



March 13, 2024

RE: Competitive Integrated Employment Services (CIES)

Chairman Aaron Michlewitz
 House Committee on Ways & Means
 Room 243
 Boston, MA 02133

Chairman Michael Rodrigues
 Senate Committee on Ways and Means
 Room 212
 Boston, MA 02133

Dear Chairman Michlewitz and Chairman Rodrigues:

Our organizations provide (or support) *Competitive Integrated Employment Services (CIES)* on behalf of the Commonwealth through contracts with the Department of Transitional Assistance. **CIES is the state’s only welfare-to-work program**; it helps individuals who are receiving state assistance transition off welfare.

The Department of Transitional Assistance oversees this program, which has helped individuals who are chronically unemployed or underemployed rejoin the workforce. After the COVID-19 pandemic, the CIES program has helped participants find jobs and secure gainful employment. In its May 2023 *Employment Services Program Report*, the Department of Transitional Assistance noted:

*“FY ‘22 continued to see 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 models of service delivery to increase access and supports for families transitioning and 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.”*

CIES continues to make a difference in the lives of residents and families across the Commonwealth, and this is due in large part to the Legislature’s historic investments in this critical workforce program. Last year, added language to your budget proposals in line item 4401-1000, *Employment Services Program*, ensured that CIES would receive at least level funding in the FY ‘24 budget. **We urge you again to**

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include the following language in your FY '25 budget proposals to ensure at least level funding for Competitive Integrated Employment Services.

provided further, that the department shall spend not less than the amount spent in fiscal year 2024 for the young parents program and the competitive integrated employment services program;


Most CIES clients who come to us are women who are seeking employment to support their families. Historically, they have been able to secure positions in business, early education, customer service, dental and nursing, home health, human services and/or medical industries to name just a few. These constituents would be willing to meet with you to discuss how this program helps them “make it in Massachusetts,” as many are young mothers, and this may be their first real job experience.

Further, you may know that CIES contracts are *performance-based*. ***If we are not achieving desired outcomes – for example, job placement – we do not receive reimbursement for providing that component of the service.*** It is a challenging provision in helping people safely return to work and secure childcare, but we are committed to the outcomes. Some of us have run these programs for more than 20 years, and we've seen them continually make a difference in the lives of parents and their children.

As the Commonwealth continues to rebound from the impact the pandemic had on our state and its residents, the CIES program is critical to the employment of individuals in our Commonwealth, particularly now in an uncertain economy.


Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments on these important services and for your consideration of adding this language to your FY '25 budget proposals. We greatly appreciate the Legislature's historic support of CIES, and we would be pleased to discuss our comments with you in more detail at your convenience.

Sincerely,



Thomas M. Connors
President/CEO
American Training, Inc.

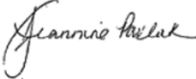

Jeff Thielman
President/CEO
International Institute of
New England


Allison Joseph
Executive Director
MY TURN, Inc.



Colleen Holmes
President/CEO
Viability, Inc.


Craig Stenning
President/CEO
Community Work
Services



Joanne Hilferty
President/CEO
Morgan Memorial
Goodwill Industries


Jeannie Pavlak
President/CEO
New England Business
Assoc.


Jim Cassetta
President/CEO
WORK Inc.


Bonnie Mello
President/CEO
Lifestream


Susan Gentili
President/CEO
SMOC


Coleman Nee
CEO
Triangle, Inc.


Bill Yelenak
President/CEO
Providers' Council