



# Boston WIOA Jobs & Training Information

## Frequently Asked Questions



### **What is WIOA?**

“WIOA” stands for “Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.” It is a U.S. Department of Labor program which funds employment services, including training, for those who need assistance in finding a job. Boston residents who are currently underemployed and meet eligibility guidelines may qualify for job services and/or training funds. Eligible individuals are workers who lose their jobs, or people not working and who have little or no work history. Eligible Massachusetts residents may qualify for comprehensive job search services.

### **What are One-Stop Career Centers?**

Career Centers have information about the local job market, employment opportunities, and education and training programs. Their staffs can help you find the best job or training program to match your skills, experience, qualifications and interests. Career Centers provide free workshops and other special programs to help job seekers be successful in their job search.

### **What is my first step to find out more about jobs and training?**

You have to go to one of the two Boston One-Stop Career Centers:

MassHire Boston Career Center, 1010 Harrison Avenue, Roxbury, MA (617-541-1400) or  
MassHire Downtown Boston Career Center, 75 Federal Street, Boston, MA (617-399-3131)

### **What happens at the career center?**

First, you become a member at one of the Boston Career Centers. Membership is free and open to the public. You have to provide some basic information about yourself and attend an orientation where you will learn about the ways the career center can help you.

If you are seeking help finding a job or training funding, you attend an “Employment and Training Briefing” or information session to learn about the choices you have. Training applicants will be given a standard reading and math test to make sure that you meet the requirements of the training programs.

You meet with a counselor who reviews and discusses your work history and the details of your job search. This information is used to see if you need training to get a job. You may be asked to give additional information such as explaining the problems you have had in your job search and reviewing the skills you need to find a job.

There must be jobs available in the field you want to train in. The career center shows you how to get this information. You have to write a statement to support your request for training. Your application will be submitted to the Mayor’s Office of Workforce Development (OWD). OW D makes the final decision on your application. There is an appeals process if you are not approved for training and believe that the decision was unfair. The entire process takes an average of 4-6 weeks. Your counselor will keep you informed about the progress of your application.

## How much funding is there for training?

There's not as much as you might think. Here are some basic facts about the availability of funds and the demand for training in Boston:

- Number of WIOA and related training vouchers (7/1/20 - 6/30/21): 115
- Number of unemployed Boston residents (as of May 2020): 60,143 (16%)
- Number of customers who used career centers (7/1/19 - 6/30/20): 11,459

## How can I get funding for training through WIOA?

You must be either: 1) a low-income or skills deficient Boston resident; 2) a laid-off Boston resident; or 3) laid off from a company in Boston. Because training funding is very limited, you must demonstrate the need for training in order to find a job. If you are unemployed and can get a job based on the skills and experience you have now, or if you are employed and can get a better job with your current skills, you will not be eligible for these funds.

Training funds in Boston are targeted to those “most in need.” The presence of any one of the following characteristics places an individual in this category:

- Lack of a solid work history, with extensive periods of unemployment or underemployment, or of non-participation in the labor market
- Employed, but earning less than 257% of the Lower Living Standard Income Level (this is like the poverty line)
- An English reading and computing achievement at less than a 9th grade level
- A history of involvement with the courts that affects employability
- Dislocated workers (living or last employed in Boston) whose education achievement, or English language ability may affect re-employment
- Other identifiable barriers to employment including a disability

## Can I get funds for training if I have a college degree?

Since labor market information tells us that the best predictor of economic success in the Boston area is educational achievement, persons who have higher educational levels such as a four-year college degree will not meet this priority unless there are “**unusual and compelling**” circumstances. For example, a person with a bachelor's degree, laid off from an accounting job, where for 20 years the computer program used was proprietary and used only by that company, might be appropriate for training in current accounting software. Or someone with a non-English language degree may qualify under the “unusual and compelling” circumstance. If this type of situation applies to you, you may apply for training under WIOA. However, because you do not meet the criteria for those “most in need,” your application will be subject to a more rigorous level of review by the regional funding administrators. **Career Center staff is not responsible for making these decisions.**