

# **Commonwealth of Massachusetts Groundfish Industry Transition Assistance Plan**

September 2013

## **Introduction**

Fisheries represent a key engine of the Massachusetts economy. Due to environmental and climate changes, Massachusetts fishermen are losing access to many fish stocks on which they depend most for their livelihood, and the Commonwealth has been engaged in trying to rebuild these stocks to ensure the continued strength of the Massachusetts' fishing industry.

Under federal law, a series of quotas have been implemented to ensure these fisheries remain sustainable. In January 2013, the New England Fishery Management Council voted to significantly curtail quotas for cod and other groundfish stocks in the Northeast. In May, the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) implemented those reductions. These reductions are likely to cause economic difficulty for many Massachusetts' fishermen and their families. The Patrick Administration has developed a Transition Assistance Plan in order to help mitigate the impact of these quota reductions on groundfish fishermen across the Commonwealth and ease their transition into other fisheries or industries.

## **Collaboration across Sectors, Agencies, and Governments**

The Commonwealth is committed to collaborating with a range of partners in all sectors and across all levels of government to minimize the difficulties facing fishermen and their families during this difficult period.

Governor Patrick has convened a Groundfish Interagency Transition Assistance Commission (GITAC) with representatives from four of the Commonwealth's eight Secretariats. Agencies participating in the Task Force include:

- Office of the Governor;
- Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs;
- Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development;
- Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development ;
- Executive Office of Health and Human Services;
- Department of Career Services;
- Department of Fish and Game;
- Department of Housing and Community Development;
- Department of Mental Health;
- Department of Transitional Assistance;
- Mass Office of Business Development;
- MassHealth.

Members of the GITAC have engaged a range of local partners, including the offices of the New Bedford and Gloucester mayors, the Massachusetts Fishermen's Partnership, and the Northeast Seafood Coalition.

## Assistance Available for Massachusetts Fishermen and Their Families

The Groundfish Interagency Task Force has met on multiple occasions to develop this Transition Assistance Plan to aid fishermen in bearing the economic challenges facing as a result of the quota reductions. The Task Force is working to leverage resources in the following areas:

- Job search assistance;
- Employment training and education assistance;
- Rental assistance and housing stabilization;
- Public benefits access;
- Health insurance and health care;
- Mental health care; and
- Loans and Relief Funds.

### Job Search Assistance

A job search engine is available at <https://web.detma.org/JobQuest/Default.aspx> to help individuals identify employment opportunities in their community. In addition, the Department of Career Services (DCS) already has in place a statewide network of One-Stop Career Centers offering individuals personalized assistance in searching for employment. They offer guidance and trainings on writing resumes and cover letters, interviewing, and other job search skills.

DCS has numerous resources available that can aid fishermen and their families in their job search, including:

- Getting Started: Career Planning - <http://www.mass.gov/lwd/docs/dcs/1985-cc-508.pdf>
- The Resume Guide - <http://www.mass.gov/lwd/docs/dcs/1865-508.pdf>
- Selling Yourself on Paper: The Cover Letter - <http://www.mass.gov/lwd/docs/dcs/1986-cc-508.pdf>
- Landing the Job You Want: Interviewing - <http://www.mass.gov/lwd/docs/dcs/1983-508.pdf>

Additional resource guides are available at <http://www.mass.gov/lwd/employment-services/resources/>.

DCS is also working with fishermen and their families at Career Centers to offer tailored, in-person assistance. Contact information for Career Centers in key fishing communities is listed below; a complete listing of locations is available at <http://www.mass.gov/lwd/employment-services/career-services/career-center-services/find-a-career-center-near-you-1.html>.

*North Shore Career Center*  
<http://www.nscareers.org/>

Thursday: 8:30 am – 7:00 pm  
Friday: 9:30 am – 5:00 pm

*Salem Location*  
70 Washington Street, 1st Floor  
Salem, MA 01970  
Phone: 978-825-7200  
[mwhitmore@detma.org](mailto:mwhitmore@detma.org)

*Lynn Location*  
181 Union Street  
Lynn, MA 01901  
Phone: 781-593-0585  
[mwhitmore@detma.org](mailto:mwhitmore@detma.org)

Hours:  
Monday – Wednesday: 8:30 am – 5:00 pm

Hours:

Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday: 8:30 am to 5:00 pm

Tuesday: 8:30 am – 7:00 pm

Friday: 9:30 am – 5:00 pm

*New Bedford Career Center*

<http://www.newbedfordcareercenter.org/>

bfrancis@detma.org

*Gloucester Location*

5 Pleasant Street

Gloucester, MA 01930

Phone: 978-283-4772

[mwhitmore@detma.org](mailto:mwhitmore@detma.org)

*Greater New Bedford Career Center*

618 Acushnet Avenue

New Bedford, MA 02740

Job Seekers: (508) 990-4000

Employers: (508) 990-4100

Hours:

Monday – Thursday: 8:30 am – 5:00 pm

Friday: 9:30 am – 5:00 pm

Closed daily from 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm

Hours:

Monday – Thursday: 8:30 am – 4:30 pm

Friday: 9:30 am – 4:30 pm

More information on available services can be found at <http://www.mass.gov/lwd/employment-services/> or by contacting a local Career Center.

For more information, see Department of Career Services Rapid Response Workshops under Next Steps and Upcoming Events below.

### **Employment Training and Education Assistance**

DCS has already conducted and will continue to conduct a range of targeted trainings in Gloucester and other communities affected by the groundfish quota reductions. DCS also plans to work with affected individuals and families to connect them with employment trainings throughout the state. Career Centers plan to use the Transferrable Occupation Relationship Quotient (TORQ) assessment tool and other relevant tools to help match individuals' unique skills with available jobs.

The local Career Centers are prepared to help affected fishermen and their families choose the training program or school that is the best fit for them, as well as to apply for financial aid. For contact information for local Career Centers see "Job Search Assistance" above.

DCS is also pursuing partnerships with local employers to identify training and hiring opportunities. Legal Sea Foods has expressed an interest in collaborating with the Commonwealth to provide training to affected individuals.

For information on specific training opportunities, visit <http://www.mass.gov/lwd/employment-services/training-opportunities/>.

### **Rental Assistance and Housing Stabilization**

The Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) operates a range of programs aimed to help low-income households afford housing. DHCD is working to ensure that eligible fishermen and their families are aware of these programs and can access assistance in applying for rental assistance.

Information on the full range of programs available through DHCD is available at <http://www.mass.gov/hed/economic/eohed/dhcd/>. Rental assistance programs include:

- Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers - <http://www.mass.gov/hed/housing/rental-assistance/s8hvc.html>;
- Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program - <http://www.mass.gov/hed/housing/rental-assistance/mrv.html>; and
- Section 8 Veterans Housing Voucher Program - <http://www.mass.gov/hed/housing/rental-assistance/s8vhp.html>.

DHCD also operates the Residential Assistance for Families in Transition (RAFT) program, which operates through the Housing Consumer Education Centers (HCECs) to assist families with flexible financial assistance to either retain their current housing or to obtain new housing in order to avoid homelessness. For a listing of the HCEC locations, visit <http://www.mass.gov/hed/economic/eohed/dhcd/contacts/housing-consumer-education-centers-listing.html>.

For more information on these or other rental assistance programs, or to determine if you and your family might be eligible for housing assistance, contact the Bureau of Rental Assistance at (617) 573-1150 or visit <http://www.mass.gov/hed/housing/rental-assistance/>.

In addition, DHCD offers a number of housing stabilization programs to aid any families that find themselves at risk of experiencing homelessness. More information on these programs is available at <http://www.mass.gov/hed/housing/stabilization/>.

### **Public Benefits Access**

The Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) offers a number of public benefits that can assist affected individuals and families as they transition into other fisheries or industries. DTA has already provided and will continue to provide affected households with in-person and written assistance to help them better understand the available benefits.

Food assistance is available through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Eligibility and application information is available at <http://www.mass.gov/snap>.

In addition, some families may qualify for cash assistance through DTA. An overview of the program, eligibility requirements, and application process can be found at <http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/dta/cash-assistance.html>.

Additional details about all of DTA's programs can be found at <http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/dta/>. DTA has offices across the Commonwealth to serve residents. A complete listing of local offices is available at <http://webapps.ehs.state.ma.us/DTAOffices/default.aspx>, but contact information for key offices is listed below.

#### ***Brockton Office***

75 Commercial Street  
Brockton, MA 02302  
(508) 895-7000  
Monday-Friday: 8:00 am – 5:00 pm

#### ***Chelsea Center Office***

80 Everett Avenue, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Chelsea, MA 02150  
(617) 551-1700  
Monday-Friday: 7:00 am – 5:00 pm

Dudley Square Office

2201 Washington Street  
Roxbury, MA 02119  
(617) 989-6000  
Monday-Friday: 7:30 am – 5:00 pm

Fall River Office

1567 North Main Street  
Fall River, MA 02720  
(508) 646-6200  
Monday-Friday: 7:30 am – 5:00 pm

Hyannis Office

181 North Street  
Hyannis, MA 02601  
(508) 862-6600  
Monday-Friday: 8:00 am – 5:00 pm

Lawrence Office

280 Merrimack Street  
Lawrence, MA 01840  
(978) 725-7100  
Monday-Friday: 7:00 am – 5:00 pm

New Bedford Office

160 West Rodney French Boulevard  
New Bedford, MA 02744  
(508) 961-2000  
Monday-Friday: 7:15 am – 5:00 pm

Newmarket Square Office

1010 Massachusetts Ave  
Boston, MA 02118  
(617) 989-2200  
Monday-Friday: 7:30 am – 5:00 pm

North Shore Office

35 Congress Street  
Salem, MA 01970  
(978) 825-7300  
Monday-Friday: 7:00 am – 5:00 pm

Plymouth Office

61 Industrial Park Road  
Plymouth, MA 02360  
(508) 7320-3100  
Monday-Friday: 7:30 am – 5:00 pm

In addition, the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (LWD) runs the Unemployment Insurance (UI) program. A list of Frequently Asked Questions about UI is available at <http://www.mass.gov/lwd/unemployment-insur/resources/questions-and-answers/claimants/>, and additional information about the program is available at <http://www.mass.gov/lwd/unemployment-insur/>. Individuals or families who believe they may be affected can visit their local Career Center (see “Job Search Assistance” above for contact information).

**Health Insurance and Health Care**

Some of the affected households may face new challenges accessing quality health care. Fishermen and their families can access the HealthConnector to see if they qualify for insurance and compare plans at <https://www.mahealthconnector.org/> or by calling 1-877-MA-ENROLL (1-877-623-6765).

Households may be eligible for insurance through MassHealth. Basic information about MassHealth, as well as an application, is available at <http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/consumer/>.

To discuss program eligibility and enrollment or learn how to access health insurance, individuals can contact a MassHealth enrollment and customer service center.

MassHealth Customer Service Center  
1-800-841-2900  
(TTY: 1-800-497-4648 for people who are deaf, hard of hearing, or speech disabled)

MassHealth Enrollment Center  
1-888-665-9993  
(TTY: 1-888-665-9997)

Complete contact information is available at  
<http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/masshealth/contact-info-for-masshealths-applicantsproviders.html>.

### **Mental Health Care**

Planning is underway at the Department of Mental Health (DMH) to conduct targeted outreach to ensure that the mental health of affected fishermen and their families remains strong, and that individuals can easily access any assistance they may require.

DMH has also created a number of resource guides to help individuals access a range of resources to help them address their mental health care needs. A complete list of guides is available at <http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/provider/guidelines-resources/clinical-treatment/mental-health/dmh-resource-guides.html>.

DMH in collaboration with MBHP supports a state-wide emergency services program (ESP) that can provide emergent and urgent psychiatric assessments and referrals. Information is available at: [www.partnership.com](http://www.partnership.com).

DMH offices can be found in many communities around the Commonwealth. A full list is available at <http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/docs/dmh/publications/dmh-resource-guide.doc>, but contact information for the North Shore and New Bedford offices is listed below.

*North Shore Site Office*  
35 Congress Street  
Salem, MA 01970  
(978) 741-7300  
TTY (978) 741-7360

(508) 957-0900  
TTY: (508) 771-3907

*New Bedford Site Office*  
888 Purchase Street  
New Bedford, MA 02740  
(508) 996-7900  
TTY: (508) 994-2338

*Cape Cod Site Office*  
270 Communication Way, Unit 1C  
Hyannis, MA 02601  
(508) 778-4627  
TTY: (508) 778-0229

*Chatham Site Office*  
181 North Street  
Hyannis, MA 02601

*Scituate Site Office*  
Quincy Mental Health Center  
460 Quincy Avenue  
Quincy, MA 02169  
(617) 984-1000  
TTY: (617) 984-1041

For more information on the wide array of services offered through DMH, please visit <http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/dmh/>.

## **Loans and Relief Funds**

### *SBA Loans*

GITAC is working with the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) to obtain access to low-interest loans for small businesses. The SBA's Economic Injury Disaster Loans are intended for certain types of businesses that have suffered substantial economic injury due to a declared disaster. The SBA can provide up to \$2 million to help meet financial obligations and operating expenses that could have been met had the disaster not occurred. The interest rate on Economic Injury Disaster Loans cannot exceed 4 percent per year.

The Department of Fish and Game, on behalf of GITAC, has submitted financial impact information from a sample of groundfish industry members to support a request from the Governor for eligibility for industry members to apply for Economic Injury Disaster Loans. That request is currently pending before SBA.

### *Commercial Fisheries Revolving Loan Fund*

In January 2012, Governor Patrick announced the start of the Commonwealth's Commercial Fisheries Revolving Loan Fund (RLF). Through a \$1 million federal grant opportunity, the Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) partnered with the National Marine Fisheries Service to develop the RLF program to preserve fishing opportunities for small-scale fishermen struggling through the transition to catch share management in the northeast groundfish fishery. Utilizing the expertise of local lending partners, the RLF was designed to provide short-term loans to marginalized sector members to underwrite the lease cost of groundfish quota necessary for financial viability in the fishery.

With no loans made a year and a half into the program, it has become clear that the requirement to use RLF loans to lease groundfish quota has limited fishermen interest. DMF is moving forward to make the requirements more flexible to assist fishermen with other financial needs.

### *Other Relief Funds*

The Commonwealth, in conjunction with NOAA, is working to identify other relief funds available through the U.S. Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, and Labor to identify programs that could help support fishermen and their families in the short- and medium-term.

## **Other Commonwealth Actions to Aid Fishermen**

### *Marketing Massachusetts Seafood*

The State Legislature established a special commission in 2010 to investigate the merits of developing a coordinated, generic marketing program for Massachusetts seafood. The special commission was assigned a comprehensive task to determine if a permanent Massachusetts seafood marketing program could "enhance and stabilize the economic environment for the commercial fishing industry and fishing communities." The special commission's report was finalized in July 2013.

Recommendations in the report include the development of a marketing program for wild-caught seafood landed in Massachusetts, supported by a directed fund and led by an industry steering committee. The program would provide services that support the Massachusetts seafood industry, promote Massachusetts seafood products, and grow an informed seafood consumer base.

In addition, the Department of Fish and Game and its Division of Marine Fisheries have been exploring ways to increase the use of locally caught seafood by state agencies and other Commonwealth entities that purchase food. A number of state universities and colleges, such as University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, are serving locally landed seafood to promote sustainability and profitability for local fishing communities.

#### *Marine Fisheries Institute Resources*

Created in 2002, the Massachusetts Marine Fisheries Institute (MFI) links the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries and the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth School for Marine Science and Technology to enhance the Commonwealth's ability to positively affect the marine fisheries management in the state and throughout the northeast.

Economic analyses on the impact of sector management and low annual catch limits by the MFI were instrumental to the Secretary of Commerce determining that a commercial fishery failure due to a fishery resource disaster will exist for the 2013 northeast groundfish fishing season (May 1, 2013 through April 30, 2014). The MFI continues to promote and support improvements to the data and methods used to evaluate groundfish populations, thereby reducing uncertainty and hopefully leading to higher catch limits.

## **Local Partners**

GITAC has been coordinating with a range of local partners serving the fishing community. Listed below is a non-exhaustive list of a few such strong local partners. GITAC looks forward to further strengthening its collaboration with its partners providing on-the-ground assistance to fishermen and their families.

### **Fishing Partnership Support Services Navigators**

Fishing Partnership Support Services employs six Support Services Navigators (<http://fishingpartnership.org/about/navigators-and-offices/>) to help fishermen and their families understand and access the diverse resources available to them. Navigators are trained community health workers who come from fishing families themselves and work to connect individuals and families with the Commonwealth resources described above. Contact information for Support Services Navigators in communities along the coast is listed below.

#### Chatham

3 Champlain Road, Stage Harbor  
Chatham, MA 02633  
Navigator: Shareen Davis:  
[sdavis@fishingpartnership.org](mailto:sdavis@fishingpartnership.org)  
(508) 237-9402

#### Gloucester

2 Blackburn Center  
Gloucester, MA 01930  
Navigator: Angela Sanfilippo:  
[asanfilippo@fishingpartnership.org](mailto:asanfilippo@fishingpartnership.org)  
(978) 282-4847

Gloucester Navigator: Nina Groppo:  
[ngroppo@fishingpartnership.org](mailto:ngroppo@fishingpartnership.org)  
(978) 282-4847

New Bedford Navigator: Verna Kendall:  
[vkendall@fishingpartnership.org](mailto:vkendall@fishingpartnership.org)  
(508) 991-3043

*New Bedford*  
114 MacArthur Drive  
New Bedford, MA 02740  
Navigator: Debra Machie:  
[dmachie@fishingpartnership.org](mailto:dmachie@fishingpartnership.org)  
(508) 991-3043

*Scituate*  
8 Otis Place  
Scituate, MA 02066  
Navigator: Lori Caron:  
[lcaron@fishingpartnership.org](mailto:lcaron@fishingpartnership.org)  
(781) 635-0011

Fishing Partnership Support Services works with a number of organizations focused on improving the health and well-being of the fishing community. These organizations include the Massachusetts Fishermen's Partnership, as well as Health Care for All. In addition, Navigators work with local organizations to improve access to health screenings, vaccines, and health education. These local partners include:

- Dana Farber Cancer Institute Blum Outreach Van;
- Southcoast Health Van;
- Visiting Nurse Association of Cape Cod;
- Community Nurse of Fairhaven;
- Chatham Health Department;
- Gloucester Health Department;
- Melanoma Foundation of New England;
- Lion's Club 33K EyeMobile;
- Visiting Dental Associates of Massachusetts;
- Mass Audiology; and
- New Bedford Board of Health.

## **Other Local Partners**

### Gloucester

#### **Action, Inc.**

180 Main Street  
Gloucester, MA 01930

*Services:* Energy Assistance, Food, Child Care, Asset Development, Job Training, Emergency Shelter for individuals

#### **Community Teamwork, Inc.**

155 Merrimack Street, 2nd Floor  
Lowell, MA 01852

*Services:* Housing Assistance, Energy Assistance, Food, Child Care, Asset Development

#### **Gloucester Housing Authority**

259 Washington Street  
Gloucester, MA 01931-1599

*Services:* Public Housing, Rental Assistance

New Bedford

**PACE**

166 William Street

New Bedford, MA 02742

*Services:* Energy Assistance, Food, Child Care,  
Asset Development

**New Bedford Housing Authority**

134 South Second Street

New Bedford, MA 02740

*Services:* Public housing

**South Shore Housing Development**

169 Summer Street

Kingston, MA 02364

*Services:* Housing Assistance

Scituate

**South Shore Housing Development**

169 Summer Street

Kingston, MA 02364

*Services:* Housing Assistance

**Scituate Housing Authority**

791 Country Way

Scituate, MA 02066

*Services:* Public housing

**South Shore Community Action Council**

265 South Meadow Road

Plymouth, MA 02360

*Services:* Energy Assistance, Food, Child Care,  
Asset Development

Chatham

**South Shore Community Action Council**

265 South Meadow Road

Plymouth, MA 02360

*Services:* Energy Assistance, Food, Child Care,  
Asset Development

**Housing Assistance Corporation**

460 W. Main Street

Hyannis, MA 02601

*Services:* Housing Services, Economic  
Development

**Community Action Committee of Cape Cod and  
Islands, Inc.**

372 North Street, Hyannis MA. 02601

*Services:* Housing Assistance, Child Care

**Chatham Housing Authority**

240 Crowell Road

Chatham, MA 02633

*Services:* Public housing

**Community Services Block Grantees**

The Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) program funds Community Action Agencies across the Commonwealth. These agencies offer a host of different programs targeted to low income families and individuals. Many of the programs offered may be helpful in sustaining families affected by a job loss before they secure new employment. These activities include:

- Employment and job skills training;
- Food and nutrition assistance;
- Child development programs, including Head Start and center-based day care;

- Individual and family self-sufficiency initiatives;
- Youth development;
- Fuel and energy assistance;
- Domestic violence counseling and emergency assistance;
- Emergency assistance such as temporary shelter, hunger, medical assistance, clothing, conflict resolution, etc.;
- Affordable housing and homeownership opportunities;
- Assistance to homeless and "at-risk" families and individuals; and
- Transportation assistance.

More information can be found at <http://www.mass.gov/hed/community/funding/community-services-block-grant-csbg.html>.

## Next Steps and Upcoming Events

Households in many Commonwealth communities will face numerous challenges as the quota reductions take effect. However, the Commonwealth is working across sectors, agencies, and governments to aid affected fishermen and their families during this difficult transition. In addition to the ongoing availability of the resources described above, the Commonwealth is planning in-person trainings on a range of career and other services.

### Department of Career Services Rapid Response Workshops

The State's Rapid Response team is responsible for responding to and coordinating all Rapid Response activities around events that adversely affect workers and employers. Rapid Response is also responsible for coordinating activities and the gathering of demographics to be used for the application of National Emergency Grants which have been used in the past, where 5 national emergency grants have been received that assisted Fishermen and their families that were affected in the past.

The workshops explore:

- How to develop and set up a resume;
- How to build accomplishments into a resume;
- Tips for making a resume stand out;
- Resources for alternative occupations;
- Assessments of which transferrable skills relate to alternative applications;
- How LMI can increase the chances of getting hired; and
- Personalized employment plans.

For more information, contact Ken Messina at the Department of Career Services Rapid Response Team at [kmessina@detma.org](mailto:kmessina@detma.org).

Representatives from state agencies and grantees can be on hand during the event to provide information on housing, food, financial, mental health, and other resources available to fishermen and their families.

For example, at the most recent event, DCS, in coordination with the Fishing Partnership, conducted a “Rapid Response” training in Gloucester, where representatives provided assistance with Unemployment Insurance (UI) Online, resume assistance and training in career services. Representatives from DTA, DMH, MassHealth and a local DHCD partner, Action Inc., an organization that provides assistance accessing housing benefits were in attendance. Increased coordination with local counterparts will ideally lead to increased participation from local communities and would provide stronger support for advocacy for funds and support on a federal level.

### **More Information**

Additional information on upcoming events and other resources to aid fishermen and their families is available through the Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) within the Department of Fish and Game at <http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/dfg/dmf/>. DMF operates a listserv to provide timely information regarding marine fishery openings and closings, regulation changes, and public hearing notices; the Commonwealth will use this listserv to keep stakeholders informed about upcoming trainings and available resources. To join the listserv, please send an email with nothing in the subject or body to [join-marinefisheries@listserv.state.ma.us](mailto:join-marinefisheries@listserv.state.ma.us).