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Secure Jobs Report

June 2025



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSITIONAL ASSISTANCE SECURE JOBS REPORT

June 2025

REPORT OVERVIEW

Pursuant to line-item 4400-1020 of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 General Appropriations Act (GAA), the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) is required to submit the following report on the status of its Secure Jobs Program. Because the fiscal year has not yet ended, this report will focus on the programming and outcomes for FY2024.

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 offers a comprehensive system of programs and supports to help individuals and families achieve greater economic self-sufficiency, including food and nutritional assistance, economic assistance, and employment support

PROGRAM BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

Secure Jobs was created in 2013 through a partnership between the Fireman Foundation and the Massachusetts Interagency Council on Housing and Homelessness to address both homelessness and joblessness. Initially targeting families participating in the HomeBASE Rental Assistance Program, Secure Jobs brought together state agencies, homeless providers, and workforce development agencies to support families in increasing their economic mobility by connecting them with housing supports and community-based providers. Secure Jobs providers focus on helping families become employment ready, while addressing any barriers that may interfere with their economic mobility goals. 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.

The initial evaluation of the demonstration program found that Secure Jobs is the right fit for parents who are ready, willing, and able to work, and that individualized service delivery is critical to success. Additionally, providing strong connections to employers allowed participants to obtain employment and strong retention services helped participants stay 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 services for individuals and families receiving support from the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC, formerly DHCD) Emergency Assistance (EA) program, the Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program (MRVP), the HomeBASE program, or the Residential Assistance for Families in Transition (RAFT) program.

In the FY18 GAA, administration of the Secure Jobs program was transferred to DTA. Working collaboratively with EOHLC, the Department continues to support individuals and families who are served by EOHLC programs through this program.

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. Outcomes for Secure Jobs participants are expected to be achieved across the following key domains:

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

DTA takes a “two-generation” (2-Gen) approach to increasing economic mobility in all its employment programming. This 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.

OPERATIONAL UPDATE

Secure Jobs serves families receiving assistance from EOHLC in the areas of Boston, Brockton, Fall River, Taunton, Hyannis, New Bedford, Framingham, Fitchburg, Lawrence, Lowell, Holyoke, Springfield, Southbridge and Worcester. Each provider offers services across several established phases of job planning, job readiness, and placement:

Phase 1 - Enrollment and Goal Setting

Phase 2 - Job Readiness and Training

Phase 3 - Initial Employment

Phase 4 - Six-month Employment Retention

Phase 5 - Employment Retention and Next Steps

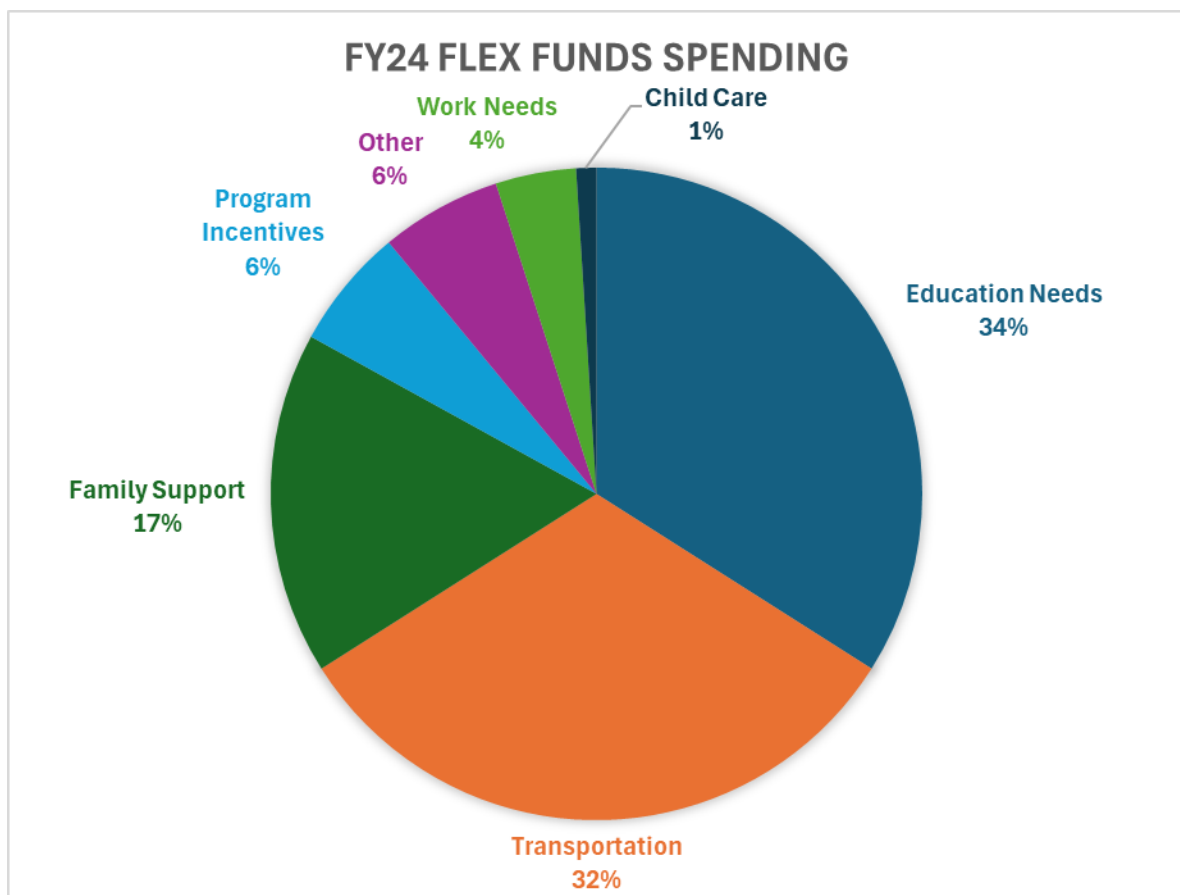
Providers enroll participants into the program phase that best reflects their status. They can adjust the specific phase as the participant moves through the program and progresses through setting and achieving milestones towards their employment goals. The expectation is that providers deliver flexible, individualized support, working in partnership with families on their path towards long-term meaningful employment and economic stability. Participants in phases 3-5 are employed and receiving retention support.

In FY2024, during the most recent procurement, Secure Jobs eligibility was changed to application for EOHLC services, rather than at enrollment. It is DTA’s hope that families will receive the services necessary to bypass an eviction and retain their housing through enrollment into Secure Jobs early on in their housing insecurity. This is a new housing status that is being tracked as of FY2024 to truly understand the impact this change will have on families.

FLEXIBLE FUNDING IMPACT

The provision of flexible funds is a hallmark of Secure Jobs. Flexible funds are included in each budget allocation and providers are responsible for determining the usage and issuance with their participants. This helps to support families who have unexpected costs related to entry into employment.

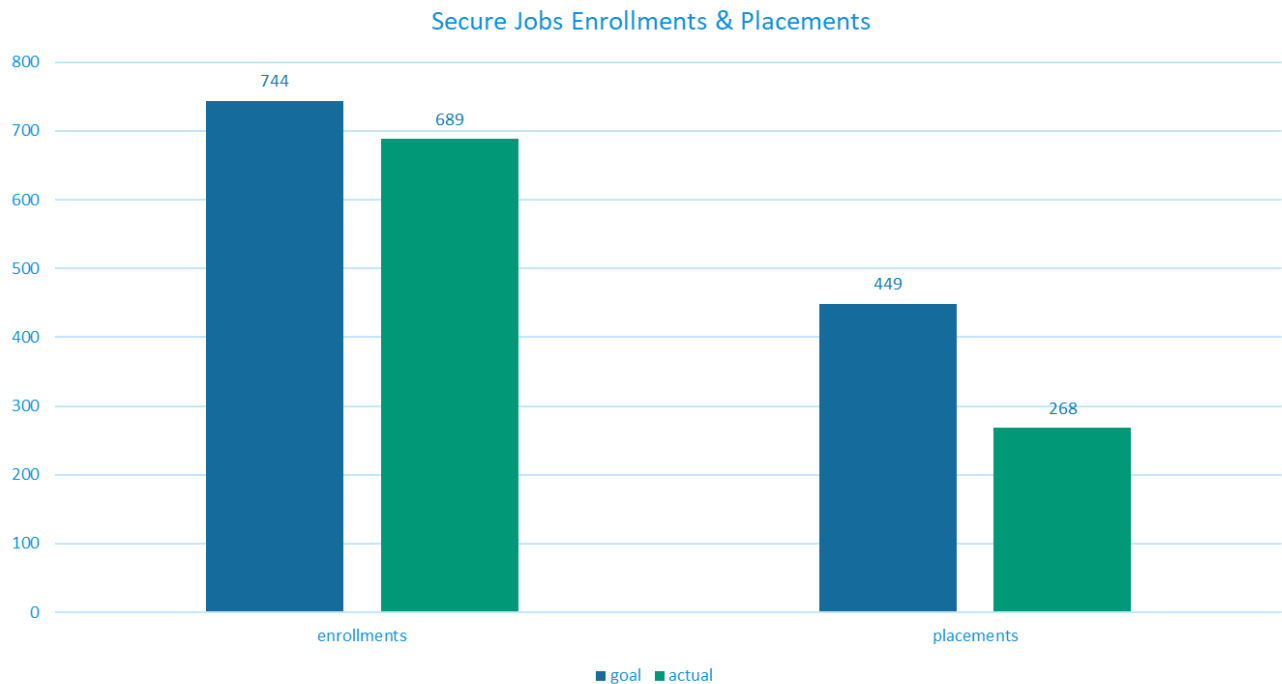
In the FY24 GAA, the Legislature allocated \$5M in funding for Secure Jobs. Providers were able to utilize the increases in available funding to meet the unique needs of participants. 21.98% of the Secure Jobs budget was spent on flexible funds totaling \$1,099,895.00. Providers purchased laptops and hotspots to facilitate job search and training efforts and paid for professional certifications to increase earnings potential. They have also assisted with the purchase of vehicles for families who are employed and need reliable transportation, assisted families with moving costs, and paid overdue utility bills.



In the first two quarters of FY24, we have seen an increase in the usage of flex funds for family supports, including payment for professional trainings and certifications, moving costs, payment of overdue utility bills and other work and family support expenses. Transportation continues to

represent a large percentage of utilization of flexible funds. Many providers use flexible funds to offer incentives to retain or reengage clients who may have already found employment but need additional support to increase their wages.

In FY24, there were 689 enrollments in the Secure Jobs program and 268 participants who achieved successful employment. The average wage of first time employment placements for Secure Jobs participants in FY24 was \$17.00, working an average of 31 hours per week. 64 unique employers hired Secure Jobs participants, Amazon and Walmart being the top employers.



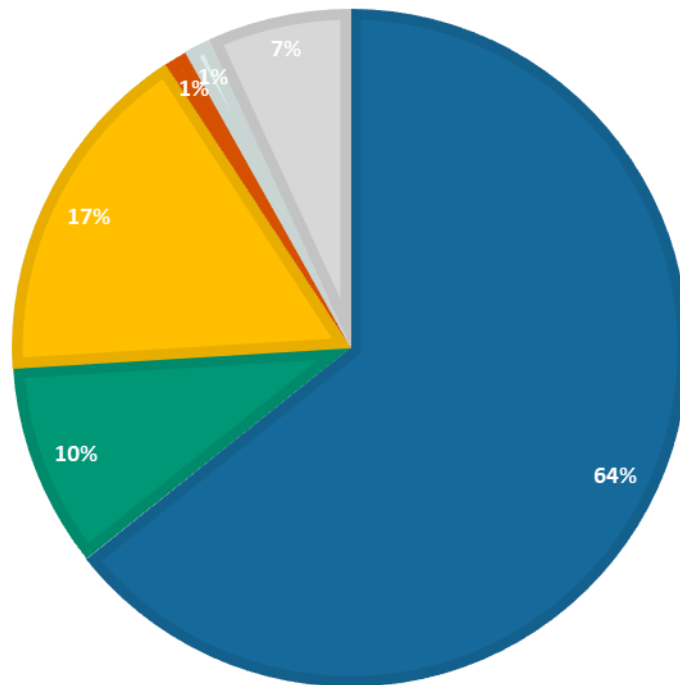
In the first two quarters of FY25, 453 participants statewide were enrolled in the eight different Secure Jobs programs:

- 35% are currently employed with an average wage of \$19.32 per hour, a 7% increase from \$18.08 per hour in FY24.

As of January 2024, 53% of Secure Jobs participants were residing in Emergency Assistance Shelter through EOHLC. FY2023 revealed an interesting housing trend that had not been seen in prior years: an increase in shelter placements in later retention phases. The path through each phase is not necessarily linear, the percentage of families residing in shelter decreases to 21% in phase 4 and then increases to 55% in Phase 5.

HOUSING STATUS AT ENROLLMENT

■ EA Shelter ■ HomeBase
■ Market Rent/Non Subsidized ■ Multifamily Subsidized
■ Section 8 ■ Other/Unknown



CONCLUSION

DTA and EOHLC continue to work in partnership with providers to strengthen the services provided by the Secure Jobs program. 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 EOHLC, remains committed to continuing this work in support of economic mobility for homeless children and families.