

MASSACHUSETTS

Workforce Investment Act

WIA Communication No. 04-85

Policy Information

To: Chief Elected Officials
Workforce Investment Board Chairs
Workforce Investment Board Directors
Title I Administrators
Career Center Directors
Title I Fiscal Officers
DCS Regional Directors for Workforce Integration
DCS Associate Directors
DCS Field Managers

cc: WIA State Partners

From: Susan Lawler, Commissioner
Division of Career Services

Date: November 4, 2004

Subject: Development of Local Plans for the Employment Assistance Services and Skill Start Programs. Information Session on Local Area Plans for FY 2005
Employment Assistance Services (EAS) and Skill-Start Programs

Purpose: To transmit local allocations for the Employment Assistance Services (EAS) and Skill Start programs and to provide local Workforce Investment Boards and workforce investment partners with guidance for preparing and submitting an integrated plan for the provision of employment and training services to customers referred by the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) for services under the EAS and Skill Start programs.

Background: DTA has historically partnered with the Division of Career Services (DCS) for the purpose of providing high quality, comprehensive employment services to DTA customers through the Massachusetts Career Center System. The goal of these services is to promote and encourage the long term economic self-sufficiency of DTA customers. The primary programs through which these services are currently delivered include the Employment Assistance Services (EAS) and Skill Start programs.

Changes being implemented by DTA for the FY2005 program year will have a direct bearing on the delivery of services under these two programs. The DTA changes include:

- **Skill Start Program:** DTA has restructured into three major divisions: Food Stamps, Cash Assistance and Housing, with the Food Stamps division the largest of the three divisions in terms of number of customers served. As the Skill Start program is designed specifically for Food Stamp recipients the Skill Start program will be expected to serve a higher number of customers. Accordingly, a higher level of funds (above the FY04 level) has been allocated by DTA to DCS for the Skill Start program for FY 2005. With the increased number of customers to be served and the additional level of funding, comes a renewed and heightened emphasis by DTA on Skill Start program performance.

While the DTA changes related to the Skill Start program will not require specific program design changes, DTA has made clear its intention to renew its focus on the provision of services to food stamp recipients under the Skill Start program. The increased scope of the program in terms of planned customer participation and the resulting increase in the program's performance goals will require each local workforce areas to review its overall service design for DTA customers and to further integrate the Skill Start program into the service mix in each Career Center for increased efficiency and effectiveness. It is especially important for all Career Center staff, especially all staff servicing DTA customers, to become sufficiently familiar with the Skill Start program in order to improve their ability to provide and/or refer any food stamp recipients to appropriate services. It is also extremely important that all such services be properly recorded and tracked so that program performance and success will be clearly documented and reported.

It is also anticipated that DTA's renewed focus on services to Food Stamp recipients will result in the potential for even higher funding levels beyond FY 2005. Attention to meeting and exceeding performance goals must be a priority for both the state and local areas for FY 2005.

For reference, the Scope of Work from the Interagency Service Agreement (ISA) between DTA and DCS for the Skill Start program is attached.

- **EAS Program:** A change in the work requirement hours for non-exempt TAFDC recipients as described in DTA Field Operations Memoranda 2004-37, 37A and 37B. As a result of this change DCS (as the administrator of the EAS Program) must assure that local provider service programming includes a sufficient level of activities to fulfill all hourly participation requirements for EAS customers referred by DTA.

Additionally, on October 29, 2004, DTA issued Field Operations Memo 2004-42 (copy attached) requiring the ESP Referral and Response Forms to reflect an individual customer's work required hours. This information will be manually added to the form by the AU Manager until the change can be made

in BEACON. It is the responsibility of the EAS staff to ensure their DTA work required customers are *scheduled for the appropriate number of service hours*. It is also the responsibility of the EAS staff to report to their DTA counterparts the number of hours each DTA customer participates in job search activities.

The only other change to the EAS program operation from FY04 to FY05 is the reinstatement of the collection of a DTA authorization number. It is again required that the EAS staff member record the authorization number from the ESP16 referral form from BEACON into the MOSES database. Staff who need direction as to the process for recording the authorization number in MOSES should contact the MOSES Help Desk 617-626-5656.

In response to the DTA changes related to the EAS Program, DCS has convened a workgroup to examine the current components of the EAS program and recommend updated definitions, designs and delivery methods to improve efficiency and effectiveness of the program. The workgroup's recommendations will be incorporated into staff training sessions to be scheduled in December. Notice of the specific schedule for these training sessions will be forthcoming.

DCS is also in the process of developing a weekly participation report that can be printed from MOSES for EAS staff to share with their DTA counterparts. Upon final development of the report field instructions will be issued under separate cover.

For reference, a copy of the Scope of Work from the Interagency Service Agreement (ISA) between DTA and DCS for the EAS Program will be forwarded under separate cover upon its final execution and will be distributed at the November planning information session described below.

Action

Required:

The EAS and Skill Start programs are the front door by which DTA customers are introduced to all services available at One-Stop Career Centers. As such it is important for local areas to assure both the integration of EAS and Skill Start services with other local career center services and the effective coordination of Skill Start and EAS staff resources to provide the best combination of services for each individual DTA customer.

To this end, each local area will be required to submit a brief (no more than two pages) but concise plan detailing how services will be provided to DTA customers through the EAS and Skill Start programs. The attached spreadsheets include proposed goals for each area for the EAS and Skill Start programs. These goals are based on FY 2004 performance data as well as information DCS has received regarding DTA's case loads in each local area. DCS recognizes that meeting these goals is dependent upon adequate referrals from DTA and has received a commitment from DTA that appropriate referral levels will be met. However, this does not mean that areas should not continue to review local referral and recruitment activities to assure an appropriate number program customers.

The EAS ISA between DCS and DTA provides for an overall statewide placement goal total of 2069 and 100 upgrades. In terms of local planning, 2,029 placements and 56 upgrades have been allocated proportionally to local areas as described above. The balance of the statewide total goal has not been assigned. This has been done so that any area that meets its assigned goal can submit a request to increase its goal from the unassigned pool thereby creating an incentive for the local area to increase its receipt of program revenue above its original allocation level. For FY 2005 local EAS reimbursement will be at the same rate as established for FY 2004.

Each local area plan must include the following:

1. DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM DESIGN INCLUDING:

- **How and where will outreach and marketing be conducted? How will DTA customers *and* DTA staff learn about EAS and Skill Start program services?**
- **How will staff insure that the most appropriate mix of services is recommended for each customer?**
- **How will customers be scheduled for the required number of hours? What options will be offered for job search services? Include individual and group services offered at DTA offices and Career Centers. How will participation be tracked?**
- **What strategies will be used for employer outreach and job development?**
- **Describe post-placement and other follow-up services.**
- **How will the EAS and Skill Start programs be integrated with each other and with other staff and programs within the Career Center?**
- **How will EAS and Skill Start customers access services at Career Centers?**
- **Describe communication and interaction between Career Center and DTA staff.**

2. A STAFF ALLOCATION PLAN INCLUDING:

- **The cumulative number of FTEs assigned to the EAS and Skill Start programs**
- **The location of program staff (DTA offices and/or Career Centers)**

- **The specific funding sources to be charged to cover the assigned FTE costs. NOTE:** *Local areas may use discretion in their use of allocated funds under the Skill Start program. However, the local plan must clearly describe how the assigned level of FTEs are to be supported with Skill Start funds or with other local funding resources.*

Local area plans should be developed as a joint effort by Career Center and DTA local service staff and management. As we all know, goals cannot be met without the cooperation of local DTA staff and management so it is important to insure that everyone involved understands and agrees with the local plan and goals. As referenced above, plans should be *no more than 2 pages in length*.

Local performance against planned goals will be reviewed by DCS on a monthly basis. DCS reserves the right to renegotiate performance goals with local areas and reallocate funds based on actual performance at any time.

Local plans must be submitted to DCS no later than December 3rd, 2004 and should be submitted to:

**Peg Ryan
Division of Career Services
Charles F. Hurley Building
19 Staniford Street
Boston, MA 02114**

Important Note: The plan is to be considered a modification of the local area FY 2005 MOU with DCS and therefore is to be submitted by the WIB and signed by the WIB Chair and the designated DCS Field Manager. A modification of the FY 2005 ANNUAL WORKFORCE INVESTMENT AREA PLAN BUDGET must also be submitted with the plan.

INFORMATION SESSION

To assist in the development of local plans, an information session is scheduled for:

Tuesday, November 12th from 9:30 AM to 12:30 PM at the DCS/DUA Training Center in Marlborough.

*******PLEASE NOTE DATE CHANGE*******

PLEASE NOTE DATE CHANGE FROM WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 3rd TO TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 12th.

Directions to Marlborough Training Center

Take Rte. 495 to Exit 24B (Route 20 West). Travel towards Northborough approximately one half mile. At bottom of hill, immediately after the second traffic light, turn right into parking lot. ETR Marlborough is located in suite 200 on the second floor of the R.K. Executive Center Building.

The information session will include the following topics:

- Reporting requirements;
- Required MOSES documentation for both EAS and Skill Start programs;
- Communication with DTA staff regarding new work rules;
- Review of Skill Start rules and methods for tracking in MOSES.

Please RSVP to Susan Buonopane – sbuonopane@detma.org - by Monday, November 9th, 2004.

Inquiries: Direct all inquiries to Margaret Ryan at (617) 626-5703 or mryan@detma.org

Filing: Please file this in your notebook of previously issued WIA Communication Series Issuances as #04-85.