

**COMMONWEALTH
CORPORATION**



**Workforce Training
Fund Program**

WTFP^{FY}₂₃ ANNUAL REPORT



THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF LABOR AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

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INTRODUCTION



The Workforce Training Fund is a resource for Massachusetts employers to train incumbent workers, which in turn, strengthens productivity and competitiveness for employers in a variety of industries throughout the state. The Workforce Training Fund Program is funded through an assessment on Massachusetts employers' Unemployment Insurance contributions. Commonwealth Corporation, a quasi-public agency, administers the Workforce Training Fund on behalf of the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development.

The enabling legislation for the Workforce Training Fund (Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 29 Section 2RR) calls for a report to be filed with the Joint Committee on Labor and Workforce Development and the House and Senate Ways and Means Committees by September 1 of each year. The report addresses grants made during the previous fiscal year with the appropriate recommendations and information. The report also includes information concerning the collection of the workforce training contributions for the previous calendar year, including (i) the amount collected in each quarter and the total amount collected for the calendar year; (ii) the total number of employers that contributed to the fund and the total number of employees employed by that group of employers; and (iii) the contribution rate.

WORKFORCE TRAINING FUND GRANT PROGRAMS

During Fiscal Year 2023 (July 2022 – June 2023), the Workforce Training Fund Program offered two different grant programs to Massachusetts businesses that assisted in upskilling incumbent workers. These grants support skills acquisition for thousands of workers and improve the competitiveness and productivity of thousands of businesses across the Commonwealth.

GENERAL PROGRAM

Businesses of any size are eligible to apply (intermediaries may lead a consortium application). During FY23, applicants could request up to \$250,000 for up to two years to support training for their workforce. Grant funds must be matched dollar-for-dollar by the employers. The match may be cash or in-kind (including wages paid to employees during training).

[More information about General Program training grants.](#)

EXPRESS PROGRAM

During FY23, businesses of any size were eligible to apply for grants to cover training selected from a database of registered courses. Businesses could receive up to \$30,000 per calendar year; the maximum payment per trainee per course is \$3,000. Grant recipients with [more than 100 MA employees](#), upon completion of an approved course, received reimbursement of as much as half the total cost of training, up to \$3,000 per person per course.

[More information about current Express Program grants.](#)



2023 HIGHLIGHTS

FY23 continues a period of unprecedented growth for engagement with an emphasis on access for small and diverse businesses. Since the global COVID-19 pandemic, the Workforce Training Fund has pivoted to directly address the needs of small and diverse businesses.

RECORD-BREAKING PARTICIPATION:

In FY23, Workforce Training Fund Program (WTFP) awarded \$39.1 million, more than any year since its inception. As a result, more than 30,000 Massachusetts workers will gain new skills via grant-funded training. More than 1,600 employers were engaged in FY23, representing every region of the Commonwealth.

JOB GROWTH @ 3X THE NATIONAL RATE:

Overall, General Program grantees that completed training grew net employment in Massachusetts by 26.8% over the past two years, resulting in a net growth of 6,319 employees in Massachusetts. This compares favorably to the 8.1% statewide growth in employment and 7.8% national growth in employment, indicating WTFP funds are invested where jobs are growing.

SMALL BUSINESS-FOCUSED GROWTH:

In total, the number of grants awarded in FY23 increased by 32%, and funds awarded increased by \$6.9 million, a 21% increase. During FY23, 86% of grants awarded went to businesses with 100 or fewer employees in Massachusetts. The largest increase in share of grants awarded in FY23 includes businesses with employee sizes ranging from 16 to 50 in Massachusetts. In FY23, 607 grants were awarded to these businesses, representing a 55% increase in the number of grants awarded to this segment compared to the prior year. As a result of policy changes, increased investment in customer support staff, and increased investment in technology to improve user experience, we have improved the value proposition for small businesses in the Express Program. Workforce Training Fund Program have also made additional investments in outreach and marketing to minority-owned and women-owned enterprises and will continue the focus on diverse business engagement and businesses located in gateway cities during FY24.

GRANTS AWARDED IN 2023

During FY23, 2,965 new training grants totaling \$39.1M were awarded by the Workforce Training Fund Program, including grants from the General Program and Express Program. During FY23, the Workforce Training Fund Program engaged 1,669 businesses in order to fund training for 30,340 workers.

New Grants Awarded During FY23	Trainees*	Amount	Employers*	Average Cost Per Trainee
General Program	11,085	\$19,536,490	192	\$1,762
Express Program	19,255	\$19,580,757	1,477	\$1,017
	30,340	\$39,117,247	1,669	\$1,289

**Includes total case count with individual employers participating in more than one grant/program in Fiscal Year*



SUCCESS STORIES

Investing in Workforce Development in Times of Transition

Workforce Training Fund Program GENERAL PROGRAM



Bertolino Foods has been a key supplier of meat in New England, providing quality products in both food manufacturing and distribution. In hopes of facilitating workforce development within a rapid expansion from 60 to 130 employees, Bertolino Foods was awarded \$156,000 from the Workforce Training Fund to implement training in management, compliance, and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) for their workers.

Doris Lopez, Director of Human Resources at Bertolino Foods, says the training could not have come at a better time. "To ensure a smooth transition, our employees needed to be equipped with practical and enhanced skills to help them meet their sales, profit, and performance objectives," said Lopez.



"It was imperative that our teams felt we were investing in their professional development and arming them with the appropriate tools and knowledge to accomplish lofty objectives," added Lopez. With the grant, Bertolino Foods made meaningful progress toward reaching new goals and took the proper steps to prepare its workforce for potential future challenges, including new organizational structures. Lopez says training helped employees better understand what role they play in the future of the organization. "The skills and knowledge acquired have been valuable in our worker's development," said Lopez. "Training gave them a greater understanding and reasons for their responsibilities and company expectations. It has been a great help to them in obtaining the confidence to achieve their career and company goals, completing work more efficiently, and improving their decision-making."

The benefits of the WTFP grant have been clearly visible. Fifteen employees who received Management & Leadership and Operations Management training have been promoted into Lead, Supervisor, Assistant Manager, or Manager positions as a direct result of skills they gained in these classes. Additionally, ESOL training has helped non-native-English speaking employees navigate complex terminology and interpersonal communications required to advance in their career paths. "These English classes helped so many employees in all departments of our organization learn to improve their communication skills with their managers, supervisors, and peers," said Lopez.

For Bertolino, investing in workforce development training for their employees was not just a gesture of goodwill towards their workforce but also a critical growth strategy.



Bertolino Foods trains workers at their Peabody headquarters.

FY23 GENERAL PROGRAM TRAINING GRANT AWARDS

In FY23, Commonwealth Corporation awarded 147 General Program Training Grants for 192 businesses. This includes 11 consortium grants partnership projects for 56 businesses. The total amount awarded was \$19.5M. In total, the businesses plan to train 11,085 workers with these funds. The businesses project that by the end of their two-year grant periods, they will have a net increase of 2,682 additional workers employed in Massachusetts. Training topics include English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL); technical and business software; diversity equity and inclusion (DEI); process improvement; quality assurance; productivity skills; sales and customer service; supervision and leadership; and project management.

GENERAL PROGRAM AWARDS BY INDUSTRY

Industry	# of grants	Amount Awarded	Industry Representation of Grand Total Awarded
Manufacturing	79	\$9,789,720	50.1%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	21	\$2,886,251	14.8%
Construction	12	\$1,776,083	9.1%
Healthcare & Social Assistance	10	\$1,974,000	10.1%
Other Services (except Public Admin)	6	\$725,181	3.7%
Accommodation and Food Services	6	\$592,186	3.0%
Finance & Insurance	5	\$559,250	2.9%
Wholesale Trade	3	\$607,798	3.1%
Transportation & Warehousing	1	\$175,535	0.9%
Retail	1	\$215,321	1.1%
Agriculture/Forestry/Fishing/Hunting	1	\$108,465	0.6%
Information	1	\$48,300	0.2%
Real Estate/Rental/Leasing	1	\$78,400	0.4%
Grand Total	147	\$19,536,490	100.00%

GENERAL PROGRAM AWARDS BY WORKFORCE BOARD REGION

Workforce Board Region	# of grants	Amount Awarded	Region Representation of Grand Total Awarded
Metro North	27	\$3,790,432	19.4%
Metro South/West	20	\$2,714,708	13.9%
Boston	18	\$2,325,338	11.9%
Central MA	16	\$2,007,188	10.3%
Hampden	11	\$1,562,411	8.0%
North Shore	8	\$1,016,047	5.2%
Bristol	8	\$1,150,084	5.9%
Greater Lowell	8	\$1,023,255	5.2%
South Shore	6	\$749,575	3.8%
North Central MA	6	\$1,004,460	5.1%
Merrimack Valley	5	\$531,141	2.7%
Greater New Bedford	4	\$400,680	2.1%
Brockton	4	\$678,228	3.5%
Franklin/Hampshire	3	\$261,305	1.3%
Berkshire	2	\$243,637	1.2%
Cape & Islands	1	\$78,000	0.4%
Grand Total	147	\$19,536,490	100.0%



OX Industries celebrates graduation from ESOL training program.

FY23 EXPRESS PROGRAM GRANT AWARDS

In FY23, Commonwealth Corporation approved 2,808 grant applications from 1,477 unique businesses for a total of \$19.5M in grant funds to train 19,255 employees. (Note: businesses may submit multiple applications; employees may participate in multiple courses).

Training topics included the following: process improvement; quality assurance; diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI); IT Administration; English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL); marketing; sales and customer service; supervision and leadership; occupation-specific skills training; project management; and business software.

EXPRESS PROGRAM AWARDS BY INDUSTRY

Industry	# Grants Awarded	Amount Awarded	Industry Representation of Grand Total Awarded
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	911	\$4,201,320	21.5%
Finance & Insurance	520	\$1,642,583	8.4%
Manufacturing	486	\$5,880,447	30.0%
Other Services (except Public Admin)	299	\$2,127,679	10.9%
Construction	165	\$1,576,815	8.1%
Healthcare & Social Assistance	90	\$724,837	3.7%
Educational Services	82	\$730,619	3.7%
Retail	60	\$516,707	2.6%
Accommodation and Food Services	44	\$555,585	2.8%
Real Estate/Rental/Leasing	32	\$318,838	1.6%
Wholesale Trade	29	\$338,775	1.7%
Arts/Entertainment/Recreation	28	\$260,448	1.3%
Transportation & Warehousing	21	\$204,574	1.0%
Agriculture/Forestry/Fishing/Hunting	20	\$141,351	0.7%
Information	15	\$196,946	1.0%
Admin/Support/Waste Mgmt/Remediation	7	\$71,145	0.4%
Management of Companies & Enterprise	5	\$7,848	0.0%
Utilities	3	\$83,960	0.4%
Public Administration	1	\$280	0.0%

Grand Total

2,818

\$19,580,757

100%

EXPRESS PROGRAM AWARDS BY WORKFORCE BOARD REGION

Workforce Board Region	# of Grants Awarded	Amount Awarded	Region Representation of Grand Total Awarded
Metro South/West	642	\$3,969,949	20.3%
Metro North	359	\$2,695,388	13.8%
Central MA	250	\$1,856,545	9.5%
Boston	241	\$2,082,060	10.6%
South Shore	217	\$1,471,265	7.5%
Hampden	170	\$786,272	4.0%
North Shore	160	\$1,347,018	6.9%
Merrimack Valley	116	\$978,704	5.0%
Bristol	108	\$738,827	3.8%
Franklin/Hampshire	106	\$524,424	2.7%
Greater Lowell	99	\$630,588	3.2%
Cape & Islands	81	\$394,320	2.0%
North Central MA	78	\$715,457	3.7%
Greater New Bedford	77	\$574,968	2.9%
Berkshire	63	\$274,049	1.4%
Brockton	51	\$540,923	2.8%
Grand Total	2,818	\$19,580,757	100%

Empowering Women to Find Joyful Wellness



LISA DAHL
WELLNESS



Health and wellness coach, Lisa Dahl.

After experiencing the “toxic diet and weight-loss culture” firsthand, Lisa Dahl started her wellness business, hoping to empower women to live joyfully, feel energized, and find freedom in their relationships with food and body. Her Bolton, Massachusetts-based business, Lisa Dahl Wellness, offers a sanctuary for those hoping to break free from dieting and heal their relationship with food and body. Dahl offers individual and group coaching on Intuitive Eating and Body Image. Her core program, “Body Peace & Food Freedom,” is a 6-month program that helps women with challenging relationships with food ditch their diets and cultivates sustainable and healthy practices.

At Lisa Dahl Wellness, programs are community-based, with no more than 10-12 participants in every group coaching program. Dahl says this creates a close-knit community where women find connections, support, and education. In addition, they develop unique friendships that last long after the program ends



Lisa hosts “Getting Healthy Without Rules” on WMC-TV.

She says participants learn to listen, trust, and respect their bodies and become happy, healthy, and confident through the journey. Lisa Dahl Wellness offers online coaching through Zoom (since starting the practice during the COVID-19 pandemic, Dahl says virtual coaching has enabled her to serve even more clients from across the country), but her team has also resumed facilitating in-person retreats for clients, with several planned over the coming months.



Because of the training provided by Robin Samora of Partner Promotions, Inc., which was reimbursed to Lisa Dahl Wellness via their Express Program Grant, Dahl's business underwent an exciting marketing overhaul.

Through the training provided by the Express Program, Dahl learned how to increase her visibility by enhancing her social media presence, repurposing marketing content, and using customer data to gain insights into new markets.

Since taking the training, Dahl began producing a weekly TV show that airs WMCT-TV in Marlborough, Getting Healthy Without Rules, which has built awareness of the services Dahl offers.

With the tools she learned from Express Program-funded training, Dahl has grown her business to include more offerings, such as a new program called "The Magic of Mindful Eating," which aims to serve more clients looking for sanctuary and support on their journeys toward health and self-acceptance.

“

“I want to create an environment where women can support each other, changing how women perceive themselves and helping them accept themselves in a positive light.”

-Lisa Dahl

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IMPACT ANALYSIS

General Program Training Grants Completed in FY23

In FY23, 96 General Program Training Grants closed after completing two-year training initiatives. In total, the 96 grantees projected adding 929 workers by the end of the two-year grants. The actual number of net new jobs added by the end of their grant period was 6,319, which is 680% of the proposed job growth.

Overall, the grant recipients reported 26.8% employment growth over their two-year grant period compared to 8.1% statewide and 7.8% nationally.

JOB GROWTH RATE COMPARISON 2021-2023

WTFP 26.8%

MASS.* 8.1%

US* 7.8%

*Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

IMPACT ANALYSIS

Businesses in the Manufacturing industry made up the largest share, 50%, of the General Program Training Grants that ended during FY23. The next largest industry sector was Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services, followed by Healthcare & Social Assistance.

Of the 96 grantees to complete training in FY23, 71 (74%) reported a net increase in their Massachusetts workforce since the beginning of their grant period; 9 grantees (9%) reported their employment levels remained unchanged; and 16 grantees (17%) reported they had fewer employees at the end of the grant period.

The original amount awarded to the 96 grantees totaled \$10.38M. The final amount expended at the end of the grant period was \$9.37M (90% of the amount awarded). Only 38% of grantees expended their full contract amount. 63% of grantees did not exhaust awarded funds. Commonly, grantees scale down training plans and meet objectives with lower expenses than anticipated. Unused funds are returned and awarded in future grants.

WORKERS TRAINED

- Grantees were expected to train 5,611 workers. The actual number trained is 5,773 workers (3% more than planned).
- 70% of grantees trained as many workers as planned or more than planned.



Robin Samora, principal of Partner Promotions, Inc., speaks at CommCorp Lead the Change Event at The Enterprise Center at Salem State University. Partner Promotions has several marketing training courses for small businesses listed on the Express Program Course Directory.

GRANTS COMPLETED IN FY23 BY INDUSTRY

Industry	Expenditures	% of Total	# of Grants	Total Trained	Total Jobs Added by Grantees
Manufacturing	\$4,468,035	47.7%	48	2,707	898
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	\$1,837,415	19.6%	14	993	404
Healthcare & Social Assistance	\$798,458	8.5%	6	659	4,933
Construction	\$462,464	4.9%	5	145	31
Other Services (except Public Admin)	\$400,565	4.3%	4	257	2
Transportation & Warehousing	\$348,531	3.7%	3	196	53
Finance & Insurance	\$313,213	3.3%	4	378	77
Educational Services	\$309,015	3.3%	4	203	17
Accommodation/Food Service/Hospitality	\$170,326	1.8%	4	78	46
Agriculture/Forestry/Fishing/Hunting	\$97,490	1.0%	1	87	26
Retail	\$74,200	0.8%	1	16	4
Accommodation and Food Services	\$57,500	0.6%	1	15	(186)
Real Estate/Rental/Leasing	\$34,729	0.4%	1	39	14

Grand Total **\$9,371,940** **100.0%** **96** **5,773** **6,319**

*This is the net change in the total number of Massachusetts-based employees during General Program grants among those organizations who completed training grants during FY23.

GRANTS COMPLETED IN FY23 BY WORKFORCE REGION

Workforce Region	Expenditures	% of Total	# of Grants	Total Trained	Jobs Added by Workforce Region of Grant Total
Metro South/West	\$1,607,918	17.2%	17	649	5,044
Metro North	\$1,543,265	16.5%	14	1,348	452
Greater Lowell	\$1,418,070	15.1%	12	842	417
Central MA	\$949,034	10.1%	11	558	54
Boston	\$1,148,776	12.3%	9	864	157
Hampden	\$861,516	9.2%	9	301	49
North Shore	\$241,550	2.6%	5	200	91
South Shore	\$278,649	3.0%	4	149	39
Merrimack Valley	\$262,250	2.8%	4	216	138
North Central MA	\$346,000	3.7%	4	164	55
Bristol	\$187,988	2.0%	3	95	(182)
Brockton	\$242,440	2.6%	2	218	(15)
Franklin/Hampshire	\$108,910	1.2%	1	36	0
Cape & Islands	\$175,575	1.9%	1	133	20

Grand Total	\$9,371,940	100.0%	96	5,773	6,319
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SUCCESS STORIES

Workforce Training Fund Program GENERAL PROGRAM

Bridging the Leadership Experience Gap

LeMessurier.

LeMessurier, a Boston consulting firm established in 1961, works alongside architects, developers, contractors, and business owners to facilitate and optimize building design and construction. Some of their best-known projects include Seiji Ozawa Hall at Tanglewood, The Boston Public Library, and the TD Garden, to name a few. As a long-standing organization in a rapidly changing industry, LeMessurier applied for a Workforce Training Fund Program grant to address a gap of experience among promising, emerging leaders, and to stay ahead of the curve in a marketplace that demands strong business development, technical skills, marketing, and communications skills.



Thanks to a \$182,080 Workforce Training Fund grant, LeMessurier embarked on large-scale formal training for the first time in recent years and created a specialized program that included all levels and departments. “We wanted the next generation of firm leadership to gain an understanding of marketing, business development, branding, and business planning,” said LeMessurier’s Kathryn Grady. “At the same time, we wanted our engineers, enclosure consultants, and modelers to build a shared foundation and understanding of BIM, Revit, their tools, and plug-ins to facilitate exchanges of ideas, improving processes, and innovation. Over time, we discovered that communication was improving across the board. People were engaged with the training but also with discovering the stories, skills, and lessons we can offer each other,” she added.

Since completing training, LeMessurier reports growth that can be directly attributed to the training grant. With stronger communication skills and sharpened business development tools, the firm reports it has changed its attitude toward project pursuits, allowing them to expand their client network and measurably improve its odds of securing project contracts. Bill Lovallo, Managing Principal at LeMessurier, remarked, “After two years of training, we’ve seen increased revenue, added employees, and more people are coming to work at LeMessurier from our competitors than at any other time in our 60-plus years as a company. We must be doing something right.”

GENERAL PROGRAM TRAINING GRANTS WITHDRAWN IN FISCAL YEAR 2023

In FY23, 69 businesses that had been awarded General Program Training grants elected to withdraw from the program prior to completing training. These grantees were awarded a total of \$8.4M in General Program grant funds but used only \$3.3M (39%) prior to withdrawing due to unanticipated circumstances that resulted in the cancelation of training. Unused funds will be reprogrammed for future grants. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, many grantees received one-time extension grants to fulfill training originally planned prior to the pandemic, which was delayed during the pandemic. In some cases, as expected, grantees scaled back training plans to focus on emerging challenges. Unused funds will be reprogrammed by Commonwealth Corporation for the Workforce Training Fund Program.

ANNUAL COLLECTIONS OF WORKFORCE TRAINING FUND CONTRIBUTIONS

For calendar year 2022 (January 1, 2022 - December 31, 2022), a total of 249,599 employers contributed to the Workforce Training Trust Fund—the source of grant funding. These organizations employed a collective total of 3,366,958 employees* for the same period.

The following chart shows the amount collected in each quarter and the total amount collected for the calendar year. The actual contribution rate is 0.056% of unemployment insurance taxable wage base. The maximum contribution is \$8.40 per employee per year.

Quarter	Amount Collected
2022 Q1 (January- March)	\$2,848,731.19
2022 Q2 (April-June)	\$15,481,170.85
2022 Q3 (July-September)	\$5,134,690.02
2022 Q4 (October-December)	\$3,468,835.63
Total CY 2022 Collections	\$26,933,427.69

*Includes total case count with individual workers employed by two or more different organizations during one calendar year

**We thank
you for your
continued
support.**

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