

**Report to the 188<sup>th</sup> General Court  
Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

**Metro North One-Stop Career Centers**



**Metro North Regional Employment Board**

**Submitted by the Metro North Regional Employment Board  
125 CambridgePark Drive  
Cambridge, MA 02140  
[www.mnreb.org](http://www.mnreb.org)**

**March 2014**

The **Metro North Regional Employment Board (REB)** charters two career centers, both operated by Middlesex Community College, to serve the 20-community Metro North region:

- ◆ **Career Source, Cambridge and Chelsea** (satellite)
- ◆ **The Career Place, Woburn**

Since their inception, the Metro North career centers have served over 216,000 job seekers, placing an average of close to 10,000 in jobs per year. The current average wage is \$25.29. Our centers are currently serving over 1,200 employer customers per year, listing thousands of job postings, and providing a variety of other employer services, such as outplacement and on-site recruitment.

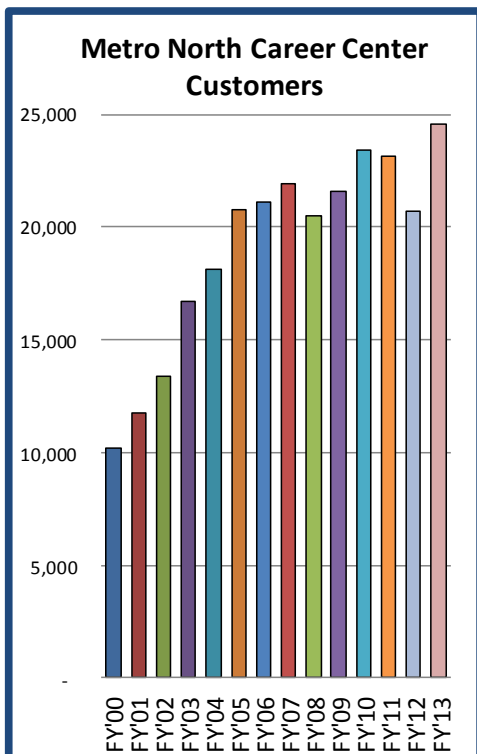
The Metro North career centers have been recognized for their outstanding performance. In FY'13, the centers had the second highest volume of customer visits (109,648) compared to other regions statewide, the highest number of job placements, the second highest average wage, and the third highest number of individual customers served (24,534). During the last twelve years, the REB has conducted extensive customer satisfaction surveys, with an average of 81% of sampled customers rating the quality of services as "good" or "excellent."

***The Current Economy and Career Center Demographics***

The Metro North region has the second largest labor force in Massachusetts, with 428,528 workers, but as of December 2013, 22,307 of them were without jobs, a slight increase (+389) compared to a year ago. As of June 2013, 7,184 were receiving unemployment benefits while seeking work, the third highest number of any region in the state. Over fourteen percent (14.4%) of these claimants were laid off from office and

Career Center Customers Served in FY'13	
Arlington	937
Belmont	408
Burlington	658
Cambridge	1,628
Chelsea	1,170
Everett	1,099
Malden	1,437
Medford	1,230
Melrose	618
North Reading	351
Reading	571
Revere	919
Somerville	1,521
Stoneham	685
Wakefield	598
Watertown	503
Wilmington	519
Winchester	367
Winthrop	185
Woburn	1,564
<b>Metro North</b>	<b>16,968</b>
<b>Non-Residents</b>	<b>7,566</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>24,534</b>

administrative support positions, followed by management (12.7%), food preparation and serving (8.6%), sales (8.1%), and construction (7.8%). The professional, scientific, and technical services industry was hardest hit, with 13.4% of all layoffs in Metro North, followed by healthcare (11.2%), accommodation and food services (11.1%), construction (9.0%), and retail (8.4%).



With 55 staff (60 including co-located staff) and a regional budget of \$4.2M, the Metro North One-Stop Career Centers are designed to meet the needs of the full spectrum of workers, from professionals to low-income customers and welfare recipients seeking entry-level positions. Through the provision of a broad menu of workshop services and individualized assistance, customers are provided with job search, training, and job placement services.

The Metro North One-Stops are proactive in working with employers facing layoffs to assist them with outplacement services. While awaiting a National Emergency Grant to support training and other job placement services, the Metro North career centers are currently providing a Rapid Response program of services to former employees of four companies that recently experienced large layoffs. The centers have also delivered outplacement services to employees of multiple Trade-certified companies who lost their jobs due to outsourcing overseas.

*"Thank you for the professional services you have provided to me at Career Source...starting with the warm welcome from the front desk, to the one-on-one coaching/resume review, and the good tips about salary negotiation. Kudos to the staff!"*

*--KB, Arlington resident*

*"We enjoy a fantastic relationship with Career Source, which has been a great help in finding candidates. I have attended job fairs and have found [Career Source staff] to be extremely helpful, friendly and knowledgeable. We are always trying to diversify our staff to represent the communities in which we serve and Career Source has been a great help."*

*--Director of Recruitment, Conservation Services Group*

*"I have landed in Higher Education - one of my target markets. Thank you so much for your wise and effective assistance and encouragement. I will long remember your warm heart, sharp insights, spot-on coaching, and patience. Thank you for your part in a major transition in my life."*

*--SM, now Senior Administrative Associate at a university in Boston*

*"Thank you for your help with the recruitment session we held at Career Source in Chelsea. I was very pleased with the turnout of candidates for the event. Many job seekers had exactly what we were looking for; they came with well written resumes, presented them professionally, and many had some background in security or a criminal justice education. I would love to plan regular recruitment sessions going forward."*

*--District Recruiter, Allied Barton Security Services*

*"With your guidance, I gained the confidence to go after senior-level positions and proudly communicate the value of my experience."*

*--Career Source Customer, now Media Director at a Boston Advertising Agency*

As shown on the previous page, between FY'00 and FY'13, the number of career center customers rose from about 10,000 to almost 25,000, 250% of FY'00 levels. Since FY'10, despite continued high demand, overall staffing has declined by about 19 positions.

On any given week, the two Metro North career centers serve an average of 1200 to 1400 customers. Continuing the trend of the last few years, the centers have been inundated with unemployed people seeking help from Department of Unemployment Assistance staff who are co-located at the centers (but are not career center staff). Every year, the career centers assist dislocated workers and low-income adults by assessing their skills and interests, helping them conduct labor market analyses, and evaluating their career options in order to determine whether career training would make them more marketable in the current economy. In FY'13, career center staff provided case management services to 588 dislocated workers and 385 low-income adults who received occupational skills training, short-term skills development, and/or intensive job placement assistance through funding provided by the **Workforce Investment Act (WIA)**. However, WIA enrollees (even with WIA Youth added in) represent only about 5% of all customers making use of the centers.

The Career Place offers about eight job fairs per year, with in-house fairs regularly drawing over 200 customers, and off-site fairs drawing 300 to 500 participants. Career Source operates one or two large job fairs per year, each with hundreds of attendees, and also sponsors popular weekly Employer Forums which bring employers together with 20 to 30 customers to talk about industry trends and to match qualified customers with available job openings. For 2012, the most recent calendar year for which employment status is available from employer wage match data, 12,084 customers of Metro North career centers entered employment (please see chart at right).

The Metro North centers daily meet the challenge of serving a diverse

customer population that ranges widely in education, age, and skill levels. While 40% of those served have only a high school diploma or less, another 39% have a college or post-graduate degree. Seventeen percent (17%) are primarily speakers of languages other than English, and 32% are black/African-American, Latino, Asian, or representatives of other non-white racial/ethnic groups. Customers represent a full range of ages: 29% are under age 35, while 27% are age 55 and over.

	Jobs	Customers
Arlington	483	671
Belmont	177	268
Burlington	352	504
Cambridge	793	1,167
Chelsea	563	783
Everett	596	826
Malden	634	941
Medford	609	934
Melrose	265	395
North Reading	174	246
Reading	255	383
Revere	462	663
Somerville	688	1,012
Stoneham	264	393
Wakefield	279	409
Watertown	195	306
Wilmington	254	382
Winchester	158	253
Winthrop	86	138
Woburn	658	976
Metro North	7,945	11,650
Outside Region	4,139	6,022
<b>Total</b>	<b>12,084</b>	<b>17,672</b>

## Services to Veterans

In FY'13, the Metro North region served 1,327 veterans, the second highest number in the state. Specialized veterans staff at each career center work individually with veterans to ensure they benefit from the full range of center services as well as connecting them directly to employment opportunities. In "Hire-a-Veteran Month" (November), each career center sponsors special events to promote the reintegration of veterans into the workforce.

## Services to Youth

The Metro North Career Centers operate the **School to Career Connecting Activities** program, connecting youth in area high schools to internships, targeting opportunities in priority industries. Over the years, career center staff have partnered with area schools to connect up to 300 youth each year to jobs. With resources declining since FY'09, service levels have fallen, with 167 youth served in FY'13; 69, or 41%, were placed in internships in priority industries. Youth staff are currently working with students in the following communities: Chelsea, Everett, Malden, Revere, Somerville, and Woburn, in many cases exposing them to their very first employment experience. Research by the Northeastern Center for Labor Market Studies and Drexel University shows that youth connected to jobs early in life are more likely to achieve later academic and career success.

Under what we call the "**WIA Transition Services Program**," the career centers visit community-based and other local organizations to conduct outreach to high school dropouts and other disconnected youth to encourage them to return to school, attend alternative WIA programs, and/or to assist them with their job search. In FY'13, this outreach program served over 700 youth in the region.

Under **WIA Youth** programming, career center youth staff provide career exploration and employment readiness workshops and case management services to 222 in-school and out-of-school youth enrolled in 12 programs each year. Youth enrolled in these programs are high school dropouts (55%), most of whom lack basic skills (64%), and many with a disability (43%). Seventy-five percent (75%) of WIA Youth funds are dedicated to serving out-of-school youth, to assist them in attaining a high school equivalency credential, exploring career options, and pursuing further education opportunities.

Career centers have also pursued funding from other sources, e.g., **MCAS Pathways** (The Career Place) and the Mass General **Revere Cares** Program (Career Source) to expand youth services offerings.

The Metro North REB also supports **YouthWorks** programs in six communities: Cambridge, Chelsea, Everett, Malden, Revere, and Somerville. In 2013, about 700 youth were placed in summer jobs in Metro North; in five of these communities, an additional 80 students are currently participating in a year-round YouthWorks program, which offers subsidized work experience, and with career centers providing work readiness preparation.

*"I loved your services. You provided me with qualified applicants, followed up in a timely manner and are a pleasure to work with. I will definitely keep posting positions with you."*

*--Employer Customer, The Career Place*

*"Resources at The Career Place are invaluable. The knowledgeable, approachable staff and the diversity of topics covered, from updating your resume to practicing interview questions to networking appropriately, have been instrumental in my job search activities."*

*--Job Seeker, The Career Place*

*"We received many resumes for our position. We were very pleasantly surprised with the high caliber of candidates. We hired one of your customers and are delighted with her."*

*--Employer Customer, The Career Place*

*"You must be doing something right over there, because ever since I took the JumpStart program, I have been in such great demand. Anyhow, I won't be coming in to see you anymore – which is the way it is supposed to be, right?"*

*--Newly Hired Job Seeker, The Career Place*

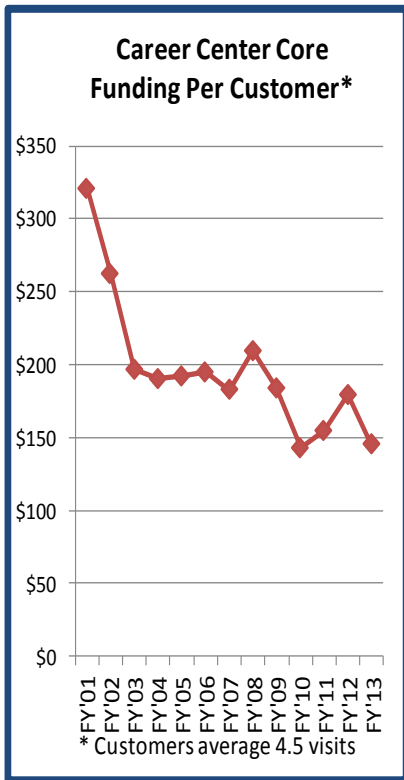
*"Thank you so much for the hospitality shown to us during the recent recruitment of our employees. We were able to hire 3 new associates. The professionalism shown by your staff was outstanding! This is the second time I have used the career center for my staffing needs and have not been disappointed. Thank You to you and your staff."*

*--Employer Customer, The Career Place*

*"We had great day yesterday at [The] Career Place. We had about 12 candidates show up. We are hiring almost 6 of them. Thank you for taking time to organize this for us . . . Thank you."*

*--Employer Customer, The Career Place*

The **Metro North Youth Council** meets bimonthly to coordinate these regional youth activities and to support career exploration events, such as Construction Career Day.



### Resources per Customer

Core state and federal funding (including One-Stop Career Center State Line Item funds) for the Metro North centers is at an all-time low when compared with funding for every year since FY'01, while customer volume currently stands at 250% of FY'01 levels. This translates to a startling decline in core funding from about \$320 per customer to \$145 in FY'13, with these funds supporting an average of 4.5 visits per customer. The REB and career centers have pursued additional funding through aggressive grant development and entrepreneurial strategies in order to supplement core funding and enhance their capacity to meet the needs of the 25,000 customers and 1,200 employers using the Metro North centers each year. For example, in June 2012, the Metro North Regional Employment Board was awarded a \$3M US Department of Labor **Workforce Innovation Fund Grant** to support the **CONNECT** project in Chelsea, a partnership of six organizations geared towards assisting families in achieving economic self-sufficiency. As one of the key partners, Career Source is receiving \$100K per year over a three-year period in order to provide career and job development services to job seekers and training seekers, as well as serving surrounding employers seeking new employees or professional development assistance for incumbent workers.

In recent months, the REB and career centers have worked together on development activities, with grant awards for the Future City competition (introducing middle-school youth to engineering through building model cities), AMP It Up (exposing youth to careers in advanced manufacturing), Healthcare Planning (working with hospitals/healthcare organizations to assess needs related healthcare reform), and training and placing people with disabilities (led by Triangle). Metro North and Boston worked together with many partners, including Boston, Cambridge, Malden, and Somerville Public Schools, Google, Microsoft, Partners HealthCare, MassCAN, and BATEC, and others on a Youth CareerConnect project, in a proposal to incorporate computer science/information technology into high school curricula; in this model, career centers would provide support/counseling services to high school youth in Metro North.

### Regional Strategy

The Metro North REB FY'13-FY'16 Strategic Plan focuses on creating industry consortia, comprised of companies, community colleges, vocational technical schools, other education and training providers, and career centers, in four priority industries: Healthcare, Advanced Manufacturing, Life Sciences, and Information Technology. The industry consortia will focus on the development of career pathways, aligning training to business needs, responding as a partnership to grant opportunities that will support new and/or incumbent worker training (e.g., **Workforce Training Fund**), and will also act as a resource for labor market data, industry trends, and best practices. To date, the REB convenes an on-going **Healthcare Partnership**, as well as a **STEM Partnership**, which focuses on exposure to career options (science, technology, engineering, and math) that cut across our priority industries. The STEM Partnership spearheaded the development of an online **STEM Resource** (see [www.mnreb.org/STEM.php](http://www.mnreb.org/STEM.php)) and sponsors annual events (please see "Upcoming Events" below) to promote partnerships among education, business, and workforce development. In November 2013, the Governor's STEM Council designated the REB as the lead of the Metro North Regional STEM Network, which will be tasked with coordinating and implementing STEM activities in 18 communities.

In June 2012, the Metro North REB initiated a collaboration among the North Shore, Merrimack Valley, and Greater Lowell WIBs, three community colleges, multiple vocational techs, seven career centers, and over twenty employer partners for the purpose of establishing the **Northeast Advanced Manufacturing Consortium** (NAMC). The consortium successfully applied for a **Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund** grant to support the provision of training in machining

and electronic assembly to about 72 participants; career centers are key players in this grant, recruiting and case managing enrollees. The Metro North REB, on behalf of four regions, was recently awarded a grant to support two Manufacturing Marketing Managers who will visit Northeastern MA manufacturers, link them to the NAMC and assist them in accessing resources to support their workforce and other needs.

### ***Outlook for the Future***

Since career centers are primarily supported with federal and state funds, we are very concerned about the impact of continued funding reductions on our career center capacity. In FY'14, due in part to sequestration, the career centers lost about \$378K in core funding, even after an infusion of funds diverted from other uses to compensate. The impact of sequestration was moderated somewhat by the addition of reemployment funds designated for the long-term unemployed; however, these funds were lost mid-year, when Congress chose not to extend emergency unemployment benefits for the long-term unemployed.

Continued investment in the One-Stop Career Centers is critical as centers continue to work with large volumes of people in crisis to return them to the workforce. Career centers are valued by Metro North residents and businesses, and have earned a reputation for quality services that make a difference in people's lives. The return on investment, in terms of dollars reinvested in the economy by people going back to work compared to dollars invested in career center operations, is high—we estimate this to be in excess of 14:1. One-Stop Career Centers need continued support so they can help the men and women of the Commonwealth return to work and, in turn, support their communities and strengthen our economy.

### ***Upcoming Events***

- ◆ **March 5, 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM, The Career Place, Woburn, is conducting a multi-industry job fair on site.**
- ◆ **March 14, 9:30 AM – 12:00 Noon, Career Source, Cambridge, hosts a Panel on Careers in IT, Finance, and Healthcare.**
- ◆ **April 17, 11:00 AM - 2:00 PM, Career Source, Cambridge, is sponsoring a multi-industry job fair at the Holiday Inn, 30 Washington Street, Somerville.**
- ◆ **May 30, Metro North Regional STEM Network Event, Microsoft New England Research and Development Center, 9:00 AM – 12:00 Noon.**

***For further information, please contact Linda Bass, Executive Director, Metro North Regional Employment Board, 617-864-1570, [lbass@mnreb.org](mailto:lbass@mnreb.org). Please also visit our website at [www.mnreb.org](http://www.mnreb.org).***