

## WIOA Youth Workgroup

### Meeting Notes

February 20, 2015

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**Members in Attendance:** Christine Abramowitz (Regional Employment Board of Hampden County), Bob Bower (AFL-CIO), Joanna Cataldo (East Boston Neighborhood Health Center), Katy Gentile (The Career Place), Mary Giordano (Lawrence Adult Learning Resource Center), Pricilla Golding (Metro North Regional Employment Board), David Hoff (Institute for Community Inclusion), Tricia Lucier (Employment and Training Resources), John Oliveria (Mass Commission for the Blind), Vicky Palantzas (Brockton Area Workforce Investment Board), Larry Smith (Jobs and Community Service), Olivia Steele (Adult Community Learning Services), Shailah Stewart (Department of Elementary and Secondary Education)

**Non-Members in Attendance:** Les Abramowitz (Department of Career Services), Maddrey Goode (MWPA Chair), Kevin Madden (Quincy Career Center Director), John Niles (Commonwealth Corp.), Diane Hurley (Department of Career Services), Cheryl Scott (Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development), Sacha Stadhard (Department of Career Services), Eddie Zhang (Department of Career Services)

#### **DISCUSSION TOPICS:**

##### **Overview of the MWIB Steering Committee and Workgroups**

Cheryl Scott discussed the WIOA Steering Committee and the focus of developing state level goals and policies to align the workforce system with job demand and industry need. Objectives of the WIOA Steering Committee will be to re-think approach to the workforce system and the design of effective services across workforce partners.

The WIOA Steering Committee has identified three workgroups:

- Job Seeker and Employer Workgroup
- Youth Workgroup
- Eligible Training Provider List Workgroup

These workgroups will identify state level policy changes that will create effective outcomes as well as identify necessary policy and operational changes. The workgroups will report policy and operations recommendations to the WIOA Steering Committee which will then be communicated to the Massachusetts Workforce Investment Board for ratification.

Cheryl Scott noted that the State plan is due March 2016.

#### **Eligibility**

The requirement for OSY to provide proof of low-income status has been decreased under WIOA. The new youth eligibility requirements are more liberal and will allow a greater number of OSY to become eligible for WIOA.

In the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) an individual with a disability is included in the definition of a youth that requires additional assistance ([Mass Workforce Issuance #10-42](#)). In WIOA an individual with a disability is elevated as one of the additional conditions that either an ISY or OSY must meet to become eligible. While individuals with disabilities are eligible under WIA, WIOA makes clear that youth with disabilities are highly eligible for services.

Youth who live in a “High Poverty Area” are considered low-income. The definition of a “High Poverty Area” is still not defined. It was suggested that the State research and publish this definition. We will receive more information on “High Poverty Area” once the Notice of Proposed Rule Making becomes available in spring of 2015.

WIOA states that local boards may designate standing committees to provide information and assist with the planning, operational, and other issues related to the provision of services to youth. Local boards may also designate a standing committee to provide information and assist with the provision of services to individuals with disabilities.

### **Career Pathways**

WIOA requires career pathways to be developed and implemented within the local areas by aligning employment, training, post-secondary education and supportive services to individuals with barriers to employment.

A discussion on career pathways will need to take place so the group has a shared perspective of career pathways.

John Niles suggested that Career Pathway models be shared. John also noted that 40 career pathways programs are being developed across the state.

Christine Abramowitz noted that Jobs for the Future has H1-B Career Pathways models.

Olivia Steele noted that DESE has an adult Career Pathways program and RFP’s were issued state-wide.

The expansion of age increases the opportunity to provide career pathways to an older population of youth. There is also an opportunity for better partnerships between high schools and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE).

An exercise to map education, training, secondary, and post-secondary resources should take place at the state level as well as at the local level to identify career pathways.

### **Transition to WIOA**

Christine Abramowitz noted that the Employment and Training Administration released TEGL 19-14: [\*The Visions for the Workforce System and Initial Implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014.\*](#)

The TEGL states that most WIOA provisions will be implemented in July 2015. The TEGL indicates WIOA funding will be available in April 2015, and changes will need to be made to the FSR tracking.

States and local areas should begin planning and implementing WIOA transition now. The TEGL identifies actions that states and local areas should take to move forward with implementation of WIOA. DOL will provide additional guidance in the coming months on transitioning to WIOA.

Cheryl Scott noted that DOL has mentioned that FY16 will be a “building year” as we transition to WIOA. She also noted that there are other states that only serve ISY and this is a big transition for them. The purpose of the WIOA Youth Workgroup is to figure out strategies for WIOA Implementation.

### **OSY Discussion**

A majority of the OSY programs are geared towards high school drop-outs. In addition to high school drop-outs there will be an opportunity to serve an older population of youth who have their secondary credential but are disconnected. Local areas will need to expand programming to OSY.

Contact with local area high schools is encouraged to tap into the populations of youth who have completed their secondary credential but who have not made plans for training, post-secondary school, or employment. These youth should be targeted for program recruitment at the end of their last year of high schools.

There was a discussion on whether the ISY program could act as a pipeline to the OSY program. This might prove as a strategy for recruiting OSY. It was unclear how transitioning youth from the ISY program to the OSY program would affect enrollment data. Follow up regarding policy for transitioning ISY to OSY as well as performance data implications is needed.

Tricia Lucier discussed the Career Connections youth program model in the Metro Southwest local area. The program provides HiSET prep, job readiness, and occupational skills training. Tricia noted that youth participate in a Trades exploratory program where upon completion youth can transition into union jobs. Program staff also facilitates entrance into an LPN program, placement into employment and then transition into classes for the RN program.

### **Work-Based Experience**

In WIOA not less than 20% percent of funds allocated to the local areas must be used to provide in-school and out-of-school youth with work-based experiences. Work-based experience include summer jobs, pre-apprenticeship, on-the-job training, and internships.

There was a question raised about expenses attributable to the work-based experience component. Could only the training expenses be allocated, or all expenses related to the work-based experience program. The answer is that all related expenses, e.g. staffing, curriculum development, etc. can count in this category.

### **Vocational Rehabilitation**

Under WIOA 15% of public Vocation Rehabilitation funds must now be used for transition services. WIOA enhances the roles and requirements of the general workforce system in meeting the needs of individuals with disabilities. This is an opportunity for discussion on how to develop strategies to support career pathways for individuals with disabilities that lead to employment.

Individuals with disabilities must have access to pre-employment transition services. Pre-employment transition services for youth include job exploration, work-based learning experiences, workplace readiness, instruction in self-advocacy, and counseling opportunities for enrollment in transition or postsecondary education programs.

There is a need to explore other resources and create partnerships to deliver these services to individuals with disabilities. Employer partnerships will be key for employment options and outcomes.

### **Procurement**

WIOA maintains a competitive procurement cycle but allows for 10% of funds to be used for pay for performance contracts. WIOA also allows sole source contracts if there are insufficient providers. The option to sole source a contract is also available in WIA if competition is determined to be inadequate or where there is a failed competition ([Mass Workforce Issuance # 01-52](#)). Diane noted that the requirements for sole source contracts in WIA are very restrictive and because of this local areas did not use this option.

John noted that a recent Executive Order from the governor of the State of Washington directs all state cabinet agencies to use performance-based contracting in all contracts for products and services. The state's Department of Enterprise Services has created a website as an on-line reference source for procurement, contracting and performance

management to meet this new policy. The core website is accessible at:

<http://www.des.wa.gov/services/ContractingPurchasing/PoliciesTraining/Resources/Pages/performanceBasedContracting.aspx>

The home page of that URL contains additional links to helpful reference materials, including state policies, contracting guides, a PowerPoint document on performance-based contracting. Other links include sample performance based contracts for client services, personal services, and IT services.

One of the core reference documents is titled [State Auditor's Office \(SAO\) " Idea in Brief: Results-Based Contracting, State Government Performance Review "](#), and can be downloaded from that website (or click on the link).

### **Performance Measures**

There was discussion on whether the new In Program Skill Gains measure in WIOA would need to be a measure of academic skill gains or would work readiness be an allowable measure of skill gains. The Work Based Learning Plan (WBLP) could be used as a tool to assess work readiness skill gains. More information on the definition of In Program Skills Gains is needed.

There was discussion as to whether the National Career Readiness Credential (NCRC) could be used as a positive outcome for the diploma/credential attainment performance measure in WIOA. Through the Massachusetts Career Readiness Initiative, all One-Stop Career Centers and Community Colleges will have the ability to test for the NCRC, which will greatly expand access and use of the NCRC statewide. The group would like to know the Department of Labor's position on accepting the NCRC as an industry recognized credential.

There was discussion regarding the definition of Effectiveness in Serving Employers.

Christine noted that the federal Secretary's of Labor and Education will jointly develop and established this measure across all programs.

### **Timeline**

John Niles noted that the timeline was broad and addresses big picture issues however; there is a need to discuss the specific provisions in WIOA.

Diane Hurley agreed that the timeline is geared towards broad policy issues. There will also be a need to have discussions based on strategies for the implementation of the specific WIOA youth provisions. In the coming months we will create subcommittees to recommend strategies and guidance for implementation of the specific WIOA provisions.

### **Next Meeting Date**

It was agreed that the WIOA Youth Workgroup would meet on the last Friday of the month for the next four consecutive months.

Below is a schedule for the WIOA Youth Workgroup meetings:

- Friday, March 27<sup>th</sup> – The North Central Career Center in Leominster, MA from 10:00 am – 12:00 pm
- Friday, April 24<sup>th</sup> - ETR Framingham from 10:00 am – 12:00 pm
- Friday, May 27<sup>th</sup> – TBA
- Friday, June 26<sup>th</sup> – TBA

