

**Metro North Regional Employment Board
One Stop Career Center Operator Frequently Asked Questions**

August 3, 2017

Q: What is the Metro North REB's role in selecting a one-stop career center operator?

A: The Metro North Regional Employment Board ("REB") is responsible for the distribution, evaluation, and oversight of workforce development funds. Part of this responsibility is to lead the process of competitively procuring the career center operator and chartering the career centers for our region. REB members are charged to select the most qualified bidder who will provide the best services to the job seekers, workers and employers in the region.

Q: Why did the Metro North REB issue an RFP to select an operator(s) for the region's one-stop career centers?

A: Under the U.S. Department of Labor's Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, authorized by Congress and signed into law by the President in 2014, every workforce development board across the country is mandated to lead a competitive selection process to select a career center operator this year. Metro North had not led a competitive selection process for a career center operator since 1998.

Q: Who is on the Metro North REB?

A: By statute, the REB is composed of key partners and must be more than 50% employers. Other members include local education entities, organized labor, community-based organizations, and economic development agencies. REB members are appointed by the Cambridge City Manager.

Q: Who was on the One Stop Career Center review committee?

A: Members included employers, career center core partners, and a representative of the workforce region's Chief Elected Official. The review committee included a majority of Metro North Regional Employment Board members. In addition, employers comprised a majority of the review committee, just as they are required to be a majority of the REB.

Q: What is the role of the career center core partners in the review process?

A: All career center core partners were invited to participate in the review process. Some partners sit on the review team. The remaining partners were invited to read the proposals and provide comments to the review team.

Q: What has the career center operator selection process been to date? Where are we in the process?

A: The REB released a request for proposals in April 2017. Two bidders submitted proposals in May 2017, Middlesex Community College, the current operator, and The Workplace.

The One-Stop Career Center review team reviewed the proposals, interviewed bidders, and, at its meeting on July 6, 2017, selected an operator to recommend to the full REB Board based on its thorough review. On June 19, 2017, the full REB Board voted to select the region's career center for FY18 beginning October 1, 2017.

Q: Can I observe REB meetings?

A: Yes. All REB meetings are open meetings, which means anyone can observe the meetings; meeting information is posted on the REB's calendar at mnreb.org.

Q: What organization was selected to be the operator of the Metro North career centers?

A: After a thorough review of all submissions, The WorkPlace was selected to be the career center operator. The Workplace is a national leader in workforce development programming and innovation, currently operating programs in 15 states. They oversee career centers in Connecticut and Rhode Island. The REB is impressed with their holistic approach to serving clients, proven track record addressing employers' needs, fundraising acumen, and partnership building. Some of their innovative approaches include the development of a successful program for long-term unemployed individuals, the creation of a mobile career center, and partnerships with both corporations and community organizations. We are excited to bring their expertise, knowledge, and resources to the region's businesses, workers, and job seekers.

Q: With the selection of a new operator, what does the transition look like? How long will the transition be? What are the implications of this change for those who need career services and current partnerships? What are the implications of this for current staff who work at the career centers?

A: The REB is implementing a transition plan to ensure that services of the One-Stop Career Centers will continue without interruption. All current partnerships will be honored. The Request for Proposals mandates that a new operator is selected must interview all current interested career center staff. We do not know if all of the staff will remain the same. The REB is committed to deep local knowledge and expertise of the region. The Cambridge and Chelsea locations will remain the same. A lease agreement is being negotiated for a career center in the north part of the region/Woburn. The contract commencement date for the new operator is October 1, 2017. The current operator will continue to provide services through September 30, 2017.

Q: What is the contract length for the selected operator?

A: The REB voted to grant The Workplace a four year charter with performance to be evaluated annually by the REB.

Q: What will happen to the youth programs supported by the Metro North career centers this summer?

A: The current staffing for YouthWorks, Connecting Activities, and WIOA Youth will remain in place through September 30, 2017.

Q: What will happen to the youth programs after October 1, 2017?

A: On June 27, 2017, The REB issued a Request for Proposals for a Youth Services Operator for the period October 1, 2017 – June 30, 2018, with possible renewals for up to four years. The REB received one proposal from The Workplace. On July 27, the REB review team discussed and rated the proposal. The review team voted to award the youth operator contract to The Workplace. Given the single application, the process needs approval of the Massachusetts Department of Career Services, which is pending. The youth operator includes services related to Connecting Activities and WIOA Youth framework and general services. YouthWorks providers, WIOA youth providers, and other youth providers may contract with the selected operator for training and other services.

Q: Who should I contact if I have questions?

A: The REB is happy to answer questions about this process. If you have questions, please send an e-mail to REBFAQ@mnreb.org.

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