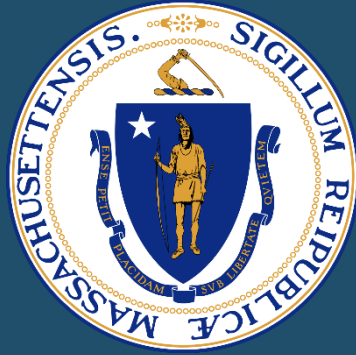


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Employment Services Program Report

July 2022



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSITIONAL ASSISTANCE EMPLOYMENT SERVICES PROGRAM REPORT

MAY 2022

REPORT OVERVIEW

Pursuant to line item 4401-1000 of the Fiscal Year 2022 (FY22) General Appropriations Act (GAA), the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) is required to report on the status of its Employment Services Program (ESP), including the number of clients served by these programs, the number of clients who transition into employment, the number of clients who remain in employment after 90 days, and the number of clients who remain in employment after 1 year. Because FY22 has not concluded before the submission of this report, DTA reported on the previous fiscal year's ESP activities.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSITIONAL ASSISTANCE MISSION

DTA's mission 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 does this through a comprehensive system of programs and supports, including food and nutritional assistance, economic assistance, and employment supports. DTA serves one out of every seven people in the Commonwealth including working families, children, elders, and people with disabilities.

TRANSITIONAL AID TO FAMILIES WITH DEPENDENT CHILDREN (TAFDC)

TAFDC is a state and federally funded program that provides direct cash assistance and employment supports to families with children, and pregnant women, with little or no income. TAFDC is operated under the federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant.

The goal of TAFDC is to support families as they transition from economic crisis to stability. Over the past three plus years DTA has worked to remove barriers to economic mobility and to help families find their path to success. The Department has pursued a three-pronged approach to disrupt multi-generational poverty and meet labor market demands through multi-year reforms that:

- Simplify and streamline program rules and requirements for working families,
- Better incentivize and support employment and employment related activities, and
- Ease the "cliff effect" during the transition to economic mobility.

EMPLOYMENT SERVICES PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Employment Services Program (ESP) is an integral part of DTA's effort to transition TAFDC clients to work and increase their economic mobility. Each year, the state's annual budget allocates funding for employment services for TAFDC clients through the ESP. The primary goals of the ESP are to assist TAFDC clients to prepare for and connect with career pathways and to resolve barriers for sustained employment. DTA case managers connect TAFDC clients to

employment and training programs by referring them to appropriate activities based on their skill level and personal goals.

The ESP is comprised of a number of outcomes-driven (pay-for-performance) programs funded through line-item 4401-1000 in the state GAA, which include the:

- Competitive Integrated Employment Services (CIES)
- Employment Supports Services Program, via the Office for Refugees and Immigrants (ORI)
- Secure Jobs Program
- DTA Works Program
- Work Participant Program (WPP)
- Young Parents Program (YPP), and
- Empowering to Employ (ETE).

The theory of change for DTA's employment service programs is that a two-generation approach helps both parents and their children make progress together and provides interventions that can help break the cycle of multi-generational poverty.¹ In FY21, DTA launched a rebrand of its employment services program, now known as the TAFDC Pathways to Work Program. As a part of the rebranding, DTA performed a complete overhaul of its employment services website with a focus on increasing accessibility to our programs. The Pathways to Work program webpage now provides an overview of each funded program, program eligibility, and contact information to connect to one of DTA's local office employment services case managers known as Full Engagement Workers (FEW). Each of DTA's 20 local offices has one or more dedicated FEWs. All families are encouraged to connect with a FEW to learn more about the Pathways to Work program and enroll in an activity that aligns with their individual employment goals.

Since the onset of the public health emergency, DTA has focused on strategies to engage with families and partners in the workforce system to provide TAFDC clients with the opportunity to re-enter the workforce. Recognizing that many families continue to face challenges in returning to education, training, or employment as the economy continues to recover from the pandemic, TAFDC Pathways to Work providers continue to strategically focus on increasing access to expanded service delivery models of training and educational programming, and employment supports. DTA-funded providers are offering a combination of services delivered in person, virtually, and through a hybrid model, which has increased opportunities for DTA clients to upskill or re-skill in preparation for returning to the workforce.

COMPETITIVE INTEGRATED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES PROGRAM

The Competitive Integrated Employment Services (CIES) program provides training, education, and job readiness services to TAFDC families interested in obtaining employment. The primary focus is to assist clients in seeking and securing employment in jobs connected to a career

¹[Two-Generation Playbook](#), Ascend at the Aspen Institute, September 2016

pathway with the supports necessary to remain employed and achieve career growth. This program implements a whole family approach to providing these services and has been operationalized since 2019 when it was re-procured. This approach is facilitated by assessing and addressing the needs of each family across their life domains of family stability, well-being, financial management, education and training, and employment and career.² FY20 was the first year the newly procured CIES program was operationalized.

Through the CIES program, DTA hopes to affect change for families by:

- Empowering participants to pursue a path to economic mobility through education, training, and job readiness;
- Actively engaging participants to develop the skills necessary to achieve economic stability in a fulfilling career path; and
- Providing participants with hope and aspiration to break the cycle of poverty and achieve personal and economic growth as they pursue their goals.

The CIES program provides a comprehensive array of job search, training, and education services focused on successful employment placement, career growth, and retention. Clients may also participate in industry-validated occupational/vocational training. The CIES program recognizes that job readiness involves more than just education and work history but includes addressing issues that can significantly impact an individual's ability to maintain employment such as health, housing stability, and family life. Through workforce development, contextual learning, and breaking down barriers, DTA partners with CIES providers to empower participants to build family stability while obtaining and sustaining employment.

CIES providers actively engage and partner with participants to set family goals and develop individualized employment plans incorporating four components: Assessment and Goal setting, Job-targeted Education and Skills Training, Job Retention at 30 and 90 days, and Job Retention at 180 days. Job Retention Services include goal setting, continued skill development, and coordinated case management. CIES outcomes are based on these four components which are all connected directly to employment. To obtain these outcomes, CIES providers support families as they pass through recognized milestones. Providers deliver post-employment supports to clients for up to one year. To ensure providers have the resources to provide post-employment supports, outcome payments are made to service providers when clients retain employment and/or experience wage growth.

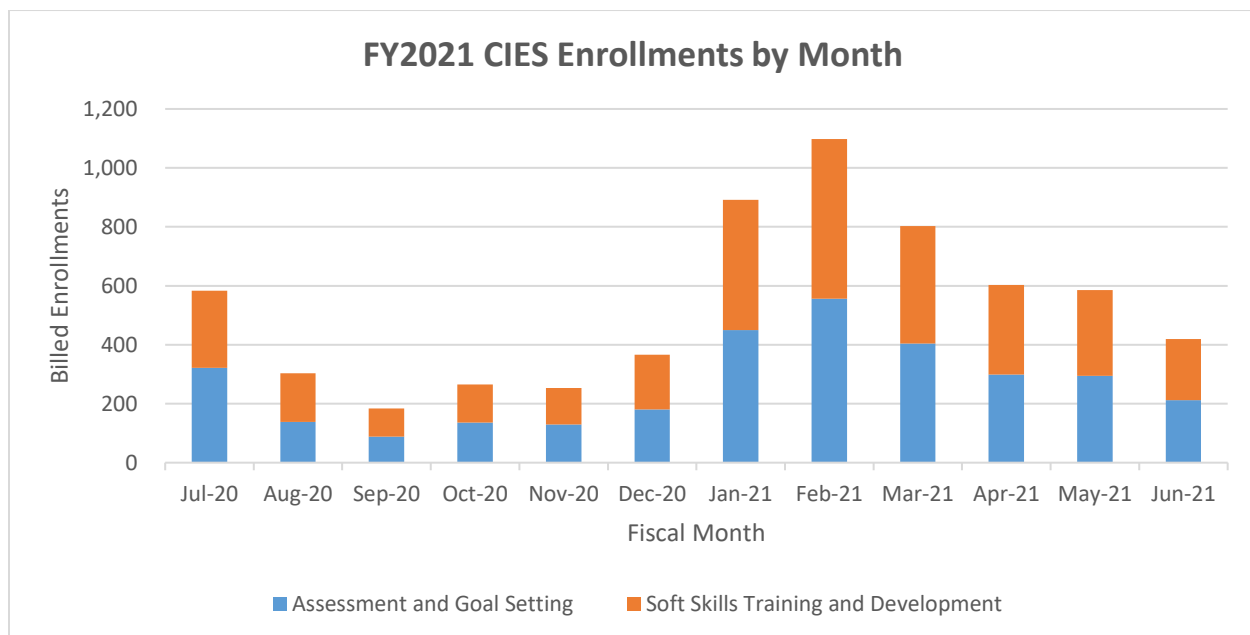
As the economic recovery progressed in FY21, there was an increase in enrollments to the CIES program as more families became comfortable with returning to the workforce. Over the last two years, CIES providers have made shifts in their modes of service delivery to increase access and supports for families transitioning back into employment post-pandemic and have been able to connect families to jobs with living wages and help them retain their employment.

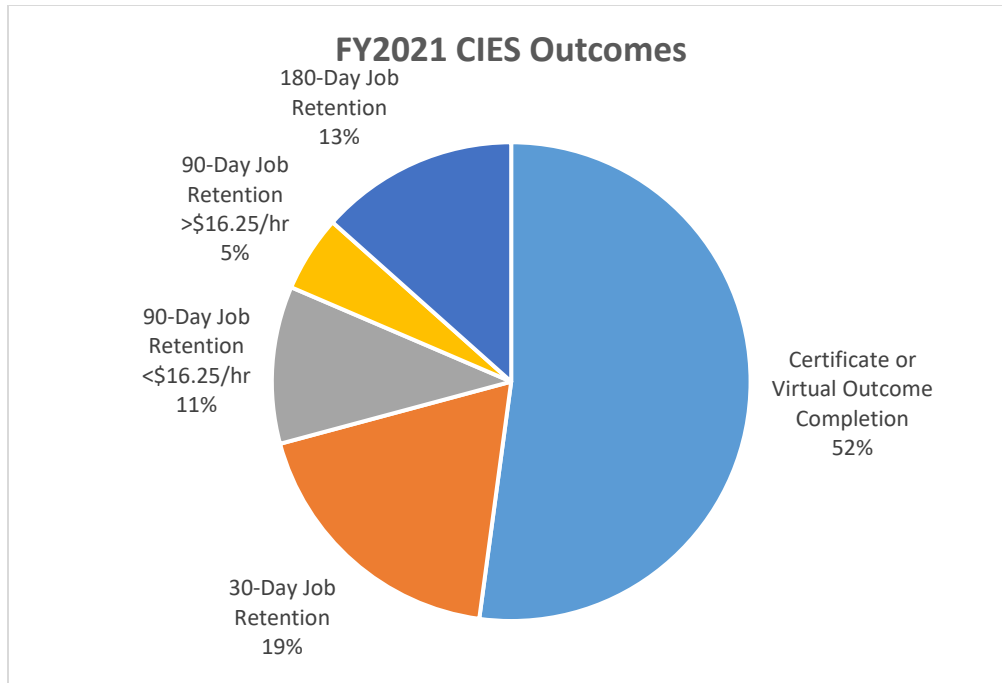
² The *Economic Stability Roadmap*, including the five domains, are adapted with permission from The Bridge to Self-Sufficiency® by Economic Mobility Pathways, Inc.

The focus on flexible service delivery modes and individualized supports better positioned providers to support the immediate and unique needs of participants in the areas of family stability and well-being, while focusing on remote education and training tied to participants' employment goals. DTA continues to support these shifts through the CIES funding structure to compensate providers for virtual services that keep participants engaged and prepared to return to work or obtain employment post-pandemic.

Over the last year, DTA has seen a significant increase in clients engaging and participating in the program, training completions and employment retention. Clients who can participate are experiencing wage growth and obtaining jobs connected to emerging career pathways in the current economy. DTA is also continuing to make improvements in FY21 in data collection to improve analysis of enrollments and outcomes related to virtual services, hourly wage growth, and job retention at 30, 90, and 180 days.

CIES Enrollments & Outcomes					
Fiscal Year	# Enrollments	# of Certificates	# 30-day Retention	# 90-day Retention	# 180-day Retention
FY2021	1,330	770	276	229	198
Outcome Performance		58%	21%	17%	15%





EMPLOYMENT SUPPORTS SERVICES PROGRAM AT THE MASSACHUSETTS OFFICE FOR REFUGEES AND IMMIGRANTS

The Employment Supports Services Program, administered by the Massachusetts Office for Refugees and Immigrants (ORI) offers unique language, cultural, and employment placement skills to TAFDC recipients who are refugees and immigrants, and those whose primary language is not English. Services are provided in the client's primary language as they work to build their English language skills. Youth participants can enroll in this program after completing a HiSET or DTA's YPP.

Through ORI services, families can overcome linguistic barriers which may hinder them from obtaining and retaining employment. ORI's employment services include comprehensive assessment of a family's needs, employment readiness, access to vocational skills trainings, financial literacy, job placement, and retention. Currently, ORI provides these services to eligible clients in the Boston, Brockton, Chelsea, Framingham, Holyoke, Lowell, Malden, North Shore, Quincy, Worcester, and Springfield DTA catchment areas.

ORI Enrollments & Outcomes					
Fiscal Year	# Enrollments	# Job Placements	# 30-Day Retention	# 90-Day Retention	Quality Salary
FY2020	129	127	121	115	35
FY2021	218	105	81	59	43

In the FY21 GAA, ORI was allocated \$1M with an additional \$250,000 adding a cost reimbursement component to enhance ESOL instruction and expand vocational skill training programs, financial literacy, and other pre- and post-employment services. The additional \$250,000 created similar outcome milestones to CIES tracking employment at 90-days. In FY21, ORI implemented virtual outcomes, similar to DTA's CIES virtual outcomes and have had 101 virtual outcomes during the fiscal year.

Prior to FY21, ORI was only compensated for the employment outcomes of clients. Now, ORI providers are compensated for enrollments and outcomes, and flexible spending has been allotted to providers to support unanticipated needs and barriers to employment.

In FY22, ORI is seeing a large influx of Afghan and Haitian refugees who are out of the job market and are struggling with common economic mobility barriers like childcare and transportation.

SECURE JOBS PROGRAM

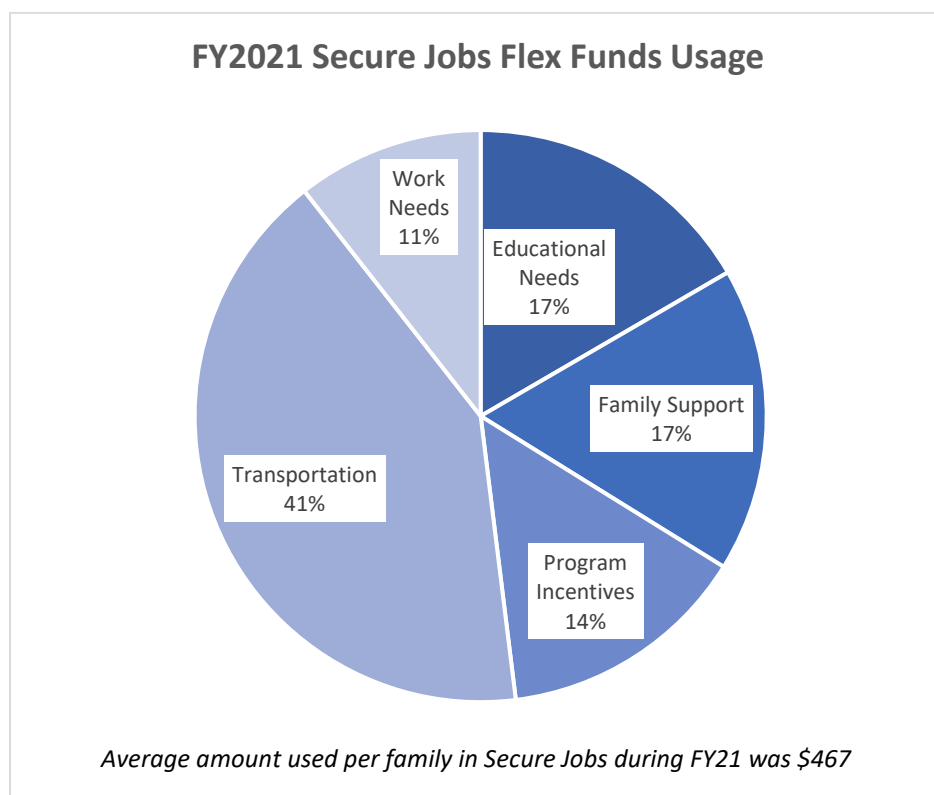
DTA collaborates with the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) to administer the Secure Jobs Program, which was created through a partnership between the Fireman Foundation and the Massachusetts Interagency Council on Housing and Homelessness. Secure Jobs supports families in increasing their economic mobility by connecting them with housing supports and community-based providers. These providers focus on helping families become employment ready, while addressing any barriers that may interfere with their economic mobility goals. The model of the Secure Jobs Program emphasizes employment first to shorten the length of stay in shelter and expedite the attainment of permanent housing, contributing to upward economic mobility and family stability. Secure Jobs focuses on three key domains: Education and Career, Stable Housing and Economic Stability, and Family Stability and Well-Being. Participants have access to flexible funds, which are used to address individual barriers to employment. By connecting housing and workforce development services, Secure Jobs offers comprehensive supports that families need to obtain employment through client-centered economic mobility plans tailored to their individual needs.

Secure Jobs serves families receiving assistance from DHCD in the areas of Boston, Brockton, Fall River, Taunton, Hyannis, New Bedford, Framingham, Lawrence, Lowell, Holyoke, Springfield, and Worcester. Through Secure Jobs, DTA and DHCD have also aligned policies to reduce barriers for our shared families that support the best outcomes. The Moving to Work Funds made available to DTA from DHCD have allowed for 50 Mobile Section 8 Vouchers to be distributed through lottery over three years to Secure Jobs participants who have obtained and maintained employment for six months. DTA and DHCD continue to work in partnership with providers to strengthen the services provided by the Secure Jobs program. As of this report, all vouchers have been released through a lottery and 39 recipients have moved into new apartments. The remaining 11 are in the process of securing housing.

Many of the hallmark innovations, including flexibility for participants and alignment between housing and employment services, have been retained as the program continues to grow. Increased funding for the program has allowed for enhanced services to be made available to

support increasing employment outcomes and Secure Jobs programming is now available in more communities in the Commonwealth. DTA, in collaboration with DHCD, remains committed in partnership to continuing the work in support of economic mobility for children and families experiencing homelessness.

Secure Jobs Enrollments & Outcomes			
Fiscal Year	# Enrollments	# Job Placements	Performance Rate
FY2020	458	228	50%
FY2021	416	268	64%



DTA WORKS INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

The DTA Works Internship Program is a work-ready program funded for TAFDC recipients. DTA Works provides TAFDC recipients with the opportunity to acquire or develop skills necessary to re-enter the workforce. Interns are placed at a variety of locations including DTA offices, partner state agencies, and non-profit community-based organizations where they receive on-the-job training and mentorship. Interns work with a mentor and program coordinators to identify barriers that may be interfering with their economic mobility. Once identified, the intern and coordinator create specific goals to overcome any barriers and support the intern on their path to economic mobility.

Interns may participate for up to 36 weeks with the option to extend by an additional 12 weeks to support their transition to work. They receive a monthly education and training stipend to

support their participation. The monthly stipend is in addition to their TAFDC benefits and does not impact those benefits.

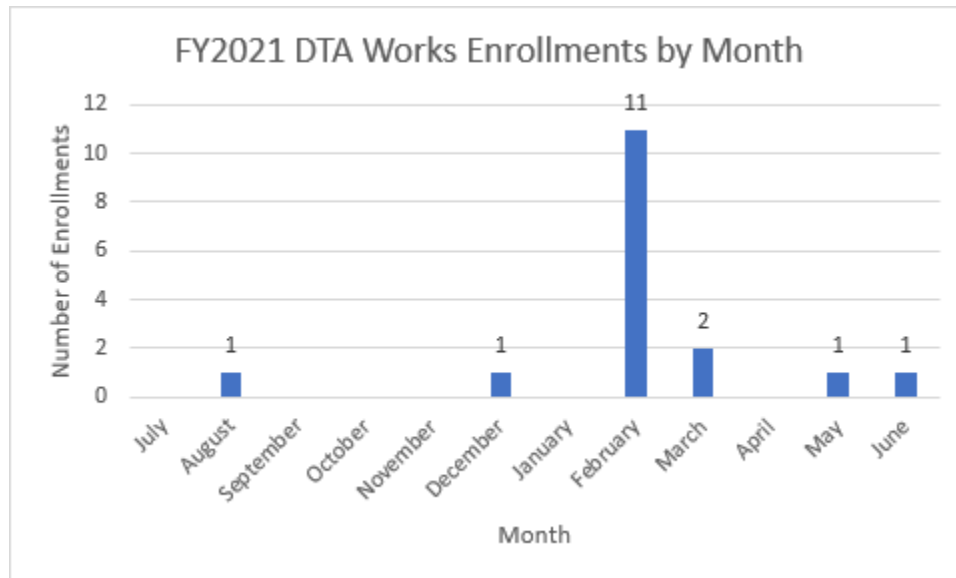
The DTA Works model is centered on public-private sector partnerships that provide meaningful internship tracks that lead to employment in high demand labor markets. The DTA Works Health Administration Services Training (HAST) is an internship facilitated through a partnership with Mass General Brigham and Project Hope. This program, which was originally slated to start in March of 2020 but had to be delayed and redesigned due to COVID-19, is now beginning its third cohort. In FY21, DTA Works partnered with Holyoke Community College, Springfield Public Schools, Springfield Federation of Paraprofessionals, and Springfield WORKS to deliver a new paraeducator training class and internship track. Interns receive five weeks of job readiness training followed by two weeks of paraeducator job specific training, taught by Holyoke Community College and Springfield Public School Employees. Upon completion of training, participants enter an in-person internship within the Springfield Public Schools to demonstrate the competencies that were learned during the training. The Springfield Public Schools has committed to employing interns who excel during their internship and training.

DTA Works continues to remain flexible with its placement opportunities, offering in-person, virtual and hybrid placements. Many interns are placed at MassHire Centers, and intern placements are returning to DTA local offices as well.

Since FY20, DTA Works has also introduced a new program component, Budget Buddies, Inc., a non-profit organization focused on empowering women with low incomes to confidently navigate their financial goals. Budget Buddies provides the coaching to ensure interns are better prepared to manage and plan for financial cliffs as they transition from benefits to the workforce.

There are 50 current enrollments for FY22. In FY21, 100% of DTA Works participants identified as female. Over 2.5 million women nationwide have had to quit their jobs to care for their families since the start of the pandemic. When interviewing potential interns in FY21, many say that they needed to step back from the workforce and training because of the pandemic and are now enrolled for FY22 and ready to sharpen their skills and return to work.

DTA Works Enrollments & Outcomes			
Fiscal Year	# Enrollments	# Post-Internship Employment	Performance Rate
FY2020	48	24	50%
FY2021	17	9	59%



YOUNG PARENTS PROGRAM

The Young Parents Program (YPP) serves young parents, ages 14 through 24, who are receiving TAFDC or are the non-custodial parent of a child receiving TAFDC. YPP is a year-round, full-time program that focuses on education to career pathways as the primary goal for young parents. The theory of change for 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.³ YPP supports positive outcomes across three domains; Education and Career; Life and Personal; Parenting and Family.

Through YPP, DTA seeks to:

- Empower parents to pursue a path to economic mobility through education pathways and job readiness, while establishing support networks that allow parents to successfully access and maintain active benefits;
- Actively engage participants to develop the skills necessary to advocate and care for their children so that ultimately the children in this program are safe, healthy, and thriving; and
- Provide a sense of hope and aspiration to empower families to break the cycle of multi-generational poverty through sustained school and community involvement and engagement with the program.

The 2-Gen approach of YPP 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

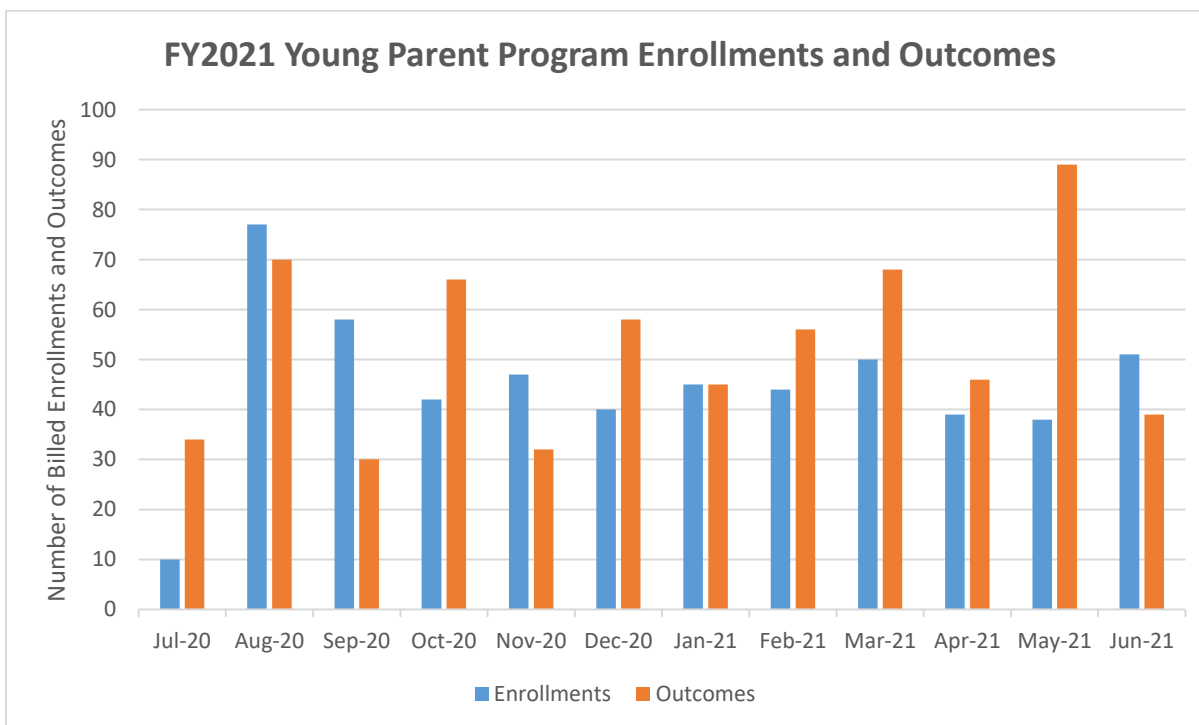
³ "Two-Generation Playbook "Ascend, The Aspen Institute (ascend.aspendinstitute.org)

education and supports for children along with tools to improve parents' economic situations, outcomes for both the parent and child can improve.

Many YPP providers are returning to a hybrid model of learning, where participants can attend school and training both virtually and in person. DTA continues to allow flexibility in the funding structure of YPP for virtual outcomes and milestone achievement in the Life and Personal and Parenting and Family pillars of the Education to Career Pathway Assessment.

Prior to COVID-19, providers could only request compensation in the Education to Career pillar. This new flexibility recognizes providers' continued support and commitment to our young families, even if the young parent's current progress is not in the education or career pillar. Barriers such as child care and transportation have become even more pronounced for young parents, and the flexibility allows providers to financially support and celebrate achievements such as enrollment into and the completion of parenting courses, increased financial literacy capacity, and obtaining driver's licenses. The accomplishment of these outcomes leads to an increase in economic mobility for young parents and their families.

YPP Program Enrollments & Outcomes			
Fiscal Year	# Enrollments	# Outcomes Achieved	Utilization
FY2020	577	498	86%
FY2021	608	374	62%



THE WORK PARTICIPANT PROGRAM

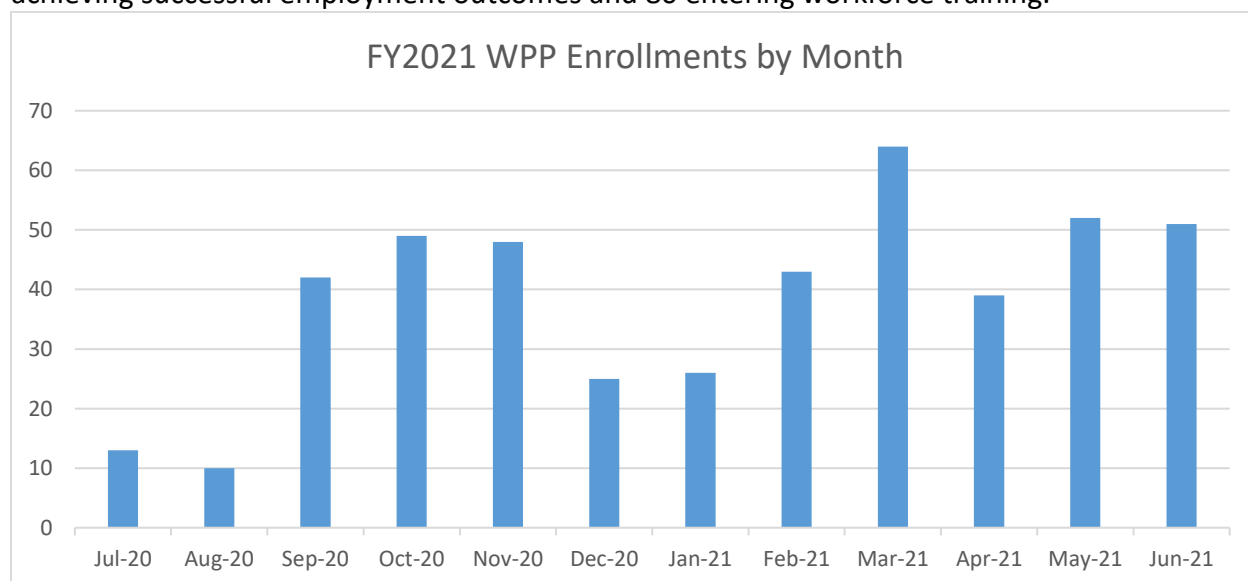
DTA is an essential partner in Massachusetts' implementation of the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). WIOA seeks to integrate states' workforce systems to better serve employers and jobseekers. Signed into law in 2014, WIOA reauthorized the nation's employment, training, adult education, and vocational rehabilitation programs for the first time in 16 years. WIOA's emphasis is on targeting low-income adults and youth with limited training and skills as well as individuals with disabilities to help them overcome barriers to economic success.

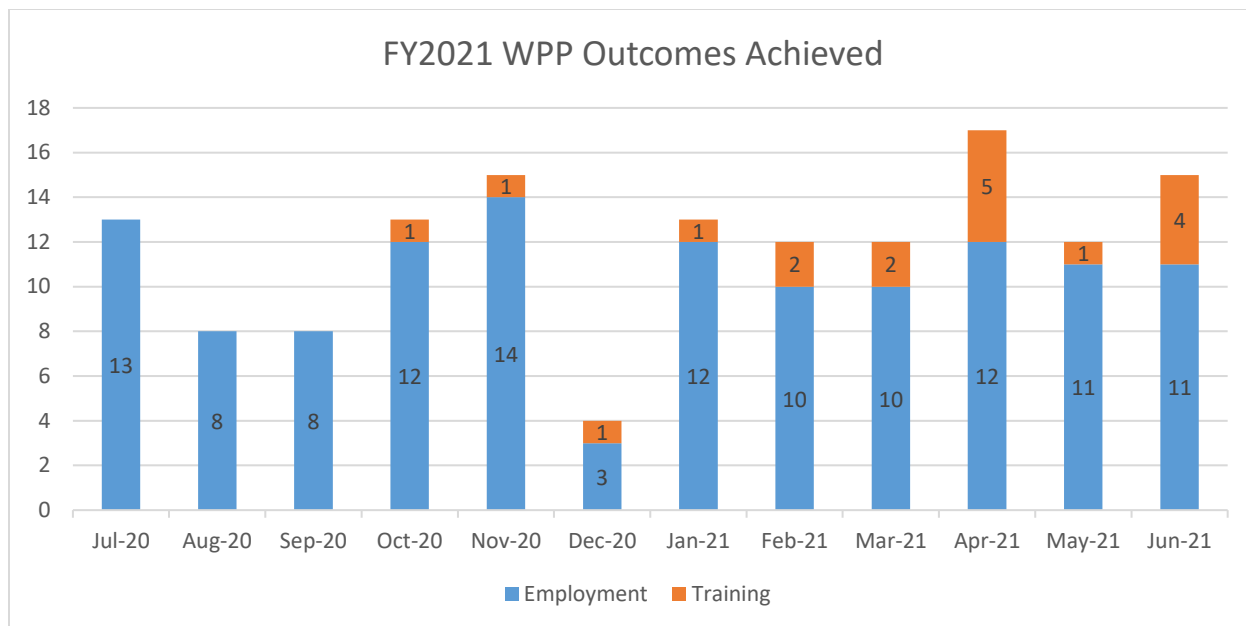
Since the passage of WIOA, DTA has worked closely with the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD) to implement a new, more integrated system of workforce development for DTA clients and other priority populations with significant barriers to work. The aim of this collaboration is to:

- Develop meaningful pathways to work and economic mobility for low-income, disabled and chronically un/underemployed individuals/families; and
- Ensure that DTA clients and families with significant barriers can access the workforce system with the support needed to attain and sustain employment.

Through this partnership, both TAFDC and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) clients can access additional employment supports through the network of MassHire Career Centers with EOLWD. Located throughout Massachusetts, each MassHire Career Center offers services to DTA clients through the Work Participant Program (WPP). Through WPP, clients receive access to individualized career counseling and guidance, workshops, job fairs, employer recruitment, and access to free resources to assist with their job search and applications.

In FY21, DTA continued to work in partnership with the network of MassHire Centers to conduct strategic outreach to shared clients to promote new enrollment and align employment service delivery. These efforts have resulted in 462 new enrollments into WPP in FY21, with 124 achieving successful employment outcomes and 80 entering workforce training.





EMPOWERING TO EMPLOY

Empowering to Employ is a partnership between DTA and the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) that maximizes employment opportunities for workforce engagement for TAFDC families and clients with disabilities. This initiative was launched on July 1, 2018, with a shared commitment to establish an integrated employment model for individuals with disabilities receiving TAFDC leading to sustained employment, economic independence, and family stability.

DTA and MRC use a jointly funded model of client engagement and intensive co-case management to provide individualized and meaningful services with the goal to:

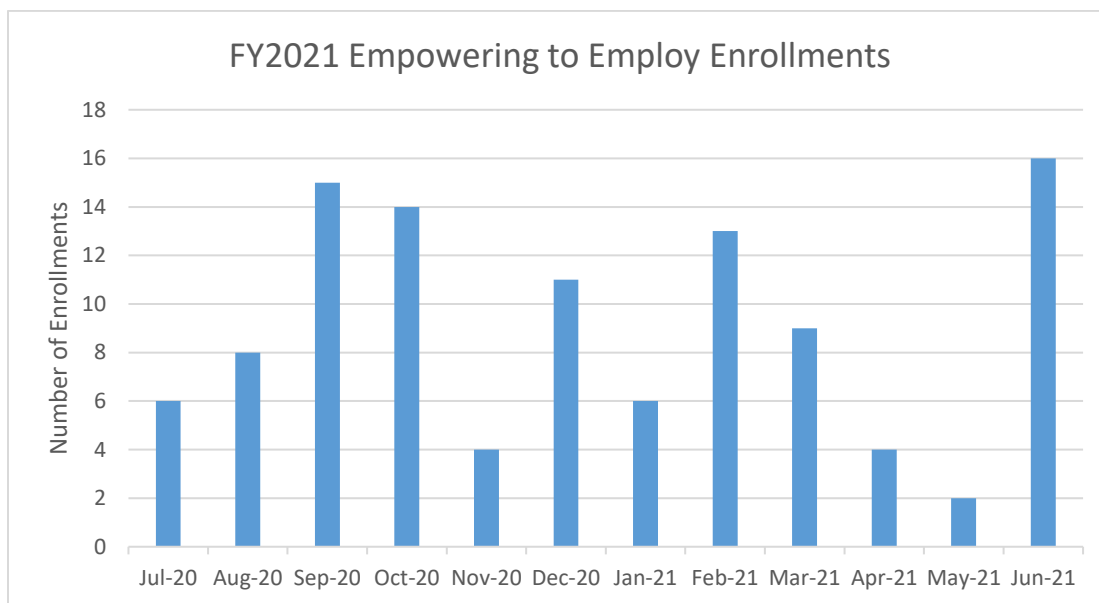
- Shift the paradigm from *exemption* due to a disability to individualized vocational *supports* needed for employment;
- Work in partnership with local teams to identify “best practices” for improved employment-related outcomes for clients with disabilities and their families;
- Engage and sustain TAFDC clients in meaningful employment-related activities that lead to jobs in high demand industries; and
- Develop and “test” an intensive co-case management model to promote, engage, and support clients on their path to economic stability.

Although DTA clients have always had access to MRC services, this initiative streamlines the enrollment process and allows DTA to take a targeted approach to connecting potential participants. Both agencies have been committed to learning each other’s services, developing strategies to blend agency strengths, and creating a process to meet the needs of individuals and families, with the goal of connecting participants to the workforce.

In FY21, ESP funding supported MRC Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors and Job Placement Specialists in five designated DTA office locations: Quincy, Lawrence, Brockton, North Shore (located in Salem), and Fitchburg. Through the MRC technology initiative, jobseekers are provided with the technology necessary to fully participate in Empowering to Employ.

In FY22, new opportunities to increase referrals to the program are being explored, such as using DTA disability determination data, and expanding the referral networks to include a broader range of stakeholders. DTA and MRC are also exploring opportunities to expand the number of co-located offices, beginning in FY23.

Entering the 3rd quarter of FY22, the Empowering to Employ Program had 155 active clients in the program; 31 clients in the ETE program achieved successful outcomes which equates to 20% of program participants entering successful employment.



EMPLOYMENT-FOCUSED SUPPORTS

Eligible TAFDC clients participating in approved work-related activities, inclusive of the DTA funded ESP programs, continue to have access to the following supports as needed: child care referrals, transportation benefits of \$80 per month, learning disability screening and assessments, Hi-SET vouchers for both in person and remote testing options, 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: 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 provides additional nutritional supports as former clients transition to work.

DTA provides Transitional Support Services (TSS) to support employment retention and prevent the need to return to TAFDC for clients whose case closed due to earnings. TSS includes Work Related Expense and Transportation stipends which begins when a case has been closed for 30 days. TSS stipends are available for a period of four months, in amounts that decrease over the TSS period. The Work-Related Expense stipend is \$200 in the first month, decreasing by \$50 over the next three months, ending in a \$50 stipend in the fourth month. The Transportation stipend is \$80 in the first month, decreasing by \$20 over the next three months, ending in a \$20 stipend in month four.

These small, but meaningful, supports help to mitigate the “cliff effect” many clients face when transitioning off TAFDC and allow clients to experience the benefits of work, a critical support during and post-pandemic.

2-Gen Economic Mobility Programs for High-Risk Youth

Following an initial investment of \$2.5 million in the FY21 GAA, DTA entered into an interagency service agreement (ISA) with the Department of Public Health to administer a 2-Gen grant program that supports economic mobility among high-risk young parents and leverages cross-sector collaboration of service delivery through the Massachusetts Pregnant and Parenting Teen Initiative (MPPTI). For more than a decade, MPPTI has provided multidisciplinary, team-based case management for young parents in Massachusetts, with a goal of increasing life opportunities and enhancing family stability among expectant adolescents and young families in priority populations and communities.

In FY21 DTA and DPH awarded grants through a competitive process to seven community-based agencies to provide targeted support to high-risk expectant and parenting adolescents using the MPPTI model. All funded agencies serve at least one community with high teen birth rate (Tier 1 community), while some agencies also serve a geographically nearby Tier 2 community with lower teen birth rates.

TABLE I MASSACHUSETTS PREGNANT AND PARENTING TEEN INITIATIVE PROVIDERS	
Priority Community – T1/T2	Agency
Lawrence/Methuen	Family Services of the Merrimack Valley
Lowell	Community Teamwork, Inc.
Brockton	Brockton Neighborhood Health Center
New Bedford	Meeting Street
Chelsea/Everett	Roca, Inc.
Springfield/Holyoke	The Care Center
Fitchburg	LUK

Throughout the agencies’ collaboration in this work, the importance of young parents’ voices in providing quality services and supporting economic mobility has become increasingly clear. Since FY21, the Massachusetts Pregnant and Parenting Teen Initiatives (MPPTI) have supported 521 families, an increase of approximately 70% compared to the number of families served in the original MPPTI model that ended in June 2020. The investment of \$2.5M has been instrumental

for this population; it has allowed young parents to access COVID-19 response supports that would not have been available otherwise.

As leaders of the Young Parents with Young Children Working Group, both agencies are committed to providing all young parent stakeholders an equitable voice in policy and practice and are in the initial phases of building a clear path for young parent feedback. Additionally, leaders from DTA and DPH, along with community providers and young parents, have recently been selected as members of the System Alignment for Young Families Learning Academy through the American Public Human Services Association. This Academy will bring together six cross-sectional state teams to advance alignment of health and human services systems to better serve and support young families. Both DTA and DPH value and look forward to this continued partnership.

CONCLUSION

As the Commonwealth continues to evaluate the changes, challenges, and innovations induced by the pandemic to the state's workforce and labor market, particularly as they relate to the experiences of families with low-income, the Department is committed to promoting increased participation in training & employment opportunities for the 1 in 7 Massachusetts residents in receipt of DTA services. Through partnership with Pathways to Work providers, sister agencies and the state's workforce system, DTA continues to identify new opportunities for targeted outreach, increased flexibility in service delivery and individualized work supports for families in receipt of TAFDC to promote meaningful engagement in the Pathways to Work Program to assist them to achieve their career path and economic mobility goals.