



MASSACHUSETTS  
**Workforce Investment Act**

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**WIA Communication No. 03-25**

**Policy**    **Information**

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**To:** Chief Elected Officials  
Workforce Investment Board Chairs  
Workforce Investment Board Directors  
Title I Administrators  
Title I Fiscal Officers  
Career Center Directors  
DET Regional and Area Directors

**From:** Jane Edmonds, Director  
Department of Workforce Development

**Date:** November 13, 2003

**Subject:** Application Instructions for Rapid Response Set-Aside Funds

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**Purpose:** To transmit the Commonwealth's policy regarding the process for distribution of Rapid Response Set-Aside Funds (**this policy replaces WIA Policy #00-32 and #03-11**)

**Background:** The discretionary funds available for dislocated worker projects in Massachusetts are WIA Rapid Response 25% set-aside funds. The Department of Workforce Development has given the responsibility for the distribution and management of these funds to the Division of Employment and Training.

This policy is intended to address when and how these funds will be made available to local areas impacted by mass layoffs and closings.

**Policy:** The Commonwealth's policy regarding the distribution of Rapid Response Set-Aside (RRSA) funds is attached. This policy shall apply to all Massachusetts Local Workforce Investment Areas.

**Effective:** Immediately.

**Inquiries:** Questions related to this policy should be directed to Ken Messina at (508) 890-3218 or at [kmessina@detma.org](mailto:kmessina@detma.org)

**Filing:** Please file this in your notebook of previously issued WIA Communication Series Issuances as #03-25.

## Sequence of Activities

Upon receipt of notification of a mass layoff or plant closing, staff of the Division of Employment and Training (DET) Rapid Response Unit notifies the Local Workforce Investment Board (LWIB) and Chief Elected Official (CEO) of the activity.

DET Rapid Response staff works with the affected company to gather information regarding the impacted population. Data collected includes but is not limited to:

- Demographic information
- Job titles
- Salary information
- Duration of employment with the company
- Education and skill levels
- Workers' interest in accessing services

Using this information, Rapid Response and other DET staff in coordination with the Local Workforce Investment Board (LWIB) develops a plan for the delivery of Rapid Response and other services available from DET, One Stop Career Centers, Department of Economic Development and other state and local programs. This plan may include aversion strategies, turnaround management assistance and/or an implementation strategy and schedule for the DET Rapid Response Team to provide on-site services. If information gathered during this process indicates that a majority of the targeted population has barriers to employment that will require intensive and training services, then DET Rapid Response staff works with the local board to determine whether a proposal to request Rapid Response set-aside funds may be appropriate.

*Note: All proposals should be developed in collaboration with the local area Rapid Response Coordinator.*

## Proposal Criteria

In order for the mass layoff or closing event to be considered for Rapid Response set-aside funding, the local area must submit a proposal, which has been reviewed and determined complete by a Rapid Response Coordinator. The proposal must contain the following criteria:

1. Documentation demonstrating that the level of layoff activity resulting from the mass layoff or closing exceeds the local area's current capacity to address the needs of the population.
2. Documentation that a significant percentage of the affected workforce has barriers to employment.
3. Description of the proposed use of the funds relative to the amount of funds requested. Rapid Response Set-Aside Funds may be used for the following:
  - a.) **Training** – Occupational training.
  - b.) **Trade Assistance** – Areas which demonstrate a high volume of Trade customers may request RRSA funds to support staff to work directly with Trade customers. The request for RRSA funding will be evaluated based upon the size of the Trade customer caseload.

- c.) **Intensive Services** – RRSA funds may be requested to support staff working directly with customers dislocated from specific companies identified in the proposal, i.e. companies experiencing mass layoffs or closure. It should be noted that it is the intention of the Commonwealth to direct a majority of RRSA funds toward training.
4. Description of the service strategy for the affected population, including types of services to be provided and planned number of participants to be served with these funds.

The proposal for Rapid Response set-aside funds must include the following:

- Cover letter, including narrative description of the four conditions as described above.
- Sign-off sheet that includes signatures of the LWIB Director, Fiscal Agent and local area Rapid Response Coordinator.
- Budget.
- Budget Narrative.

The proposal for Rapid Response set-aside funds should be sent to:

Lisa Caissie  
Division of Employment and Training  
Hurley Bldg. – 19 Staniford Street  
E.S.P.S. 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Boston, Massachusetts 02114

*(Proposal may be submitted electronically to [lcaissie@detma.org](mailto:lcaissie@detma.org) and followed by a hard copy)*

## **Reporting Requirements**

### 1. Program Reporting Requirements

Participant data will be entered in the Massachusetts One Stop Employment System (MOSES). A career-center specific program will be set up for this purpose.

### 2. Fiscal Reporting Requirements

Rapid Response funds under WIA are considered separate from formula funds and will not be added to the current fiscal year allocation. Expenditures for Rapid Response Set Aside funds will be tracked separately. A Fiscal Status Report (FSR) will be submitted electronically by the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month to DET. The email address is [vamorelli@detma.org](mailto:vamorelli@detma.org)

The Commonwealth reserves the right to recapture unexpended funds. Also, when funding is provided as a “bridge” pending award of a National Emergency Grant (NEG), it is the option of the Commonwealth to recapture funds expended/obligated from the Rapid Response set-aside grant subsequent to the effective date of the NEG.

DET will review the information provided along with other relevant information. Information factored into the funding decision will include timing of layoffs, size of the dislocation, needs of the population and amount of available funds. Written notification of the funding decision will be provided to the Local Workforce Investment Board. At that time, additional information and/or planning documents may be requested. Funds may be awarded incrementally, based upon specific performance criteria.

# Rapid Response Set-Aside Funds

## Proposal Signatory Sheet

Workforce Investment Area: \_\_\_\_\_

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**WIB Director** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Fiscal Agent** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Rapid Response Coordinator** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_