



BOSTON CITY COUNCIL

Committee on Labor, Workforce, and Economic Development
Benjamin Weber, Chair

One City Hall Square 5th Floor, Boston, MA 02201 ♦ Phone: (617) 635-3040 ♦ city.council@boston.gov

REPORT OF COMMITTEE CHAIR

April 4, 2025

Dear Councilors,

The Committee on Labor, Workforce, and Economic Development was referred the following dockets for consideration:

Docket #0294, Message and order authorizing the City of Boston to accept and expend the amount of One Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$100,000.00) in the form of a grant, from the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program, awarded by the United States Department of the Treasury to be administered by the Office of Workforce Development. The grant will fund services to underserved populations in the hardest-to-reach areas, both urban and non-urban, in basic tax return preparation to qualified individuals.

Docket #0295, Message and order authorizing the City of Boston to accept and expend the amount of Seventy-Five Thousand Dollars (\$75,000.00) in the form of a grant, for the Boston Tax Help Coalition Santander Bank Grant, awarded by Santander Bank, N.A. to be administered by the Office of Workforce Development. The grant will fund the Boston Tax Help Coalition to provide pathways from poverty to financial empowerment by maximizing the impact of tax credits through free tax preparation, financial education, and economic stability opportunities.

These matters were sponsored by Mayor Michelle Wu, and were referred to the Committee on January 29, 2025.

Docket #0400, Message and order authorizing the City of Boston to accept and expend the amount of Four Hundred Ten Thousand Dollars (\$410,000.00) in the form of a grant, for the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Funding, awarded by the MA Executive Office for Administrative & Finance to be administered by the Office of Workforce Development. The grant will fund to support the Center for Working Families' Boston Tax Help Coalition in assisting low-income taxpayers with personal income tax filing for the 2024 tax session.

Docket #0405, Message and order authorizing the City of Boston to accept and expend the amount of Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$50,000.00) in the form of a grant for the Friends of Youth Opportunity Boston Grant, awarded by The Baupost Group to be administered by the Office of Workforce Development. The grant will fund opportunities for young people ages 12-24 to work and learn along with intensive staff support.

These matters were sponsored by Mayor Michelle Wu, and were referred to the Committee on February 5, 2025.

Docket #0454, Message and order authorizing the City of Boston to accept and expend the amount of Forty-Three Thousand Three Hundred Twelve Dollars and Fifty Cents (\$43,312.50) in the form of a grant for the FYOB MLK Scholars Program Grant, awarded by the Boston Foundation, passed



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through the Philanthropic Initiative, to be administered by the Office of Workforce Development. The grant will fund summer jobs, financial education, and professional development opportunities for Boston youth.

This matter was sponsored by Mayor Michelle Wu, and was referred to the Committee on February 12, 2025.

Docket #0526, Message and order authorizing the City of Boston to accept and expend the amount of One Million One Hundred Ninety Thousand Seventy-One Dollars and Sixty-Four Cents (\$1,190,071.64) in the form of a grant for the Carry-in WIOS Adult Program, awarded by the United States Department of Labor, passed through the MassHire Department of Career Services, to be administered by the Office of Workforce Department. The grant will fund services to help job seekers access employment, education, skills, training, apprenticeships and support services.

Docket #0529, Message and order authorizing the City of Boston to accept and expend the amount of Ninety-Five Thousand Dollars (\$95,000.00) in the form of a grant, for the Workforce Training Fund Grant, awarded by MassHire Department of Career Services to be administered by the Office of Workforce Development. The grant will fund programming to help address business productivity and competitiveness by providing resources to Massachusetts businesses for training current and newly hired employees.

Docket #0531, Message and order authorizing the City of Boston to accept and expend the amount of Forty-One Thousand Eight Hundred Twenty-Eight Dollars and Sixty Cents (\$41,828.60) in the form of a grant for the Shelter Supplemental Funding Grant, awarded by MassHire Department of Career Services to be administered by the Office of Workforce Development. The grant will fund MassHire career centers with supplemental funding to support emergency assistance (EA) shelters residents with training and employment opportunities.

These matters were sponsored by Mayor Michelle Wu, and were referred to the Committee on February 26, 2025.

Docket #0642, Message and order authorizing the City of Boston to accept and expend the amount of Three Hundred Eighty-Two Thousand One Hundred Sixty-Three Dollars and Fifty-Nine Cents (\$382,163.59) in form of a grant, for the Carry-In Wagner Peyser Program Grant, awarded by the United States Department of Labor, passed through the MassHire Department of Career Services, to be administered by the Office of Workforce Development. The grant will fund the individual reemployment needs of Unemployment Insurance claimants, as well as prevent and detect improper benefit payments, and application assistance for, training and education resources and programs.

Docket #0643, Message and order authorizing the City of Boston to accept and expend the amount of One Hundred Forty Thousand Dollars (\$140,000.000) in the form of a grant, for the Uncornered Grant, awarded by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, passed through the Economic Development & Industrial Corporation of Boston to be administered by the Office of Workforce Development. The grant will fund coaching, mentorship, and other workforce development training opportunities for at-risk, violence-involved youth and reentering citizens.



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These matters were sponsored by Mayor Michelle Wu, and were referred to the Committee on March 12, 2025.

Summary of Legislation

Docket #0294 would authorize the City of Boston to accept and expend the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program grant in the amount of \$100,000. This grant was awarded by the United States Department of the Treasury and will be administered by the Office of Workforce Development. The grant would fund services to underserved populations in hardest-to-reach areas, both urban and non-urban, in basic tax return preparation to qualified individuals.

Docket #0295 would authorize the City of Boston to accept and expend Boston Tax Help Coalition Santander Bank grant in the amount of \$75,000. This grant would be administered by the Office Workforce Development and would fund the Boston Tax Help Coalition to provide pathways from poverty to financial empowerment by maximizing the impact of tax credits through free tax preparation, financial education, and economic stability opportunities.

Docket #0400 would authorize the City of Boston to accept and expend the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Funding grant in the amount of \$410,000. This grant is awarded by the MA Executive Office for Administration and Finance and will be administered by the Office of Workforce Development. This grant would fund the Center Working Families' Boston Tax Help Coalition in assisting low-income taxpayers with personal income tax fillings for the 2024 tax season.

Docket #0405 would authorize the City of Boston to accept and expend the Friends of Youth Opportunity Boston grant in the amount of \$50,000. This grant was awarded by the Baupost Group to be administered by the Office of Workforce Development and would fund opportunities for young people ages 14-24 to work and learn along with intensive staff support.

Docket #0454 would authorize the City of Boston to accept and expend the FYOBMLK Scholars Program grant in the amount of \$43,312.50. This grant was awarded by the Boston Foundation through The Philanthropic Initiative to be administered by the Office of Workforce Development. This grant would fund summer jobs, financial education, and professional development opportunities for Boston Youth.

Docket #0526 would authorize the City of Boston to accept and expend the Carry-in WIOA Adult Program grant in the amount of \$1,190,071.64. This grant was awarded by the United States Department of Labor through the MassHire Department of Career Services and will be administered by the Office of Workforce Development. The grant will fund services to help job seekers access employment, education, skills, training, apprenticeships and support services.

Docket #0529 would authorize the City of Boston to accept and expend the Workforce Training Fund grant in the amount of \$95,000.00. This grant was awarded by MassHire Department of Career Services and will be administered by the Office of Workforce Development. This grant would fund programming to help address business productivity and competitiveness by providing resources to Massachusetts businesses for training current and newly hired employees.



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Docket #0531 would authorize the City of Boston to accept and expend the Shelter Supplemental Funding grant in the amount of \$41,828.60. This grant was awarded by MassHire Department of Career Services and will be administered by the Office of Workforce Development. This grant would fund MassHire career centers with supplemental funding to support emergency assistance (EA) shelter residents with training and employment opportunities.

Docket #0642 would authorize the City of Boston to accept and expend the Carry-in Wagner Peyser Program grant in the amount of \$382,163.59. This grant was awarded by United States Department of Labor through the MassHire Department of Career Services and will be administered by the Office of Workforce Development. This grant would fund the individual reemployment needs of Unemployment Insurance claimants, as well as prevent and detect improper benefit payments, and application assistance for training and education resources and programs.

Docket #0643 would authorize the City of Boston to accept and expend the Uncornered grant in the amount of \$140,000. This grant was awarded by Uncornered Inc. and will be administered by the Office of Workforce Development. This grant would fund coaching, mentorships, and other workforce development training opportunities for at-risk, violence-involved youth and reentering citizens.

Information Received at Hearing

The Committee held a hearing on Thursday, April 4, 2025 to discuss ten labor and workforce development grants. The Committee was joined by Constance Martin, Director of Operations for the Center of Working Families and the Office of Workforce Development (OWD), Tanisha Deleon, Deputy Director of Youth Options Unlimited at OWD; Katy Gall, Director of Grants at OWD; and Joseph Le, Chief of Staff for the Worker Empowerment Cabinet - all of whom provided testimony on behalf of the Administration.

Director Martin discussed Dockets #0294-0295 and #0400, and stated that these grants to assist in funding tax-related assistant services and resources through the Boston Tax Help Coalition (BTHC) and their Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program. She discussed the positive work and impact of the BTHC and VITA stating that last tax season they saved Boston taxpayers more than \$2.5 million in preparation fees. They assisted in preparing 11,700 tax returns and provided \$22.7 million in refunds including \$7.3 million in Earned Income Tax Credits. BTHC manages 30 tax sites throughout Boston and the Greater Boston region with varying schedules and language assistance capabilities - partnering with ABCD, Urban Edge, Boston Public Library and the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind and Deaf. She stated that BTHC also provides free training to more than 300 volunteers to earn IRS certification, showing they have the necessary skills to file tax returns accurately.

Deputy Director Deleon discussed Dockets #0405, #0454, and #0643, and stated that these grants would provide funding for job opportunities, professional development, financial education, coaching and mentorship for youth, at-risk youth, and reentering citizens. She stated that Docket #0405 is a grant awarded by The Baupost Group and that 69 percent of these funds will be used for youth stipends and 31 percent would be used to fund program support and administration. She stated that Docket #0454 is a grant awarded by the MLK Scholars Program and that 90 percent of these funds will be used for youth stipends and 10 percent for program support and administration. Lastly, she stated that Docket #0643 is a grant awarded by Uncornered Inc. and that 60 percent of these funds will be allocated for participate



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stipends and 40 percent for program support and administration. Deputy Director Deleon discussed the 2024-2025 impact metrics from these programs and stated that they were able to reach 258 youth, with 98 percent meeting target or adjacent population criteria, 44 youth were placed in internships, delivered more than 1,475 hours of direct services across case management, coaching, and resource navigation; and enabled staffing program continuity, and operation innovation despite a 60 reduction in funding.

Director Gall discussed Dockets #0526, #0529, #0531, and #0642 stated that these various grants would primarily provide funding for Career Center services including assisting job seekers find employment, skills and job training, employee resources for small businesses, and prevent and detect improper benefit payments. She stated that Career Centers are funded through the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), and that the Career Center One Stop grant is from a state line item designated to supplement federal WIOA funding. Currently, there are two organizations that have been awarded the Career Center charter - the MassHire Boston Career Center which had a total budget of about \$2.32 million in FY25 and MassHire Downtown Boston which had a total budget of about \$1.96 million in FY25.

Committee Chair Recommended Action

As Chair of the Committee on Labor, Workforce, and Economic Development I recommend moving the listed dockets from the Committee to the full Council for discussion and formal action. At this time, my recommendation to the full Council will be that these matters **OUGHT TO PASS**.

Benjamin J. Weber, Chair
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