

FINAL FY 2008 BOSTON LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BUSINESS PLAN

II – LOCAL LABOR MARKET ANALYSIS

Along with the state's economy, Boston's economy continues to grow at a rate faster than the nation's. According to a UMass Boston report, the state's economy grew at a 4.7% annual rate in the 1st quarter of 2007, the fastest pace in nearly seven years. The US economy, by contrast, grew at a 1.3% rate, its worst performance since early 2003.¹

The number of employed persons in Boston increased slightly by 3,672 (+1.3%) to 277,160 between the fourth quarters of 2005 and 2006. Similar growth (+1.2%) occurred for the state as a whole. In terms of jobs, between the second quarters of 2005 and 2006, the number of Boston jobs increased by 8,047, or 1.0%.² This is on par with the state's increase of 0.9% jobs during the same period. There have been strong job gains in educational and health services and professional, scientific and business services, a 1.2% gain over the year in the Boston–Cambridge-Quincy MA-NH area.³

Three large sectors, Health Care and Social Assistance (18.4%), Professional and Business Services (18.0%) and Financial Activities (15.1%) comprise more than half (51.5%) of all jobs in Boston. Between the second quarters of 2005 and 2006, Professional and Business Services gained 2,857 jobs while Health Care and Social assistance grew by 2,602 jobs. Financial activities increased by 1,476 jobs and the Leisure and Hospitality sector added 945 jobs.

Between the second quarters of 2005 and 2006, the two major sources of employment decline in Boston were Transportation and Warehousing (-1,629) and Manufacturing (-1,286).

Boston's seasonally unadjusted unemployment rate increased from 4.9% to 5.0% between the fourth quarters of 2005 and 2006. During this same period, the seasonally unadjusted unemployment rate in Massachusetts increased from 4.5% to 4.7%. A total of 14,499 Boston residents were unemployed during the fourth quarter of 2006. From an industry perspective, the four largest sources of unemployment claims in March 2007 were in Construction (16.8%), Administrative & Support (13.8%), Accommodation and Food Services (11.1%) and Health Care and Social Assistance (9.9%). Collectively, these four industries represented 52% of the total claimant population in Boston.

The four largest occupational groups among UI claimants during March 2007 were Construction (15.0%), Office and Administrative Support (12.4%), Sales (10.6%), and Production (10.5%), which together accounted for nearly half (48.5) of Boston's claimant population.⁴

¹ "Report: Mass. economy surging", Boston Globe, April 27, 2007.

² "Regional LMI Profile – Boston", MA Department of Workforce Development, March 2007.

³ "Jobs Up in Massachusetts Labor Markets in March", MA Division of Unemployment Assistance, Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, April 24, 2007.

⁴ Profile of MA Unemployment Insurance Claimants, March 2007, MA Division of Unemployment Assistance.

FINAL FY 2008 BOSTON LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BUSINESS PLAN

Although small employers (fewer than 20 employees) are the primary class of employers in Boston (82%), these firms account for just 13.1% of the total number of jobs in the city (70,752 of 539,279 jobs). The share of employment represented by these small employers in Boston is the smallest among the state's 16 Workforce Areas. By contrast, the 791 largest employers (4.1%) (more than 100 employees) provide employment for nearly two-thirds of the city's workers. The share of large employers in Boston (65.9% or 355,805) is considerably above the statewide share (48.7%) and the highest among the Commonwealth's 16 Workforce Areas. This reflects a much different employment structure than any of our other regional counterparts.⁵

A significant number of these large employers in Boston are in the healthcare or finance and insurance industries. Since the Greater Boston region has the most knowledge-intensive economy in the state, it had the highest proportion of job vacancies requiring an associate's degree or higher (53%) during the 2nd quarter of 2006. Statewide, only 43% of job vacancies required an associate's degree or higher. While there is an increase in the educational levels required, new and replacement job openings will exist which require training ranging from that provided on-the-job to graduate degrees.⁶

Training that also develops English language competence is also required as Boston's foreign-born population increased by 32.5% to 151,836 during the 1990's. Almost half of the foreign born residents (48.5%) entered the U.S. in the past 10 years. As of 2000, one-third of Boston's residents spoke a language other than English, up from 25.6% in 1990; and over 16% do not speak English very well, compared to 13% in 1990.⁷

Between the 2000 Census and July 2005, the total population in Boston increased by close to 7,500, an increase of 1.3%. This mirrors the state's population increase for the same time period. Boston's daytime population is more influenced by net in-commuting than any of the state's other Workforce Areas. Boston had a net inflow of 242,092 workers at the time of the 2000 Census.⁸

Overall, Boston continues to be a city of young adults due to the large number of students and young adults living and working in the city. One out of every three persons in Boston is between 20 and 34 years old.⁹ By 2003, the median age of Boston's residents was 31.1, compared to 36.5 for the state as a whole.¹⁰

⁵ "Regional LMI Profile – Boston", MA Department of Workforce Development, March 2007.

⁶ "Massachusetts Job Vacancy Survey, 2nd Quarter 2006", MA Department of Workforce Development, January 2007.

⁷ "Boston's Immigration, Foreign Born Population and Language Spoken: 1990-2000", Boston Redevelopment Authority, Trends 2000, Technical Note #2002-5.

⁸ "Regional LMI Profile – Boston", MA Department of Workforce Development, March 2007.

⁹ "The Boston Economy 2004 – Turning the Corner", Boston Redevelopment Authority, Report #599, September 2004.

¹⁰ "2000 Population for the Boston Workforce Area by Age and Sex", Regional LMI Profile – Boston, 3rd Quarter 2003, Interagency Workgroup for Regional Profiles.

FINAL FY 2008 BOSTON LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BUSINESS PLAN

The educational levels of Boston's population 25 years old and over continued to climb in the period between 1990 and 2000.¹¹ The percentage of persons with a high school diploma or higher increased from 75.7% in 1990 to 78.9% in 2000. The percentage with some college or higher grew from 49.1% to 54.9%. The percentage of persons with a bachelor's degree or higher increased from 30% in 1990 to 35.5% in 2000 and the growth of those with degrees beyond the bachelor's level outpaced the growth of those with bachelor's degrees—28% to 19%.

While these advances are in many ways heartening, they are not so pronounced that they eliminate all concerns about the education and training needs of the city's residents. While a greater percentage of residents over 25 years old had at least a high school diploma in 2000, nevertheless 21.1% lacked a diploma. The respective statewide share was 15.2%.¹² In addition, since the 2000 Census, the MCAS requirement has been put in place for current high school graduates. At the same time, the dropout rate in Boston has risen. The Boston Public Schools (BPS) reported 1,699 BPS students dropped out in 2005.¹³ Boston is losing as many as a third of its youth to the dropout crisis.¹⁴

Young Boston high school dropouts have a harder time finding jobs than their peers in other large cities, ranking 44th out of 50 large cities in terms of dropouts' ability to get work (30% of high school dropouts found work compared with 41% in other cities). Today in Boston, more than 8,000 young adults ages 16 to 24, mostly black and Latino men, have dropped out and not earned a GED.¹⁵

Massachusetts' occupational projections through 2014 further highlight the need for advanced degrees. Among those occupations generating half of the projected new jobs in the state that also require educational achievement are registered nurses, computer professionals, teachers and analysts, accountants and auditors.¹⁶

The Boston workforce system has maintained a high volume of job seekers accessing career center services, particularly those that are unemployed. In FY 2005, the career centers in Boston served 17,744. In FY 2006, 17,603 job seekers were served. While this represents a leveling of volume for those two years and may be reflective of overall declines in unemployment, the proportion of unemployed job seekers using the centers rose from 82% (14,627) in FY 2005 to 86% (15,189) in FY 2006.¹⁷

In attempting to meet the needs of jobseekers and employers, the Boston Career Center system utilizes labor market data in determining an appropriate mix of resources and

¹¹ "Boston School Enrollment & Educational Attainment: 1990-2000", Boston Redevelopment Authority, Trends 2000, Technical Note #2002-3.

¹² Regional LMI Profile – Boston, 3rd Quarter 2003, Interagency Workgroup for Regional Profiles.

¹³ Office of Research, Assessment and Evaluation, Boston Public Schools, February 2006.

¹⁴ Too Big To Be Seen: The High School Dropout Crisis in Boston and America. March 2006, Boston Youth Transitions Task Force.

¹⁵ Job market for dropouts tougher in Hub," April 2006. The Boston Globe.

¹⁶ Massachusetts Employment Projections Through 2014," MA Department of Workforce Development, December 2006.

¹⁷ Boston PIC, FY06 Boston Career Centers Report on Operations, October 2006.

FINAL FY 2008 BOSTON LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BUSINESS PLAN

services for customers. While this task has been made more difficult in recent years with the increasing demand for services and a steady reduction of resources available, the services and resources provided reflect customer demand and employer job vacancies in the labor market, and address skill and training needs.

As noted previously, 53% of job vacancies during the second quarter of 2006 required an associate's degree or higher. Because the Boston WIB directs WIA funds to prioritized population segments as a matter of policy, Boston's ITA's do not fund courses toward Associate or Bachelor degrees. However, the skill and training needs of career center customers are funded in a variety of industries and occupations. As of the third quarter of FY 2007, a system-wide review of the areas of training selected by Career Center customers shows that 14% of all individual training accounts (ITA) involve remediation to some degree. Remediation includes English as a Second Language (ESL) or GED preparation and over 90% of these are used for ESL.

As of the 3rd quarter of FY07, among other ITA recipients, the most frequent training choice is Administration and Office Support (38%). Almost two thirds of these were for training in the medical office area, a sector of significant growth. Construction/Logistics/Repair (14%) training is a distant second. Commercial driver training and Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) maintenance dominate this area. Health Care and Social Assistance and Professional, Scientific and Technical Services (both at 9%) are the third most utilized areas for training. The health care programs train direct care providers; the majority are Medical and Nursing Assistant programs.¹⁸

The Boston Workforce Investment Board and career center staff continue to work closely with employers and training vendors, while also consulting available LMI data through O*NET, www.massworkforce.org, America's Career InfoNet, and Northeastern University's Center for Labor Market Studies among others, to determine the job skills and training requirements necessary for employment in targeted industries and occupations.

Given the current local labor market reality, Boston has developed a FY2008 WIA Plan that attempts to address the area's most pressing needs. In doing so, it responds to two layers of the city's reality—its economic structure, which has been outlined above and the characteristics of its primary career center customers, which are detailed below.

PART III. PLAN NARRATIVE

At the time Boston submitted its FY07 Annual Business Plan in June 2007, the projected cuts in funding in the Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth allocations were -18.8%; -33.3% and -20.8%, respectively. This drastic reduction in WIA resources gave us grave concerns about our ability to maintain high-quality and results-oriented services at the basic level in the upcoming year. Fortunately, the addition of funds through the final allocation helped mitigate this situation, as did carry-in dollars in Title I-A and the

¹⁸ Boston PIC, FY07 3Q Dashboard Report on Career Centers, May 22, 2007.

FINAL FY 2008 BOSTON LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BUSINESS PLAN

availability of a National Emergency Grant covering the workers dislocated by the Federated Department Store's (Macy's) buyout of May's Department Stores (Filene's, Bloomingdale's and Lord & Taylor). Even so, it was a year when the significantly reduced WIA resources allowed bare maintenance of the system. Final allocations represented cuts of 11.6% in Adult funding, 33.3% in Dislocated Worker funding, 1.5% in Youth funding.

The positive impact of modest increases to WIA funding for FY08 compared to FY07 (13% in Adult funding, 14% in Dislocated Worker funding and 8% in Youth funding) may be muted by potential cutbacks in FY08 state funding for Career Centers for the upcoming fiscal year. In addition, the federal Wagner-Peyser allocation for Boston for FY 08 has been reduced by 2.3% from its FY07 level, which, in turn, was a reduction from the FY06 level. While the Wagner-Peyser decrease will be partially off-set by a modest increase in Title I monies the City directs to Career Centers, the Legislature's allocation of state money to Career Centers is subject to debate at the time of the writing of this Plan. Since the Career Centers operate as the "front door" to the workforce development system, any reduction of these state funds would have a significant impact on access to services, and would more than counteract any increases in the federal WIA funds.

A. JOB SEEKER CUSTOMERS

- 1. Please describe the policies of the Workforce Investment Board and One-Stop Career Center(s) to address the trends in unemployment and service needs of unemployed insurance claimants.*

Overall, trends in Boston's unemployment demographics have remained remarkably consistent over the six years WIB staff has tracked them. Of course, Boston's statistics stand out in contrast to the overall state statistics based on the nature of the city's economy and the demographics of its residents. The most glaring difference between the state and the city in terms of the people receiving unemployment insurance is the greater concentration of people whose weekly wages were \$499 and below before becoming unemployed in the city compared to the state (Mar. 07: B-35%; MA- 29.2%). Boston also has far greater percentages of claimants at the lowest educational levels (through 8th grade) (Mar. 07: B-5.9%; MA-4.9%) and the highest levels (College degree or higher) (Mar. 07: B-22.6%; MA- 17.4%) than does the state.

In addition, the city has far greater percentages of claimants between 22 and 44 than does the state (Mar. 07: B-61%; MA-54.2%). Another striking State/City disparity lies in the difference in the racial composition of unemployment claimants. In the state, in March 2007, 81.9% of claimants were white; in Boston, 47.8% were white. Blacks accounted for only 7.3% of the state's unemployment claimants, while in Boston they represented 31.7%.

A final, and perhaps the most important, way the claimant profile in Boston differs from that of the state is in the number of weeks Boston's claimants spend receiving

FINAL FY 2008 BOSTON LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BUSINESS PLAN

unemployment benefits. In March 2007, 35.4% of Boston claimants had been receiving benefits for fifteen or more weeks, in comparison to 30.9% statewide. This pattern has existed at least throughout the current fiscal year.

While these differences point to the distinctive characteristics of Boston compared to the state overall, the most meaningful comparisons to be made come from comparing the demographics of the unemployed (or at least those collecting unemployment benefits) with the population of the city as a whole. Whites, who in the 2000 census represented 49.5% of the city's population, have been consistently below 49% of the city's unemployed. In FY06 and FY07, the range was between 47% and 49%. Asians were also consistently below their 7.5% share of the city's population. Their range in FY06 and FY07 was between 4.9% and 5.3%.

By contrast, Blacks and Latinos were consistently above their share of the city's 2000 population (23.8% and 14.4%, respectively). The difference was most striking for Blacks, whose range of unemployment was between 34.7% and 30.8% between July 2005 and March 2007. During the same time period, the percentage of Latinos collecting unemployment ranged up to 18.4%, except for October 2006 when 14.3% of Boston's unemployment collectors were Latinos.

If the percentage of people receiving unemployment benefits in the "under 44"¹⁹ age categories in Boston stands out in contrast to those in the state, they also contrast to the city's population. Twenty-one point two percent of the city's population in the 2000 Census was between 25 and 34 years old. In March 2007, 26.9% of Boston UI claimants fell into this age category. While 14.7% of the city's 2000 population was between 35 and 44 years old, 27.9% of those receiving unemployment benefits were in this age category. This pattern of over-representation for these two age groups has been consistent since FY02, when we began compiling statistics.

In terms of educational level, while the 5.9% of claimants with educations through grade 8 in March 2007 is higher than the state's average, it falls well below the Census 2000 data which showed 9.1% of Boston's population having less than 9 grades of education. So too, those with education levels between the 9th and 11th grades represented 10.1% of the March 2007 claimants, while the 2000 Census reported 12.0% with schooling as far as the 9th through 12th grades with no diploma.

When one analyzes those students with a high school diploma, however, the pattern is reversed. The 2000 Census reported that 24% of the city's population fell into this category. In March 2007, 40.7% of Boston claimants had a high school diploma. A similar, if not quite so discordant incongruity appears for those claimants who had some college, but no degree. Their share of the 2000 census was 19.4%, but they represented 20.7% of UI claimants in March 2007.

¹⁹ Because the age categories used by the "Profile of Unemployment Claimants" and the 2000 Census are not exactly the same, these percentage figures are not exact. However, the point being made is valid. The trend is clear.

FINAL FY 2008 BOSTON LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BUSINESS PLAN

While the percentage of Boston UI claimants in March 2007 with a college degree or above (22.6%) was above the level in the state as a whole (18.0%), it was well below the 35.5% of people living in Boston who had earned a Bachelor's degree or higher as reported in the 2000 Boston Census.

The picture drawn by this analysis highlights some anomalies. Blacks and Latinos are over-represented in the profile of UI claimants, as are 25 to 44 year olds. People with some college are slightly more likely to be receiving benefits than their proportionate share of the population would indicate, but it is high school graduates for whom the disproportion is startling. With a census representation of 24%, at no time since January 2004 have people with a high school diploma represented below 38.6% of the city's UI claimants.

Two other elements of the analysis stand out. In comparison with the rest of the state, a significantly greater percentage of UI claimants in Boston reported previous weekly income as \$499 or less (B-35%; MA-29.2%). Annualized, this represents income below \$26,000. This is a critical data point because while the average area wage reported for the city for CY2005 is \$70,096, almost 40% of unemployed Bostonians receiving unemployment benefits had previous income that was only 37% of that average wage. And, of course, this discussion has centered on those people who receive unemployment benefits, who are certainly not all of the unemployed in the city.

Finally, the fact that a disproportionate percentage of Boston's unemployment claimants have been receiving benefits for longer than 15 weeks is striking. Boston's percentage in this category has consistently been above the state's throughout the current fiscal year. For these Bostonians, then, re-employment is no easy task.

One aspect of the Local Labor Market Analysis outlined in the previous section of this Business Plan is critical to understanding how this picture of unemployment claimants "fits" with the city's overall economic structure. Close to 250,000 workers living outside the city commute to jobs in Boston. Many of them come from the affluent suburbs surrounding the city. These people, and the clusters of wealthy city residents who live in "select" city neighborhoods, are the ones who fill the kinds of jobs that drove Boston's average wage to \$70,096 in CY2005. Except in very rare circumstances, they are not the customers of Boston's Career Centers. Networking is their primary re-employment tool.

In developing its Business Plan, Boston will start with a focus on the kinds of people who are receiving unemployment benefits (and on those who are unemployed and not receiving benefits, as well as those who are underemployed) and determine how to use the city's WIA's funds to assist them in taking a step forward from where they are toward a better economic future. WIA funds are limited; they are, by statute and by regulation, more focused on entrance into employment than on "talent development" in any long-term sense. **Boston must develop and deliver employment services consistent with WIA priorities and relevant and appropriate for the unemployed and underemployed who are the career centers' prioritized customers.**

FINAL FY 2008 BOSTON LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BUSINESS PLAN

Boston's workforce system's overarching initiatives/objectives for providing services to its job seekers are focused, as they were in the three previous years, on providing high quality and results-oriented services and, where possible, talent development opportunities. While Boston will receive modest increases in Title IA and Title ID funding in the upcoming fiscal year compared to the current one, the continued reductions to the Wagner-Peyser funding, which supports core services in the Career Centers, as well as the inconclusive status of the state's projected allocation to career centers at the time of this plan submission, mean that no major expansion of services to career center customers in FY08 is planned.

For adults with limited workforce histories or obsolete skills, who are the prioritized customers of Boston's Career Centers (see below, 3a, 3c), training is critical to talent development and eventual re-employment. For this reason, Boston has traditionally directed a large portion of its adult Title IA and ID allocations to training services. For FY08, 75% of service funding will be allocated to training services, while 25% of both IA and ID services funding will be directed toward the provision of intensive services by career centers. **Boston will employ the practice of transferring funds between WIA Titles, as we have in two of the past three years, in order to respond to the needs of Dislocated Workers.** For the upcoming fiscal year, \$175,335 will be transferred from Title IA to Title ID, making the two streams of service funding roughly equal. Of those monies, 25% will be allocated to Career Centers for the provision of intensive services. Seventy-five percent of each of the streams will be used to fund Individual Training Accounts (Title IA = \$859,905; Title ID = \$859,905).

While the average cost of an ITA training voucher had increased annually in Boston since the implementation of WIA, in FY07 costs stabilized at \$5,000. For that reason, we are not raising our projected cost of an ITA for FY08 above that level. As a result, we will have a total of 344 ITAs in FY08, 172 in each of the Adult and Dislocated Worker streams. Of these, 148 in each of the IA and ID streams will be for skills training (72 in IA and 72 in ID) and 48 for intensive services English for Employment (24 in IA and 24 in ID). In past fiscal years, Boston had transferred money to try and ameliorate the differences between the IA and ID funding streams. In FY08, we will be able to achieve parity.

Within the IA allocation, Boston will also set aside funds in the WIA Adult stream. Because of the particular challenges faced by young adult males in accessing the workforce and in finding well-paying jobs, over the past two years we have allocated monies of the adult funding stream to serve young adults in a building services project as a pilot initiative. In FY07, youth monies were also set aside to contribute to this undertaking. Through this project, 32 young men successfully completed training, including course work at Wentworth Institute, which earned them college credits. We learned valuable lessons from this experience, most significantly regarding the impact of CORI requirements on young male adults hoping to gain entrance into this employment sector. For FY08, then, we will set aside \$70,000 from the adult funding stream and \$60,000 from the youth funds for a group contract to serve young adults/older youth,

FINAL FY 2008 BOSTON LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BUSINESS PLAN

targeting a different employment sector. PIC and JCS staff will determine the scope of services and the targeted occupations for this set-aside.

In FY08, PIC and JCS staff will continue their initiatives directed toward increased communication between partners in the city's workforce development system, with a goal of continuous quality improvement. One aspect of these initiatives is the chairing of bi-monthly meetings of the Best Practices group and another is the convening of the Workforce Advisory Group. (For more information on these initiatives, see below, D, 2 and E.)

In addition to these initiatives directed toward better communication within the workforce development system, PIC and JCS staffs engage in ongoing monitoring of both career center and vendor activity. PIC staff produces a quarterly "dashboard" report for WIB committees detailing career center activity. JCS staff track vendor performance, hold monthly Career Center Task Force meetings with career center staff to address problems and strategize about developing service trends, and monitor program vendors throughout the year.

- a. *Has a change in your job seeker base resulted in a change to your locally apportioned funding (e.g. transfer of funds between Adult and Dislocated Worker categories)?*

Transfers of Workforce Investment Act funds between titles have not been driven as much by changes in the job seeker base as by fluctuating funding levels. Since the outset of the implementation of the Workforce Investment Act our experience has shown that we expend Dislocated Worker ITAs more rapidly than the vouchers in the Adult funding stream. Unlike many low-income adults, dislocated workers have income for at least six months through unemployment insurance, allowing them to be able to step out of the active workforce while in training. In addition, many of them have been long-time workers in "declining" or out-sourcing industries, who need training in order to be competitive in the current economic environment.

For FY07, when Boston received a cut of 33.3% in Dislocated Worker funds, the WIB transferred \$165,000 from the Adult funding stream to Dislocated Workers. Although this did not completely equalize the funding in these two titles, it served to lower the Dislocated Worker services cut to 25.2%. **For FY08, Boston's WIB plans to transfer \$173,335 from Title IA Adult to Title ID Dislocated Workers.** This will serve to roughly equalize the number of ITAs available in the two funding streams.

FINAL FY 2008 BOSTON LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BUSINESS PLAN

2. *Please describe how skill requirements for job seekers in your workforce investment area have changed over the past several years and how these changes have affected training and counseling activities in the One-Stop Career Center (s) and/or policies of the Workforce Investment Board.*

Since its release in 2001, MassINC's study, "New Skills for a New Economy,"²⁰ has served as a framework for understanding the current local labor market. Broadly stated, the "New Skills" study underscores a direct link between learning and wages. In the mid-twentieth century, unskilled and semi-skilled workers earned high wages in mass production industries. In the state as a whole, and in Boston in particular, those jobs and industries have long since disappeared. They have been replaced with knowledge-based industries governed by complex information and communications technologies. Today's industries require workers with higher levels of *cognitive skills*, in contrast to the manual and mechanical skills of earlier decades.

While the analysis contained in the "New Skills" report has been widely disseminated and understood, Boston's workforce development system faces the challenge of successfully moving large numbers of unemployed and underemployed Career Center customers, many of whom have significant barriers to employment, into skilled jobs at the entry-level or above. Many customers cannot access the jobs in the "new economy" in the short-term, even with the asset of a training voucher. For them, the process is a long term one, made step by step. Career Center counselors are adept at discussing these issues with their customers. And, in the end, of course, by law the framework of the WIA system is individual customer choice. We would hope that with Career Center counselor advising, customers would make a "facilitated, informed choice," but ultimately it is the customer's choice that prevails.

Another change faced by Career Center customers seeking a good job or a pathway to one is that increasingly over the last several years the means of accessing employment have changed. More and more employers are using on-line applications, which often include background checks, as the "front door" of their employment recruitment efforts. When Career Center staff and training vendors reported how challenging this development was for many of their customers, PIC staff convened a working group consisting of the business development managers at the three Boston centers to develop a workshop designed to familiarize workshop participants with the key features of online applications and personality assessments. The resulting workshop was piloted during the current fiscal year at all three career centers, at a meeting of Boston's Best Practices Group and at the Commonwealth Workforce Coalition's spring 2007 conference. With the help of the information technology team at The Work Place, a "practice application" was developed that is used in the workshop for didactic purposes and will be installed on resource library computers at Career Centers so that customers can practice completing the application. The workshop development team is also planning to make the practice application available on disk for customers to use at home.

²⁰ A second MassINC report, "Mass Economy: the Labor Supply and Our Economic Future," issued in December 2006, addresses what it sees as a contraction in the local labor force.

FINAL FY 2008 BOSTON LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BUSINESS PLAN

- a. What service strategies will be undertaken with respect to post-secondary education entities to promote lifelong learning opportunities as a focus of the workforce system?*

Given the demographic characteristics and life circumstances of those “most in need” who are the Career Centers’ primary job seeker customers and who are the focal point of the LWIB’s priority populations for the Workforce Investment Act funds (see below, 3a, 3c), as well as the very limited funds available through WIA, Boston cannot devote significant WIA resources, if any, to underwriting customers’ pursuit of post-secondary degrees. From the customers’ perspective, most cannot afford to be removed from the workforce to attend college full-time. Even those who can rely on unemployment assistance payments have that support for well less than a year. In addition, the structure of the performance outcomes built into the WIA legislation focus on employment, rather than education.

At the same time, everyone—from Career Center customers and counselors to the LWIB and the staff of the PIC and JCS—is very much aware of the need for post secondary education and training to meet the demands of the region’s changing economy. Talent development for Career Center customers, particularly those prioritized by the LWIB, can begin through skills training programs. Some WIA customers utilize ITAs to attend certificate programs at post-secondary institutions such as Bunker Hill, North Shore and Northern Essex Community Colleges and Marion and Quincy Colleges, and Clark University. Others begin by attending programs at community-based organizations or proprietary schools. In all cases, however, Career Center counselors help their customers focus not only on their immediate and short-range goals, but also on their long-term objectives as well.

Mayor Menino has been an outspoken voice for effective public post-secondary options for Boston youth and adults. One element in our strategy is undertaking a study of post-secondary outcomes for Boston Public School graduates using National Student Clearinghouse data as well as examining the alignment between labor market demand and post-secondary supply using IPEDS data.

In Boston, life-long learning is fundamental to all workforce development initiatives, whether funded by the Workforce Investment Act or by other Federal, State and City sources. It is something the City has built into all of its RFPs. Additional non-WIA resources have been devoted to the development of talent pipelines. For example, the PIC is working with employers in the Health Care and Financial Services sectors to establish “bridge” supports for students transitioning from high school to college in these areas. Through the Neighborhood Jobs Trust, the City has underwritten a pilot Math and Science Project to remediate skill deficits in these areas and transition students on to post-secondary institutions.

FINAL FY 2008 BOSTON LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BUSINESS PLAN

3. *Please describe the Priority of Service policy for your workforce investment area including the population(s) to which it applies.*

a. *Will “low-income” priority be applied to the delivery of adult intensive employment and training services in your region for FY2008 in accordance with Section 134(d)(4)(F) of the Workforce Investment Act and Subpart F §663.600 of the Regulations.*

Yes. On February 3, 2000, the Boston Workforce Investment Board voted that it “finds that funds available for training under the Workforce Investment Act are limited,” and that as a result, “a priority be established for low income customers, including those who are working poor.”

b. *If “low-income” priority will not be applied to the provision of adult intensive employment and training service for FY2008, describe the criteria that was used to determine that other funds are not limited, therefore negating the need to apply a low-income priority.*

N/A

c. *If “low-income” priority will be applied to the provision of adult intensive employment and training services for FY2008, describe the process established by the board that ensures priority is given to public assistance and other low income adults and veterans.*

In addition to the priorities outlined above in A-3-a, on April 4, 2000, the Boston WIB, recognizing that “the Boston Workforce Development system has traditionally provided services to those most in need of assistance in order to become economically self-sufficient,” voted to include among the indicators of priority status: an English reading and computing achievement at less than a 9th grade level; employed, but earning less than 150% of the Lower Living Standard Income Level (capped at up to 20% of available training funds in the dislocated worker category); lack of a good work history, with extensive periods of unemployment or underemployment, or of non-participation in the labor market; a history of involvement with the courts that affects employability; and other identifiable barriers to employment including a disability. Additional priorities specifically relating to dislocated workers that the Board set were for those for whom educational achievement or English language ability may affect re-employment.

The priorities outlined above clearly encompass Temporary Assistance for Families with Dependent Children recipients. In the case of veterans, each career center has a DVOP or LVER on site. All veterans coming to a career center are informed of the availability of DVOPs and LVERs, as well as the special services, including specialized training programs, available to them.

FINAL FY 2008 BOSTON LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BUSINESS PLAN

4. *Does your workforce investment area employ a residency requirement for job seeker access to intensive and/or training services? If yes, please describe.*

There is no residency requirement for job seeker access to intensive and/or training services in Boston. However, because the WIB found “the funding available for the implementation of the Workforce Investment Act is severely limited,” it voted on April 6, 2000, “that residents of the city most in need of assistance under the Act are to be *prioritized* for intensive and training services in the Career Center.” For dislocated workers, the priority was extended to include not just those living in Boston, but also those who had previously worked in Boston.

5. *With respect to job seeker customers, please describe additional priorities and/or strategies that have been planned for your region’s workforce development system in FY2008.*

Boston’s objectives for FY08 will remain consistent with those expressed in the City’s Business Plans in FY06 and FY07.

- **Managing quality in the context of high volume**

In FY05, as the full impact of the “Connecting Claimants” initiative was felt, volume crested at more than 17,000 job seekers, 212.5% increase from the 8,000 job seekers served in 2000. The Career Centers have been adapting their customer service delivery processes and resource utilization in the context of the dramatic rise in volume. These adaptations have focused on front door roles and processes, expanded group services, just-in-time individual services and facilitated self-service.

- **Making effective use of other funding streams to support capacity to serve special populations with extraordinary barriers.**

Boston continues to make effective use of other funding streams to enhance its capacity to serve special populations with extraordinary barriers to employment.

- Supporting capacity to serve limited English speakers remains important to the Boston workforce system given that fact that the Census 2000 data indicated that the only source of population growth in the Boston labor market had been foreign immigration. It also showed that for over one-third of the city’s residents, English was not the language spoken in the home. In addition, 6.5% of Spanish speakers; 4.0% of Asian and Pacific Island language speakers; and 12.1% of other Indo-European language speakers in the population five years and over categorized themselves as speaking English less than very well. All these percentages represented significant gains over those reported in the 1990 Census.

Those data elements explain why 14% of monies in both the Adult and Dislocated Worker Individual Training Account categories are reserved for

FINAL FY 2008 BOSTON LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BUSINESS PLAN

English for Employment intensive services. In addition, the City of Boston makes a significant contribution to the English for New Bostonian's Initiative, which provides English language services to speakers of other languages, thereby increasing the level of services available through other sources, most notably the state Department of Education.

- In FY06, with funding made available by Boston's Neighborhood Jobs Trust, the City launched a Math and Science Project, directed toward addressing skill deficiencies in the math and science skills of high school graduates and successfully transitioning them into either certificate or degree programs at post-secondary institutions. Under this initiative, three projects were funded and began operation during FY07. One, at the Benjamin Franklin Institute of Technology, focuses on careers in various technical areas including automotive, marine repair and maintenance, pharmacy and computer networking. Another, a collaboration between Bunker Hill Community College and NStar, centers on Electrical Power Utility Technology. The third collaboration, between the Boston Health Care and Research Training Institute and Roxbury Community College, deals with careers in health care. This initiative has been approved for a second year of funding in FY08.
- In FY07, Boston served as the fiscal agent for a NEG to deal with workers dislocated by the buyout by Macy's of May's Department Stores. The demographics of this group²¹ mean that, they too, are a special population—mature workers. To date, 336 have been served by this grant, 111 in Boston and the remainder spread across the eastern Massachusetts workforce areas. Two hundred sixteen enrollees have entered training. Of these, 85 are from Boston. This grant will continue into FY08, but with little, if any, new funding for training. Instead, the focus will be on providing intensive services to former Filene's employees.
- Other outside funds have allowed Boston to increase its expertise in serving the homeless. Building on a successful Career Center model of working with community-based service providers, Boston received a US Department of Labor grant to improve and expand employment services to the chronically homeless. Career Centers were integrated into this initiative, which is now in its fourth year. The fifth year is scheduled to begin on October 1, 2007.
- Finally, we continue to provide services to ex-offenders with DOL grant dollars, primarily through a partnership between The Work Place and the Framingham House of Correction for Women. This partnership is particularly noteworthy because of its focus on female prisoners, an under-served category within an under-served group. The successful work so far and the depth of

²¹ Because management did not provide demographic information to the Rapid Response team, arriving at precise numbers is difficult. Union figures for the four union Filene's stores (which included the Boston store) indicated that 70% of that group was above age 45.

FINAL FY 2008 BOSTON LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BUSINESS PLAN

experience gained will strengthen future responses we make to funding opportunities. We expect that this grant will continue in FY08.

- **Using labor market information to inform the establishment of priority employment opportunities through a PIC-developed “Careers in Demand” report.**

In past years, Boston’s efforts at integrating the use of labor market information into the city’s workforce development system have focused on training Career Center staff on how to access this kind of data to make them more effective in advising their customers. While we have been largely successful in familiarizing staff with resources available from the state, our experience has been that in the fast-paced atmosphere of service delivery at the Career Centers and working with customers who often have very little knowledge of how labor market information might be useful to them, the current state resources are overwhelming to customers. For that reason, PIC staff, using the state’s Job Vacancy Survey and “Massachusetts Employment Projections through 2014,” have begun developing a “Careers in Demand” report, which not only details what kinds of well-paying job openings that pay well will exist in great numbers in the upcoming years, but also what kind of education or training they require. We will roll out this resource in FY08. By making this resource widely known to career center staff and customers, we hope to reach people with wide range of interests and skill levels with easily accessible, user-friendly tools.

B. BUSINESS CUSTOMERS

1. *Please describe how the board will align workforce investment activities with high-growth industry sectors or those deemed “critical” in the region and also with small businesses in FY08.*
 - a. *What training will be provided to front-line OSCC staff in FY08, if any, to impart knowledge of high-growth occupations and critical job vacancies?*

The highest demand and fastest growing sectors (in terms of numbers of jobs) in Boston are life sciences (driven by hospitals) and professional and technical jobs. Each of these sectors has a high concentration of openings in jobs that require some post-secondary education. For these sectors, we are working with businesses to develop pathway programs for incumbent workers and youth to support preparation and retention in higher education as part of a talent pipeline strategy for businesses. We are developing career and college awareness materials for the 50 “Careers in Demand” in Boston for career centers to use with job seeking customers, PIC career specialists to use with high school students and community-based organizations to use with adults and youth. In addition, we have designed college and career workshops in partnership with industry and TERI/Higher Education Information Center to pilot as part of the summer jobs program.

FINAL FY 2008 BOSTON LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BUSINESS PLAN

We are also working with businesses with demand for a workforce that does not require post-secondary credentials. The Mayor's Office of Jobs and Community Services (JCS) is working with hotel chains that are opening new hotels to connect them to the Career Centers to fill vacancies. Similarly, JCS is working with small businesses in the Marine Industrial Park to develop English as a Second Language programs for their non-English speaking staffs. The Career Centers are working with a range of businesses that are hiring through online job applications to support job seekers through the online application process. The Career Centers continue to work with businesses to organize job fairs, understanding the entry requirements for the positions and preparing and screening job seekers in advance of the job fairs.

Large employers, including smaller retail establishments that are part of larger chains, dominate Boston's labor market. JCS is working with small businesses that are in the industrial parks owned by EDIC. Career Center businesses services staff reach out to smaller businesses through their job development and business development services. The PIC works with small employers through the summer jobs program.

The PIC hosts labor market information sessions for Career Center staff at least once a year, focusing on hiring trends in the city as well as Greater Boston.

2. *How does your workforce area determine the employer "menu" of services (in addition to the core services listed in WIA Policy #04-46), taking into account job vacancy data, regional surveys, and employer input?*
 - a. *What strategies does your region employ to ensure that the workforce system has the agility to respond quickly and effectively to meet the needs of business customers, particularly the needs of small businesses driven by the fast pace of innovation?*

The PIC and JCS use the combination of information and input through our policy committee structures (Employment and Training Systems Committee, Workforce Development Committee, Youth Council and Board) and through the Boston Redevelopment Authority, the parent agency of JCS. Staff members bring research from the Commonwealth, such as the job vacancy survey, as well as research commissioned by the PIC and JCS, to ensure that our strategies and services are well-aligned with labor market demands and economic development trends. We also bring a Career Center dashboard to the committees and Board on a quarterly basis to review trends related to business services and job seeker outcomes as a method of identifying new trends and paying attention to performance.

The Career Centers have well-established relationships with businesses and have shifted their mix and focus of business services over the past ten years to reflect economic trends and hiring practices. A recent example is the development through a partnership of the PIC, JCS and the Career Centers of the online job application workshop to be done with job seekers as a group, often in partnership with one or more businesses. As mentioned before, the increasing use of online job applications as standard business practice was

FINAL FY 2008 BOSTON LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BUSINESS PLAN

identified by the Career Centers through the charter review process. The PIC policy committees and PIC and JCS staff noted that this trend was particularly challenging for lower skilled job seekers, job seekers with criminal records or credit issues, and job seekers with limited English skills and developed a systemic strategy to address this trend.

3. *Please describe the extent to which employer services are integrated with other workforce or partner programs to minimize duplicative employer contact and maximize access to employment information.*

a. *Describe how employer outreach is coordinated with other workforce or partner programs to minimize repetitive contacts.*

The Boston region maintains a balance between coordination in marketing to employers and developing business products and allowing for competition among Career Centers and community-based programs so that businesses can identify the best match for their needs. The PIC convenes business groups by industry, including health care, financial services and construction and engineering in order to identify industry needs and trends and to coordinate service delivery and program design among the partners in the region. The Career Centers reach out to businesses directly, driven by both historical relationships and the characteristics of their job seeker base. The PIC and JCS also convene representatives of the service delivery system to develop customer-driven practices.

4. *With respect to business customers, please describe additional priorities and/or areas of focus that have been planned for your region's workforce development system in FY 2008.*

We have three priorities:

- Working with businesses to raise the awareness of current and future high-demand careers in the Boston labor market and how to prepare for those careers;
- Continuing to work with businesses to present the online job application process to job seekers in ways that increase the number and quality of applications;
- Working with businesses to develop structured services that support employees and recent high school graduates through post-secondary pathways in order to raise the rate of college completions and provide a talent pipeline of diverse candidates for high demand occupations.

FINAL FY 2008 BOSTON LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BUSINESS PLAN

C. YOUTH

1 Please describe the local area's overarching initiatives/objectives for providing services to youth for FY 2008.

a. Service to Youth

The mission of Boston's Workforce Investment Act (WIA) youth system is ensure that hard-to-serve, low-income youth who are not being effectively served in mainstream education and youth development systems have the skills and credentials necessary to access career-oriented employment.

Boston has a strong youth development system for young people who meet a certain threshold of readiness to participate in it. The WIA system's primary goal in satisfying its mission is to ensure that there is a safety net for those young people who have difficulty accessing or being successful in this mainstream system. A secondary goal will be to impact the infrastructure of mainstream systems so that they work for all young people.

The key to success in Boston's WIA youth system is its ability to transition youth into and out of the range of opportunities and services necessary for their successful development as responsible workers and citizens. Working through both WIA-funded youth service providers and a range of non-WIA funded youth service providers, this system will ensure that the most disadvantaged and at-risk young people have access to proven alternative modes of youth service delivery as well as access to the mainstream youth and workforce development systems.

Priority Populations

- High school dropouts or those likely to drop out;
- Court-involved youth and other law enforcement referrals;
- Young Boston Housing Authority (BHA) residents;
- Young people in Department of Social Services (DSS) custody;
- Out-of-school youth.

Service Priorities

- Tracking and referral services for every WIA participant.
- Alternative education that offers basic skill remediation, GED preparation and high school diploma options.
- Career exploration and employment programming geared toward providing an understanding of career options within a given industry, developing industry-relevant work-based readiness skills and employment competencies, and working to connect youth with next steps resulting in education, training, and employment outcomes.
- Follow-up services to ensure that former participants are employed, in post-secondary education or training, or in an appropriate social support service leading to employment or post-secondary education or training.

FINAL FY 2008 BOSTON LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BUSINESS PLAN

b. System Building

Through the Boston WIA Youth Council and the Youth Transitions Task Force, a foundation-supported effort analogous to the P21 planning process, we have been working with over 40 community, state and city agencies to address struggling students and out-of-school youth. We have focused on the dropout crisis because it unites partners across systems to collaborate to improve outcomes for youth. It is a workforce issue because dropouts cannot effectively participate in the current labor market. In fact, this organizing effort has brought the workforce, education and youth development systems closer together because they all feel the effects of the increasing alienation of disconnected youth and young adults.

We spent the first year doing quantitative and qualitative research, mapping services to youth and developing recommendations to address system gaps. Based on this research, we have been taking action steps in our areas of focus. Below is a summary.

Raising the Profile of the Issue

Dr. Andrew Sum of Northeastern University's Center for Labor Market Studies published a series of three papers on the social and fiscal consequences of the dropout crisis. This has been a focal point for raising public awareness of the issue.

The Massachusetts Department of Education (DOE) published graduation rates for the first time in February 2007. This is a new accountability measure that states will adopt. The rate of those not graduating on time is greater than the dropout rate because it includes other groups, such as students who take longer than four years to graduate. The relatively high rate of those who do not graduate on time brought attention to the dropout issue.

Local Actions Steps

The Boston Public School Department (BPS) is coordinating with community-based alternative programs, many of which are funded through WIA, on the dropout problem, providing third-party evaluations of programs and exploring ways to connect information management systems.

The school district has published a guide to alternative pathways that includes information on WIA-funded as well as district-funded programs.

The Boston Private Industry Council (PIC) has piloted outreach to dropouts this fiscal year, hiring two Outreach and Referral Specialists who are reaching out to dropouts and placing them in schools, WIA programs and other programs.

Boston used P21 funds to pilot a career center specialist to serve dropouts and other disconnected young adults. This creates a service bridge between the public schools, the PIC dropout outreach, the WIA youth system and other community providers. It also leverages the success of our MCAS Pathways program, which is among top state programs in number served and number passing the MCAS.

FINAL FY 2008 BOSTON LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BUSINESS PLAN

2. Please describe strategies or program models that you have implemented or will put in place in FY08 that have improved retention and completion for hard-to-serve youth populations (e.g. Foster Child, Adjudicated, Severely Low-Income, Educationally Deficient).

- a. Please describe your region's strategy for ensuring that WIA youth programs will lead to post-secondary education, advanced training or employment outcomes.*
- b. What strategies are in place to address the needs of youth with very low (5th or 6th grade) numeracy and literacy skills?*

Boston's strategy to improve retention and completion for hard-to-serve populations is to offer programming that will motivate the youth to achieve. This is done by offering "career exploration" programming. This type of program gives the youth insight into different careers within an industry. For example, in a six-week program a youth could explore ten different careers within the construction industry, finding out the duties, pay scale, education and training needed, advancement possibilities, benefits (including retirement), culture within the industry, etc. By exploring careers and finding one of interest, the youth is motivated to achieve in both academics and the occupational training needed for that career. After the exploration program, the youth finishes or reenrolls in high school and continues to college or whatever training program is needed with the help of the WIA provider staff, who also still give the counseling, tutoring, support, etc. needed. For youth at a very low academic level, this motivation works well since they have a longer road to success. This student would begin his/her academic work at a lower level and would receive more time and support to achieve success.

Second, as part of Boston's P-21 strategy (Youth Transitions), we also have an additional staff person at a Career Center dedicated to working with dropouts and other disconnected young adults to help them with their academic, training and job search needs.

Lastly, we are in the process of building more capacity for our WIA-funded programs to identify and assess learning disabilities in our students. The provider agencies have known for some time that a number of their students have undiagnosed disabilities and we are now developing the ability to help provide the appropriate supports to these students, so that they have the opportunity to succeed.

3. Please describe the provider partnerships that are in place in your region and the effect of these partnerships on WIA youth formula funds.

WIA providers have a strong network with each other and are committed to:

- Referrals from each other as a way of expanding service options for individual youth

FINAL FY 2008 BOSTON LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BUSINESS PLAN

- Quality improvement
- Advocacy for systems improvements.

Among network members, some providers specialize in certain populations and close partnerships have developed in these cases. For example, Hull Lifesaving Museum has an exemplary career explorations program in the maritime trades for DYS youth. As a result, Hull collaborates closely with DYS. Youth Opportunity Boston (YOB) provides case management for a large number of adjudicated youth and young adults in Boston, so YOB is a close partner with Hull—and just about any program working with this population.

Other providers have developed specific partnerships with each other. Sociedad Latina, in an effort to emphasize the importance of a high school credential, requires career explorations youth who are struggling with school to get tutoring. Those who are dropouts must attend a GED program and GEDPlus has agreed to provide services for those students. Hull Lifesaving and GEDPlus have a similar arrangement.

4. *Please describe whether or not your region has “created a space” for youth in the mainstream workforce development system and the factors/policies that led to this decision)*

Our region is “creating a space” for youth in the adult system in several ways. In the Career Centers, we have always provided core services to young adults. Recently, we have added youth populations for targeted services very slowly, so as not to overwhelm already over-utilized resources. The MCAS Pathways initiative first introduced young adults as a particular population into the Career Centers about four years ago. This initiative taught career centers how to support youth around employment and education during the transition to adulthood. Career Centers have made adjustments to their service models as a result; each of them has specialized employment workshops for young adults. The Work Place has a youth section on its web site.

The work through the MCAS Pathways Initiative has also laid the groundwork of collaboration upon which we are building. Each of the Pathways staff meets monthly with the WIA providers to make referrals to programs and to receive referrals from these providers. The WIA providers, Youth Opportunity, the Black Ministerial Alliance and the Career Centers partner together to provide job fairs for disconnected youth twice a year. Because the MCAS Pathways program has worked well in the Career Centers and the community, the WorkPlace has just hired the P21 specialist mentioned above.

Additionally, we have piloted facilities maintenance training for young adults, blending youth and adult WIA funds for two years. This program combined the expertise of youth and adult units within Action for Boston Community Development, as well as access to college courses at Wentworth Institute. We plan to continue this strategy of a young adult program, though we will explore a different occupational cluster.

FINAL FY 2008 BOSTON LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BUSINESS PLAN

5. *What specific occupational or technical skill certificates/credentials will your youth program emphasize? How are those certificates/credentials matched with the requirements for employment in the critical and high growth industries in the area (skills gap, retention, requires certification, etc.)?*

Boston's youth program will emphasize construction, health, facilities maintenance, and marine trades in its certificate/credential programs. These programs will be career exploration models and will introduce the youth to a number of careers in a given industry but will not specifically offer a certificate or credential at the conclusion of the program. After successfully concluding the program, a youth who is interested in a particular career will be referred to a training program to obtain the certificate or credential needed to work in that career. These industries are all areas with a high demand in the Boston area.

6. *What segments of the Title I WIA eligible youth population will have the highest priority for FY 2008? If your workforce investment area failed one or more youth performance measures in FY 2007, what steps will be taken in FY 2008 to ensure continuation of performance improvement?*

The highest priority population for Boston's WIA programming for FY 2008 will be disconnected males ages 18-21. These youth may be high school dropouts or high school graduates with little or no prospects of success in the job market. The career exploration programs mentioned above in response to question 5 are one way to address the needs of this population.

In FY 2006, Boston succeeded in all of its WIA Youth performance measures, as it did in FY07 through the second quarter. The report issued for 3rd quarter 2007 performance showed that the City was falling behind its goals in the Younger Youth Diploma or Equivalent Rate. We regard this reading of the performance of the system as an anomaly that will be corrected when the 4th quarter report is issued. We believe that it can be explained, in part, by the fact that earning diplomas is governed by the calendar of the school year. We are approaching June when students typically earn diplomas. In addition, we are investigating whether a data-entry failure is behind the reading provided in the most recent report. We are confident that the FY07 annual report will show Boston succeeding in all its WIA youth performance measures.

FINAL FY 2008 BOSTON LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BUSINESS PLAN

D. TRAINING RESOURCES

1. Please describe how the workforce investment board has aligned training policies to prepare individuals for high-demand occupations in high growth industries within the context of moving to a “talent development” system.

- a. What strategies does your region employ to ensure that training activities are concentrated in occupational areas having critical job vacancies and/or high demand in high-growth sectors?*

The Boston Workforce Board recognizes that the most significant labor market demand is for a well-trained, highly skilled workforce. Critical job vacancies exist in health care, life sciences and the professional and technical areas. Most of these opportunities require post-secondary training and/or education. The Boston Workforce Board addresses this need, within the customer choice mandate of WIA, with a focus on entry-level skills and on post-employment career ladders and opportunities.

Boston commits a sizeable portion of its WIA resources to educational remediation activities, especially ESOL. This commitment is complemented by a number of contextual training programs that simultaneously provide language and skill training. These WIA funded activities are complimentary to the Adult Basic Education initiatives that operate throughout the city.

The Boston Workforce Board, using a variety of resources, works closely with major service providers in the Boston health care system and provides assistance and support for the development of career ladders within local health care facilities. These career development initiatives are seen as significantly beneficial to both the employer and employee.

2. To what extent do customer choices for training coincide with the targeted occupations in high-growth areas?

- a. Please analyze training enrollments in our regions and compare trends to job vacancies and critical sectors in your region.*

The Boston labor market is dominated by large employers in mature industries with an aging workforce in which the demand for replacement workers is at least as strong as the demand in critical and emerging industries. As indicated previously, the highest demand sector in terms of numbers of jobs is life sciences (driven by hospitals) and professional and technical jobs. Each of these sectors has a high concentration of openings in jobs that require some post-secondary education.

“Talent development” in Boston also requires identifying businesses with demand for a workforce that does not require post-secondary credentials.

FINAL FY 2008 BOSTON LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BUSINESS PLAN

Through the third quarter of FY2007, one third of customers' training choices fall into the highest demand sectors (Health Care & Social Assistance: 9%, Professional, Scientific & Technical: 9%, Accommodation & Food Services: 11%). Another 38% represent administrative and office support which comprises a significant number of programs targeting medical offices. Construction, Logistics and Repair comprise 14% of enrollments and represent areas of particular interest to men.

To further align the talent development system with labor market demand, Boston devoted 14% of its training resources to courses designed to enhance basic language and numeracy skills to create opportunities for more advanced training for basic skills workers.

- 2. Please provide specific examples of how your region has leveraged WIA formula funds and additional resources to support talent development and life-long learning strategies.*

The Office of Jobs and Community Services (JCS) in partnership with the Boston Private Industry Council (PIC) continues to leverage WIA formula funds and additional resources to support talent development and life-long learning strategies. WIA formula funds are a key element in Boston's workforce development system, as were those of the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) for many years. With a strong network of training providers, including community-based organizations providing a full range of job-related services, and three One Stop Career Centers as a base, Boston works hard to plan and coordinate one comprehensive system composed of multiple funding streams, each leveraging and complementing the other.

Role of Convener

JCS and the PIC have a long history of bringing together stakeholders across multiple funding sources, including WIA, to share information, problem solve, plan, provide staff development, etc. Some groups are convened by one or the other organization and others are jointly convened. Specific examples:

- **Workforce Advisory Group (WAG):** This group of high-level staff was formed six years ago to help JCS and the PIC plan for the implementation of WIA. Staffed jointly by both organizations, the group includes representatives of DTA, DCS, Commonwealth Corporation, DOE, youth alternative education, adult skills training, ABE and Boston's three Career Centers. This group meets 4-5 times per year and advises on a range of workforce development issues and local policies. WIA performance is reviewed at most meetings.
- **Best Practices Work Group:** This group formed around operational issues that arose during the beginnings of WIA. Still active, the bi-monthly meetings of the group are designed to improve the quality of the WIA ITA system in Boston. Line staff from Career Centers and training vendors meet with JCS and PIC staff to ensure smooth operations.

FINAL FY 2008 BOSTON LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BUSINESS PLAN

- Under Welfare to Work, Boston formed a regular meeting of about fifty stakeholders all connected through their work with welfare clients. A smaller group continues to meet on welfare issues less frequently.
- The City's Neighborhood Jobs Trust (NJT) has contributed millions of dollars to the "system" through various funding initiatives over the last five years. The majority of the vendor recipients of NJT funds for skills training also serve WIA customers through ITA's. This group is brought together monthly.

Staff Development and Capacity Building

JCS and the PIC continue to demonstrate a strong commitment to staff development and capacity building opportunities that benefit Boston's workforce development system. Boston has performed well enough with WIA funds to win the annual incentive grant most years. This grant continues to be invested solely in those activities that develop talent in our own staff and in the agencies that service WIA customers: One- Stop Career Centers, skills training providers and the alternative youth network. For example, WIA incentive funds coupled with other public and private resources supported a six-session course for job developers and a one-day conference for workforce development professionals. Currently, we are co-sponsoring an intensive course designed for staff new to workforce development that covers assessment, case management, soft skills, employer relations, world of work, etc. A peer-learning network will be formed as a follow-up to this course. In FY08, we plan to sponsor the course for new staff again. In addition, we plan to partner with the Higher Education and Information Center/TERI to develop training for career center staff so they can better counsel customers on ways to personally finance training. This strategy is necessary to counter the demand for publicly funded training by career center customers.

Life-Long Learning

JCS and the PIC support and foster life-long learning in a number of ways. First, the PIC has been the recipient of several BEST grants over the last few years in the financial services and health care sectors. The sectoral work in health care which began under BEST continues today through a business arrangement with a large employer in the Longwood Medical Area.

JCS is managing a new workplace education project in South Boston's Marine Industrial Park (MIP). Forty immigrants working in four different companies receive ESOL classes at the workplace. All employers contribute paid release time with classroom space provided by one employer and the City. This program is the result of a private /public partnership established to meet the demand for ESOL classes and is part of a larger initiative called English for New Bostonians (ENB). JCS provides NJT funds and is the largest contributor to ENB. It is also worth noting that the workplace education program at the MIP illustrates the integration of workforce and economic development in Boston. The Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA) serves as the City's economic development

FINAL FY 2008 BOSTON LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BUSINESS PLAN

engine; JCS falls organizationally under the umbrella of the BRA. Together, the BRA and JCS were able to plan and coordinate around the development of an appropriate geographical location with a mix of industrial/manufacturing employers with sufficient numbers of immigrant workers in need of ESOL.

For the last few years, JCS has been leading a task force established to improve the integration of Adult Basic Education (ABE) system in Boston with the primary pieces of workforce development: One Stop Career Centers and the providers of occupational skills training (talent development). The task force comprises representatives from DOE, SABES, ABE, skills training providers, Career Centers, and the PIC. The group has planned a number of successful activities including a “trade show” at which training and ABE providers and Career Centers shared information about their services and referral processes. Another event was an all-day conference designed to break down the cultural barriers between the systems and get all parties on the same page. The group continues to meet and is currently planning an event for private and public funders to be held in September 2007. This initiative is also about life-long learning. Once the connections between the major elements of workforce development are made, then it will be easier for customers to move along the continuum of services. For example, a customer should be able to seamlessly move from ESOL to ABE, to skills training, to employment, and back to ABE to complete the GED or to participate in a college transitions program.

4. How will the region’s FY2008 level of budgeted training funds meet the needs of the area’s workers and businesses?

In FY08, Boston will continue its practice of allocating 75% of its WIA Adult service funds to training. It is obvious, however, that given the limited resources available through WIA funding, these funds in and of themselves are far from sufficient to meet the needs of Boston workers or Boston employers. Three hundred forty-four training vouchers do not go very far in a city of over half a million inhabitants. Nevertheless, we believe we are using these WIA resources judiciously. We are transferring funds to provide more resources for dislocated workers. We are allocating a portion of both the Adult and Dislocated Worker monies to serve limited English speakers. We are setting aside funds in both the Adult and Youth streams to serve young adults/older youth who are experiencing extreme difficulties in entering the workplace.

Boston will also continue to provide reemployment services to customers most in need which include non-native English speakers, who make up almost 30% of the city’s population, as well as those who have either been out of the workforce or have experienced long periods of time receiving unemployment benefits. In addition, as we have explained throughout this plan, the PIC and JCS staffs work diligently to ensure that additional training resources available in Boston serve to augment and complement the “WIA system.”

FINAL FY 2008 BOSTON LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BUSINESS PLAN

Boston will meet the needs of the area's business community through a number of strategies in FY08. (Please see the Business Customers section of this plan in Section III-B.)

Boston's FY07 Workforce Development Business Plan described in detail the strategies implemented to increase the expertise of Career Center staff with the use of LMI data. The ability of Career Center staff to document LMI was enhanced through participation in a full day DCS-sponsored LMI training session last fall. Boston WIA customers continue to benefit from LMI information provided through a variety of vehicles here in the city which include weekly reports from the Boston Redevelopment Authority's Research Dept, Master Plans from major institutions in the city like the Longwood Medical area and Harvard plans for its Allston campus, business and industry input through the City's Neighborhood Jobs Trust programs and Boston's SkillsWorks Initiative, and ongoing employer information via the Career Center employer services teams.

- a. *Does the region employ a limit or "cap" on the amount of ITA funds available to the customer? Please describe.*

Boston does not employ a cap on WIA ITA funds available for customers. ITAs exceeding \$8,000 require an additional level of review by the JCS Deputy Director of Adult Programs.

E. OPERATIONAL IMPROVEMENT

1. *What operational improvements are planned for FY 2008 with respect to the local One-Stop Career Center(s) and/or Youth Services?*

Operational improvement continues to be built on the "backbone" of continuous quality improvement. Continuing activities include:

- 1) Convening Workforce Advisory Group: Meeting quarterly, the Workforce Advisory Group (WAG) continues to function as a forum for a range of stakeholders, funders and service providers to meet to review systemic issues including labor market trends and other economic developments in the region as they impact career center operations and system integration among state agencies and service providers that operate in Boston.
- 2) Convening Best Practices Work Group: Referral processes between training providers and career centers have continued to be streamlined through enhanced communication and full implementation of electronic Trainee Progress Report. The work group also provided key input to the development of an online job application workshop by the local One Stop Career Centers. For FY08, the group will identify broader systemic concerns (e.g., the impact of accelerating use of background checks) and share best practices designed to enhance the quality and operations at Career Centers and training providers.

FINAL FY 2008 BOSTON LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BUSINESS PLAN

- 3) Continuing Charter Review process: Boston's comprehensive review of career center operations through the development of annual strategic plans, continuous review of customer demographics and outcomes, site visits and voice of the customer activities as described below will be sustained in FY08.
- 4) Soliciting ongoing customer feedback: This is accomplished through focus groups and interviews with business and job seeker customers. The focus groups include those conducted at each Career Center as well as "specialty" groups. In FY07, separate specialty groups were held with mature workers, people with physical disabilities and youth. The goal for FY07 was 200 customer contacts. We exceeded this goal (240). For FY08, the electronic customer satisfaction surveys for business and job seeker customers that were piloted in FY07 will be fully implemented. Three populations from among the following - re-entry, career center seminar, homeless, welfare customers, older youth - will be selected for specialty focus groups.
- 5) Sustaining staff teams at each of the career centers: In FY07, the centers continued to make changes to service offerings--in content, structure and modality. In response to volume demands, the centers continued use of cross training and cross informing to ensure quality in customer service and to sustain staff. Also during FY07, the centers formed strategic alliances with training providers, other community based organizations and businesses to provide workshops on specific occupational categories, increase the range of services to core customers not supported by categorical resources (while, of course, maintaining services to populations targeted by such resources). During FY08, these strategic alliances will be broadened.
- 6) Building Capacity in system providers: In FY07, a needs assessment designed to identify continuing staff development needs in labor market information was conducted and training, based on the assessment, was delivered. The specific focus involved targeting Boston businesses through sector, size and occupational analyses. The goal remains that of helping Career Center staff tighten the alignments between the skills and qualifications represented in the talent pipeline and the demands of the local labor market. In FY08, development in this area will continue to enhance staff skills in coaching, informing and guiding job seeker customers.

New improvements:

- 7) Convene Boston Business & Employer Services Team (BBEST): Based on the successful collaboration to develop the Online Job Application workshop, business services managers of the three Boston Career Centers will meet regularly to share best practices, identify common customer needs and requirements and develop products designed to meet those needs. For example, industry briefings held at each center organized for targeted groups of job seekers interested in specific industries with panel presentations by businesses representing those

FINAL FY 2008 BOSTON LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BUSINESS PLAN

industries will provide current labor market information to job seekers. Industry selection will be based on LMI.

- a. *Why were these planned operational improvements deemed necessary at this time?*

All of the previously delineated activities are required as a result of the ongoing need for sharing information and best practices across systems serving Boston's job seekers and businesses. The WAG (1) identifies issues and service gaps for which the Best Practices Work (2) designs and monitors solutions. Charter Review (3) and the customer feedback activities (4) identify issues within the career center system and each individual Career Center that lead to resource development and network expansion (5) and capacity building (6). Activity 7, convening the BBEST, creates a venue for identifying and responding to the requirements of the business sector in the effort to continuously align and realign the talent pipeline with those requirements. This extends to the job search process itself which is in the midst of significant change as a result of technological developments.

- b. *What specific impact will these planned operational improvements have for job seekers (including youth if appropriate) and business customers?*

Pending resolution of the funding issues mentioned elsewhere in this plan, job seekers will continue to receive the quality of service required. Specifically, they will be advised by staff conversant with labor market information that directly impacts job seeker choices regarding training, career development and employment options. Business customers will be able to rely on information provided by well informed staff, knowledgeable and conversant with the labor market dynamics in the city and region.

F. RAPID RESPONSE PLANNING

1. *Have any changes been made to the local Rapid Response Planning team(s) for your region?*

- a. *If yes, please list the names of any new members, who they are replacing (if applicable) and indicate which position on the team they are representing.*

There are no changes to the Boston Rapid Response planning team.

- b. *What is your region's threshold number for FY2008 that will determine when Rapid Response Planning Team meeting will be convened?*

Our Team has agreed that a layoff of 100 would be our the threshold number, but reserve the right to convene a meeting for any closing or layoff due to special circumstances or needs of the affected workforce.

FINAL FY 2008 BOSTON LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BUSINESS PLAN

G. PARTNERSHIPS

1. Please describe the regional strategies employed by your workforce investment area to utilize the specialized services of other partner programs and avoid duplicating services that are already available.

a. Please refer to Attachment D (MOU Activity Summary Form). Describe any MOUs (financial or non-financial) that have yet to be developed with critical partners and the anticipated timeline for their final execution.

b. Please describe examples of how executed MOUs have resulted in improved services to your customer base.

The Boston Workforce Board has executed MOUs or contracts with all critical partners.

An executed MOU with the Boston Housing Authority has been the basis on which a Career Center staff person has been regularly scheduled to provide employment services while located at a Tenant Taskforce Office. This outstationing, jointly supported by the workforce board and the BHA, brings employment services to residents of the housing complex and the surrounding neighborhood.

An executed MOU with the Massachusetts Department of Education has allowed for a number of joint skill training and adult education activities. These activities have resulted in staff from the respective systems developing a better understanding of the services available through each system and the requirements to access the services. This knowledge has improved the number and flow of customers between these systems.