



Workforce Issuance

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☐ Policy ☒ Information

To: Chief Elected Officials
MassHire Workforce Board Chairs
MassHire Workforce Board Directors
MassHire Career Center Directors
MassHire Fiscal Officers
MDCS Operations Managers

cc: WIOA State Partners

From: Alice Sweeney, Director
MassHire Department of Career Services

Date: September 3, 2020

Subject: **Change in the Workforce Training Fund Program, General Program RE: Matching Funds Waiver for Workplace ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) training**

Purpose: To notify MassHire Workforce Boards, MassHire Center Operators and other workforce investment partners of changes regarding ESOL training within the General Program, Workforce Training Fund Program.

Background: The Massachusetts Workforce Training Fund Program (WTFP) awards between \$18MM-\$22MM annually to Massachusetts businesses to fund training for new and recently hired employees. The WTFP gives employers these resources to invest in their workforce, improve employee skills and maintain the economic strength and viability of the Commonwealth's businesses. One of the stated priorities of the Workforce Training Fund is to improve English language skills or ESOL.

The General Program is the largest of the three Workforce Training Fund Programs. It awards up to \$250,000 for a two year, customized training program. Grant funds must be matched dollar-for-dollar by grant recipients. The matching requirement includes training-related expenses such as the cost of wages and fringe of trainees during training hours. Typically, the cost of wages and fringe of employees during training hours is sufficient to meet matching requirements.

Some employers have expressed difficulty meeting the matching requirements for ESOL training. This may be due to smaller class sizes, lower wage trainees, or other factors. To address the issue and encourage more business to use the Workforce Training Fund Program to offer their employees ESOL training, we are announcing a policy change regarding matching funds.

New General Program applications that include workplace ESOL are **not** required to meet the 1:1 matching requirement, if the application otherwise meets the match in absence of the ESOL module(s). For example, if the total grant request is \$200,000, with \$50,000 designated for ESOL, the matching funds for the non-ESOL modules must total at least \$150,000. Applicants are required to contact us at krayne@commcorp.org before applying, to receive guidance about how to take full advantage of special exceptions for ESOL.

Guidance incorporating these changes is now available at:
[WorkforceTrainingFund.org/general](https://workforcetrainingfund.org/general)

Required: MassHire Workforce Boards and MassHire Career Center Partners should be notified as well as Massachusetts Association of Community Colleges Workforce Development contacts: <https://masscc.org/workforce-training/workforce-development-contact-information>

Effective: Immediately

Inquiries: Please refer questions about the Workforce Training Fund Program to Kristen Rayne, Outreach Manager, at Krayne@commcorp.org