

**Employment Services Program Report**

**April 2018**

**Report on Employment Services Program**

*April 2018*

**Overview**

Pursuant to line item 4401-1000 of the FY2018 General Appropriations Act (GAA), the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) is required to report on the status of its Employment Services Program as follows:

“the department of transitional assistance shall file a report with the house and senate committees on ways and means not later than March 1, 2018 on: (i) the number of clients served by these programs; (ii) the number of clients who transition into employment, when applicable; (iii) the number of clients who remain in employment after 90 days, when applicable; (iv) the number of clients who remain in employment after 1 year, when applicable; and (v) other quantifiable data related to client outcomes as designed by these programs”

**Department of Transitional Assistance**

The mission of the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) is to assist and empower low-income individuals and families to meet their basic needs, improve their quality of life, and achieve long-term economic self-sufficiency. DTA offers a comprehensive system of programs and supports to achieve this mission, including food and nutritional assistance, economic assistance, and employment supports. DTA serves one out of every eight people in the Commonwealth including working families, children, elders, and people with disabilities.

Over the past three years, DTA has focused its efforts on implementing the 2014 Welfare Reform Law and with that placing a renewed emphasis on our employment programs. In June of 2016 DTA formally launched Pathways to Self Sufficiency (PSS). The goal of PSS is positive client engagement and targeted supports that lead to employment, career pathways, and long term economic self-sufficiency. DTA is also an essential partner in the state’s efforts to implement a broader workforce development strategy through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and the Governor’s *Learn to Earn* Initiative.

**Employment Services Program**

The Employment Services Program (ESP) is an integral part of the DTA’s efforts to move clients to work and self-sufficiency. Each year, the Legislature allocates funding for employment services for Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC) clients through the ESP line item. The primary goal of ESP is to assist TAFDC clients in finding jobs, resolving barriers to employment, and providing a means to gain a pathway to self-sufficiency. Case managers assist TAFDC clients to meet their work program requirements primarily by referring them to appropriate activities for their skill level and goals.

ESP is comprised of a number of outcome driven (pay-for-performance) programs funded through line-item 4001-1000 in the FY18 GAA, which includes:

* Competitive Integrated Employment Services (CIES);
* Office for Refugees and Immigrants (ORI);
* Secure Jobs Program;
* DTA Works Program;
* Young Parents Program (YPP); and
* Work Participant Program

Additionally, funding was included in the FY18 GAA for DTA to initiate pilot programs aimed at supporting transportation for clients to employment activities in two areas of Massachusetts. The pilots are being performed in Framingham and Worcester, and depending upon the outcome of these efforts and availability of funding, they may be expanded.

**Competitive Integrated Employment Services Program**

In FY10, DTA converted much of its funded employment services programs to the Competitive Integrated Employment Services (CIES) program. Under CIES procurement, overseen by Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS), new proposals for services are solicited from all potential providers.

The CIES program is focused upon achieving positive client outcomes. Service providers are reimbursed as clients pass through a recognized combination of milestones with the goal of successfully obtaining and maintaining employment. The CIES model organizes these milestones into a service continuum marked by outcome benchmarks such as obtaining a job or achieving 90 days of employment as the client moves along the path to permanent employment. Moving forward, providers will be required to monitor clients’ progress for one year after receiving a job.

There are four levels of CIES Models:

**Model I:** Employment Ready

**Model II:** Employment Training and Education

**Model III:** Employment Supports

**Model IV:** Enhanced Employment Supports

The CIES program is offered statewide. Currently, DTA is only offering Model II and Model III, which provide the following employment related services:

Employment Training and Education (CIES Model II)

Model II is designed to best serve clients with minimal barriers to employment. The range of services may include initial training or certificate programs, which are predominantly short-term (average 4-12 weeks in duration) and are targeted for specified sectors of labor markets with growth in their service area. Examples include training for business skills, Certified Nurse’s Aides (CNA), child care, clerical employment, computer/data entry clerks, customer service, dental assistants, electronics assembly, food services, home health aides, legal secretaries, and medical office skills. These trainings are then followed by a job search component. Clients may then be placed in work sites where they can earn wages. Clients also receive post-employment support services.

Employment Supports (CIES Model III)

Model III is designed to best serve clients with moderate barriers to employment. The range of services provided may include initial training and certificate programs, which are short-term (average 4-12 weeks in duration) and are targeted for specified sectors of labor markets with growth in their service area. Depending on the vendor, clients may be placed in highly supportive work sites where they can earn wages in addition to receiving a reduced TAFDC grant while transitioning into an unsubsidized job. Clients receive support to apply for, obtain, and maintain employment.

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| **CIES FY16** |
| ***CIES Model*** | ***Enrollments*** | ***Placements*** | ***Performance Rate*** | ***90-Day Retention*** | ***Retention Rate*** |
| Model II | 1,459 | 854 | 58.5% | 733 | 85.8% |
| Model III | 1,124 | 796 | 70.8% | 703 | 88.3% |
| Total | 2,583 | 1650 | 63.9% | 1,436 | 87.0% |
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| **CIES FY17** |
| ***CIES Model*** | ***Enrollments*** | ***Placements*** | ***Performance Rate*** | ***90-Day Retention*** | ***Retention Rate*** |
| Model II | 1,396 | 879 | 63.0% | 794 | 90.3% |
| Model III | 1,050 | 624 | 59.4% | 575 | 92.2% |
| Total | 2,446 | 1,503 | 61.4% | 1,396 | 92.9% |

**Massachusetts Office for Refugees and Immigrants (MORI)**

The Office for Refugees and Immigrants (MORI) offers services to employment authorized noncitizens who are also TAFDC clients. Noncitizen TAFDC clients in need of assistance to overcome cultural and linguistic barriers, which hinder them from obtaining and maintaining employment, are served through the MORI model. Services include a comprehensive assessment of client needs, job search skills, and ongoing follow-up services once the client is employed. Services are provided in the client’s primary language as clients work to build English skills and make it possible for DTA to serve recent immigrants that have a wide range of cultural and linguistic barriers to employment. Currently, MORI services are offered in the Boston, Lynn, Worcester and West Springfield areas.

In FY17, two hundred and sixty-six (266) clients were placed through the ORI program. MORI met 88.3% of their job placement goal. MORI spent $943,544 which was 94.3% of their FY17 funding.

**Secure Jobs Program**

Secure Jobs was created through a partnership between the Firemen Fund and the Massachusetts Interagency Council on Housing and Homelessness to address both homelessness and joblessness by bringing together employment and housing agencies across the state to help homeless families increase their level of economic self-sufficiency. Through state and local agency collaboration, Secure Jobs offers access to real solutions and supports that help families regain stability as they secure employment. These partnerships provide integrated housing and employment services using the Secure Jobs case management model of providing families long term personalized support tailored to their needs as they find financial stability and a home.

The Secure Jobs model assesses families to find employable parents residing in shelter, short term rapid rehousing, or rental voucher programs and assesses their career plans and skills, as well as the barriers they face to employment. Families are then matched to the services that will help them to overcome these barriers and connected with suitable employers in jobs with career pathways. After job placement, families are provided a year of support services. Thus far in FY2018, there have been 203 clients enrolled and 70 participating clients employed.

Between FY15 and FY17, the Legislature appropriated funding for the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) to execute contracts with provider agencies to deliver requisite services for individuals and families receiving support from DHCD’s Emergency Assistance (EA) program, the Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program (MRVP), the HomeBASE program, or Residential Assistance for Families in Transition (RAFT).

In the FY18 budget, administration of the program was subsequently assigned to DTA. Working collaboratively with DHCD, the program continues to serve individuals and families that are served by DHCD programs.

DTA is focused on creating partnerships to provide a comprehensive and integrated array of employment supports, job training, and related services to homeless or previously homeless families receiving housing assistance from DHCD. Participants in Secure Jobs are expected to achieve outcomes across the following three key domains:

1. Education and Career
2. Housing and Economic Stability
3. Family Stability and Well Being

The theory of change for Secure Jobs is that a focus on employment can shorten the length of stay in shelter and expedite the attainment of permanent housing, contributing to upward economic mobility and family stability.

**DTA Works**

The DTA Works program is designed to help TAFDC clients in need of work experience and mentorship by providing internship placements throughout DTA’s 23 Transitional Assistance Offices (TAOs), as well as at partner agencies. Under this initiative, clients not only gain professional skills and work experience, but are given “on the job” support to develop the soft skills necessary to obtain and maintain employment. Clients enrolled in the DTA Works program are eligible to participate for up to six months and receive a small stipend. Additionally, clients at the end of their six-month internship are evaluated for skills matching current job openings at DTA and with other state agencies. Clients are required to conduct independent job search during their enrollment in DTA Works. Participating clients are overseen by a program manager who meets with each intern one-on-one on a bi-weekly basis to evaluate the placement and provide job development services.

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| **DTA Works** |
| Fiscal Year | # Enrolled | # Attained Post-Internship Employment | % Performance |
| FY2016 | 72 | 48 | 66.7% |
| FY2017 | 97 | 76 | 78.4% |

**Young Parents Program**

YPP is an integral part of the DTA’s Employment Services Program (ESP) which serves TAFDC recipients. The program runs full-time, year round and seeks to help reduce long-term welfare dependency among young parents, ages 14 through 24, by supporting outcomes across three domains:

1. Education and Career
2. Life and Personal
3. Parenting and Family

The Department is taking a two-generation (2Gen) approach to increasing economic security for families by focusing on creating opportunities for and addressing the needs of both parents and children together. The 2Gen approach recognizes that outcomes for parents and children are intertwined and cannot develop independently of one another. Research has documented the impact of a parent’s education, economic stability, and overall health on a child’s trajectory. Similarly, children’s education and healthy development are powerful catalysts for parents. By promoting education and supports for children along with tools to improve parents’ economic situation outcomes for both the parent and child will improve. The theory of change for the YPP is that a two-generation approach helps both generations make progress together and provides interventions that can break the cycle of multi-generation poverty.[[1]](#footnote-2)

DTA currently has contracts with multiple providers pursuant to a 2008 RFR. As that RFR is expiring, services are being re-procured.

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| **Young Parents Program (YPP)** |
| **Fiscal Year** | **Enrollments** | **Outcomes** | **HiSET/HS Diploma** | **% HiSET Outcomes** | **Added Training** | **% Added Training** | **Employed** | **% Employed** |
| FY16 | 626 | 471 | 154 | 32.7% | 94 | 20.0% | 114 | 24.20% |
| FY17 | 528 | 448 | 173 | 38.6% | 97 | 21.7% | 88 | 19.6% |

**The Work Participant program**

As a part of DTA’s commitment and obligation to the implementation of the Commonwealth’s combined WIOA plan, DTA worked with the Department of Career Services (DCS) to develop and execute an Interagency Services Agreement (ISA) to satisfy WIOA funding requirements and lay out expectations for increased partnership between DTA and DCS on behalf of TANF and SNAP clients. In FY17, DTA committed $500,000 to invest in career center services for our clients. The agreement also laid out expectations for developing local collaboration between DTA’s local TAOs and the One Stop Career Centers. While DTA clients have long been served, to some extent, by the One Stop Career Centers, this new partnership is designed to build strong partnerships to meet the unique needs of DTA clients.

Since the execution of the preliminary ISA in March of 2017, this partnership has resulted in significant progress towards the intended outcomes of the agreement. Enhancements have been made in each agency’s respective information technology system and agency staff is working collaboratively to assist clients at the local level. DTA Full Engagement Workers (FEWs) have completed training specific to this effort and are spending regularly scheduled time at the One Stop Career Centers to support enrollment and service delivery for DTA clients.

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| **Work Participation Program** |
| Fiscal Year | # Enrolled | # Entered Training | # Obtained Employment |
| FY2017 (4 months only) | 451 | 67 | 31 |

**Additional Employment-Focused Supports & Services**

In addition to working alongside DCS staff as a part of the Work Participant Program, DTA’s ***Full Engagement Workers (FEW)***, who are located in each TAO, assist clients in workforce training, obtaining and maintaining employment, and other issues that present barriers to employment. The FEWs conduct client orientations twice a week to provide an overview of the transitional nature of TAFDC benefits and ensure clients are aware of available local work-related opportunities and the supports available to them through DTA. FEWs also work to develop non-DTA funded work-related resources in their areas.

Eligible TAFDC clients who are participating in most work-related activities have access to the following supports as needed: ***ESP child care referrals***, ***transportation benefits*** of up to $80 per month, ***learning disability screening and assessments***, ***Hi-SET vouchers*** and information about the benefits of employment and eligibility for tax credits via the ***Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)*** and ***Earned Income Credit (EIC)***.

Eligible former TAFDC clients who have transitioned to employment receive the following supports for a limited time as needed: ***Transitional Child Care referrals*** and information about the benefits of employment and eligibility for tax credits via EITC and EIC. Most also receive Transitional Benefit Alternative (TBA) SNAP benefits, which assists former clients in transitioning off the program.

Effective November of 2016, DTA implemented ***Transitional Support Services (TSS)*** to support the retention of employment and prevent the need to return to TAFDC for clients whose case closed due to earnings. TSS falls into two categories, Work Related Expense Stipends and Transportation Stipends. TSS stipends begin when a case is closed for 30 days. TSS stipends are available for a period of four months, in amounts that decrease over the TSS period. Since the start of the program in December 2016, 5,517 unique families have received TSS (through 4/1/18). In FY17, 2,149 unique families received these benefits.

These small but meaningful supports help to mitigate the “cliff effect” many clients face when transitioning off of TAFDC and reinforce the benefits of work.

**Aligning DTA Efforts with Broader Workforce System Development**

Since the passage of the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) in 2014, DTA has worked closely with EOLWD and DCS to implement an integrated system of workforce development for DTA clients and others with significant barriers to work. WIOA reauthorized the nation’s employment, training, adult education and vocational rehabilitation programs for the first time in 16 years. The new law is substantially different from its predecessor, the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), in its emphasis on targeting low-income adults and youth with limited training and skills to help them overcome barriers to economic success, as well as individuals with disabilities.

In support of implementation of the WIOA state plan, the Governor has launched the ***Learn to Earn Initiative (LTE)***. LTE is a coordinated, comprehensive approach to providing unemployed and underemployed individuals with the support and skills they need to obtain and sustain employment in industries where employers have the greatest needs.

While many public benefits recipientswork, these are often part-time and/or low-wage jobs without career pathways and without the possibility for wage growth and advancement. Individuals who are working and receive public benefits (TAFDC, SNAP, child care, housing, MassHealth, etc.) can face significant consequences on their household resources if they accept a raise or promotion, agree to work more hours or seek a higher paying job.

LTE is a partnership formed by the governor among EOHHS and several of its agencies (DTA, MRC, MCB, Elder Affairs, etc.) with the Executive Offices of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD), Education (EOE) and Housing and Economic Development (HED). This initiative is serving populations with historically higher than average rates of unemployment, with a focus on reducing employment barriers for individuals and families in public housing, as well as those receiving TANF and SNAP.

Implementation of the WIOA State Plan and the LTE Initiative provide a critical opportunity for DTA to leverage the investments in our Employment Support Program to address barriers to employment for our clients and help them move toward self-sufficiency. With the current unemployment rate at historic lows, we have a unique opportunity to engage clients in employment supports that lead to meaningful career pathways and longer term economic stability for them and their families.

***Note on Report***

Because FY18 has not concluded before the submission of this report, DTA reported on the previous fiscal year’s ESP activities.

1. “Two Generation Playbook“, Ascend, The Aspen Institute (ascend.aspendinstitute.org) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)