

Mass Workforce Issuance

Workforce Issuance No. 14-69

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 Operations Managers

cc: WIA State Partners

From: Alice Sweeney, Director
Department of Career Services

Date: August 25, 2014

Subject: **Hiring Incentive Training Grant Policy and Process Changes**

Purpose: To notify Local Workforce Investment Boards, One-Stop Career Center Operators and other local workforce investment partners of several policy changes to the Hiring Incentive Training Grant (HITG) Program designed to increase the quality (in terms of length of retention and amount of earnings) of the jobs for which businesses may request incentive payments.

Background: The Hiring Incentive Training Grant (HITG) Program is funded through the Massachusetts Workforce Training Fund Program. The purpose of the HITG program is to provide an incentive to Massachusetts employers to hire long-term unemployed workers and Veterans. This program is growing rapidly; in the first 6 months of 2014, Commonwealth Corporation approved applications from employers that had hired more than 800 eligible workers.

On July 15, the Advisory Board for the Workforce Training Fund Program voted to make several policy changes related to eligibility for payment under the Hiring Incentive Training Grant program. These changes are designed to increase the quality (in terms of length of retention and amount of earnings) of the jobs for which businesses may request incentive payments.

In addition, Commonwealth Corporation is making several changes designed to improve the efficiency of the application, review and payment processes and to clarify application and payment requirements.

Policy: The following outlines the policy and process changes, with relevant implementation dates. Policy Changes:

The following policy changes are effective for all employees hired on or after August 15, 2014.

Current Policy: To be eligible for payment, the employer must retain an eligible new hire (Veteran or unemployed 6 months or longer) for at least 120 days.

Revised Policy: To be eligible for payment, the employer must retain an eligible new hire (Veteran or unemployed 6 months or longer) for at least 180 days.

Current Policy: To be eligible for payment, the eligible new hire must have earned at least \$2,500.

Revised Policy: To be eligible for payment, the eligible new hire must have earned at least \$7,000.

The following policy changes are effective on August 15, 2014.

Current Policy: Payment amount is \$5,000 per eligible new hire; each employer may be paid up to \$75,000 per calendar year, which equates to 15 new hires per calendar year.

Revised Policy: Payment amount is \$5,000 per eligible new hire; each employer may be paid up to \$40,000 per calendar year, which equates to 8 new hires per calendar year. Applicants may not submit applications for more than 16 new hires per calendar year.

Application Process Changes

On August 15th, 2014 the online application will be updated. This is effective for all new applications submitted after August 15th, 2014, regardless of date of hire. Please see important notes about this updated application below:

- Applicants will still be able access this online application from www.commcorp.org.
- The new application will require that applicants upload their Certificate of Good Standing, New Hire Eligibility Determination Form and Veteran status documentation, if applicable, at the time of completing the online application. Applicants will not be able to submit an application without these items uploaded. Each New Hire Eligibility Determination Form will need to be uploaded separately; these must be scanned as individual files.
- The application deadline has been extended from 30 days to 60 days to provide employers with more time to gather the documentation that is now required to be submitted at the time of the application.

Documentation Requirement Changes

The following change is effective for all new applications submitted after August 15th, 2014, regardless of date of hire.

- The New Hire Eligibility Determination Form must be signed by an individual who had responsibility for making the hiring decision for the organization.
- In order to document Veteran status, applicants must submit one of the following proofs of military service: DD-214, Letter of Service from the Department of Veterans Affairs, or Letter from the National Personnel Records Center (change was effective June 2014).

Reimbursement Request Changes

The following change is effective for all Reimbursement Requests for new hires with a retention date of August 15th, 2014 or later (new hire date of April 15th or later).

- All Reimbursement Requests must be submitted within 30 days of the date that the new hire has met the retention requirement (120 days for new hires hired prior to August 15, 2014 and 180 days for new hires hired on or after August 15th, 2014).

Frequently Asked Questions

Question: My organization has already submitted applications for more than 16 new hires this calendar year. Am I prohibited from submitting additional applications?

Answer: Yes. Your company may not submit any additional applications this calendar year. Your company will be eligible to submit more applications for any new hires hired on or after January 1, 2015.

Question: My organization has already been paid for 8 new hires hired in calendar year 2014, but we have other approved new hires. Can I still submit reimbursement requests for these additional new hires?

Answer: No. Your organization is not eligible to receive more than \$40,000 per calendar year.

Question: I was approved for a new hire hired before August 15th. When am I eligible to submit a reimbursement request?

Answer: For any new hire hired prior to August 15th, your organization must adhere to the guidelines that were in effect before August 15. Therefore, new hires hired prior to August 15 must be retained for 120 days and earn a minimum of \$2,500 within the 120 day period for your organization to be eligible for reimbursement.

Action

Required: Please disseminate this information to all appropriate staff.

Effective: Immediately

Inquiries: Please email all questions to PolicyQA@detma.org. Also, indicate Issuance number and description.