



MASSACHUSETTS
WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT
JOINT PARTNER COMMUNICATION

WIOA Joint Partner Communication 01.2019

Policy **Information**

To: Chief Elected Officials
MassHire Workforce Board Chairs
MassHire Workforce Board Directors
WIOA Title I Administrators
MassHire Career Center Directors
WIOA Title I Fiscal Officers
MDCS Operations Managers
Adult Education Providers
Massachusetts Rehabilitation Offices and Providers
Massachusetts Commission for the Blind Offices and Providers
Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) Providers
Dept. of Transitional Assistance Offices and providers of SNAP and TANF Services

From: Jennifer James, Undersecretary
Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development
Alice Sweeney, Director
MassHire Department of Career Services
Jeffrey McCue, Commissioner
Department of Transitional Assistance
Richard Jeffers, Director
Department of Unemployment Assistance
Toni Wolf, Commissioner
Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission
David D'Arcangelo, Commissioner
Massachusetts Commission for the Blind
Jolanta Conway, State ABE Director
Department of Elementary and Secondary Ed, Adult and Community Learning Services
Olga Yulikova, Senior Community Service Employment Manager
Executive Office of Elder Affairs

Date: January 7, 2019

Subject: **Work Participant Program (WPP) Services Guidance**

Purpose: To provide guidance to MassHire Workforce Boards, MassHire Career Center Operators, Department of Transitional Assistance TAO Office Staff and other workforce development partners regarding the services to be provided to Work Participant Programs (WPP) shared customers.

Background: Effective July 1, 2017, an Interdepartmental Service Agreement (ISA) was signed between the MassHire Department of Career Services (MDCS) and the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) to provide career planning support and resources to DTA clients, who are prioritized by WIOA*.

**WIOA sec. 134 (c)(3)(E) states that individualized career services and training services funded with Title I Adult Program funds must be given on a priority basis, regardless of funding levels, to:*

- *Recipients of public assistance*
- *Other low income individuals (in accordance with Federal Poverty Guidelines and Lower Living Level Standard Income Levels)*
- *Individuals who are basic skills deficient*

Veterans under WIOA sec. 3(63)(A) and 38 U.S.C. 101 receive priority of service in all Department of Labor-funded training programs under 38 U.S.C. 4215 and described in 20 CFR 1010. A Veteran must still meet each program's eligibility criteria to receive services under the respective employment and training program.

If customers are co-enrolled with WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker or Youth programs, they must hold U.S. Citizenship or Authorization to work in the U.S, and be selective service compliant.

This program is identified as the DTA Work Participant Program (WPP). Each DTA Transitional Assistance Office (TAO) and each MassHire Career Center has designated lead staff members to work together on behalf of DTA clients. These staff work collaboratively to ensure that Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC) and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) clients receive tailored and appropriate job readiness, job matching, coaching and employment supports. The DTA designated staff (Full Engagement Workers/FEWs) from DTA local offices are also co-located at Career Centers and provide support, information and resources to Career Center staff and DTA clients on a locally established schedule and frequency.

The Local Umbrella Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and regular, ongoing local partner meetings should drive the model for local partner staff to work together to provide a full array of services to shared customers, the range of which encompasses initial assessment, career planning, workshops, event coverage and more.

The successful completion of WPP services is expected to result in full-time, unsubsidized employment for consumers that is aligned with labor market needs and participant goals toward a career pathway.

Policy: All enrolled WPP customers are expected to meet the following minimum activity/participation requirements:

- Become a member of the MassHire Career Center and register through JobQuest;
- Attend a Career Center Orientation/Seminar;
- Participate in the “career readiness” assessment process identified by the MassHire Career Center/assigned job counselor;

Active participation in and compliance with the required WPP activities satisfy TAFDC and SNAP work program requirements. For TAFDC participants, attendance and participation will be recorded on the ESP 7B form and signed by the assigned MassHire Career Center job counselor, in collaboration with the FEW.

Recruitment, Eligibility, and Enrollment: Designated MassHire Career Center staff attend employment orientations at local DTA offices to explain the information, services, programs, tools and resources participants can access through the Career Center and recruit DTA clients to participate in the WPP.

Referral for the WPP is determined by DTA. WPP referrals will be provided to DTA clients that are actively seeking new or better employment opportunities. Referrals will generally be made for DTA clients that are considered “job ready,” based on a history of employment and or educational attainment. Other DTA clients, as determined by the local TAO staff or the SNAP E&T Specialist may also receive a WPP referral, based on their specific employment goals. Procedures for receipt of referrals will be determined locally and will maximize convenience and engagement for WPP customers.

The decision for WPP enrollment should be guided by the assessment of the shared customer’s strengths and challenges and the match between their employment goals and services available through the MassHire Career Center. Career Center counselors are encouraged to consult with local FEWs on a case-by-case basis regarding participants for whom the enrollment decision is not clear. If it is determined WPP does not fit the customer’s needs, Career Center staff and DTA will work together to find alternative services.

Please refer to Mass Workforce Issuance [100 DCS 08.110: DTA Work Participation Program, Attachment D: DTA WPP MOSES Tracking Guide](#) for detailed guidance on enrolling WPP customers.

MassHire Career Center Services

WPP customers should follow the local customer flow framework. All WPP customers shall have access to:

- The Career Center Seminar

- Assessment Tools
- Job Search Assistance
- Training options, if eligible

A minimum level of service provision is required to be offered by the Career Center to WPP enrolled customers. The minimum level of service includes continuous assessment, career planning that utilizes demand labor market analysis (LMI), in depth job search coaching, training (if otherwise eligible) and other programming particular to a Career Center at a minimum level of:

- At least one (1) check-in contact *per week*; *and*
- At least four (4) self or non-self-service activities *per month* including, but not limited to in-person counseling, training, job referrals, workshops, resume assistance, or job fair attendance.

*(**Example: a customer may attend 2 workshops during weeks 1 and 2 of a particular month, meet with a counselor during week 3 and attend a job fair on week 4.)*

If eligible, and subject to availability of funding, WPP customers may also have access to WIOA funded training that is aligned with local LMI and a customer's targeted career and delivered through a workforce development system provider.

Detailed Description of Services Available to WPP Customers

Assessment: Participants will receive assessments of skill level(s), abilities, and supportive service needs. Assessment systems that will be utilized for WPP job seekers may include but are not limited to Transferable Occupational Relationship Quotient (TORQ) and the Placement Quizzes in Applied Math, Workplace Documents, and Graphic Literacy through WorkKeys Curriculum. Both of these assessment tools are designed to be individualized and have been proven effective in working with individuals across a range of experience and educational levels. TORQ allows the job seeker to take their transferable skills to the next step for career exploration/options.

WorkKeys Curriculum comprises three courses designed to remediate and enhance numeracy, literacy, and critical thinking skills. It is the updated and revised Career Ready 101, and each of the three courses is aligned with the assessments in WorkKeys 2.0. The courses are delivered via a personalized, mobile-based learning management system. The platform delivers a meaningful learning experience and provides users with a customized study schedule and detailed instructional content. The WorkKeys System promotes sustained success by encouraging career exploration and positive work behaviors, and increasing capability to develop resumes, conduct job searches, and succeed in interviews. WorkKeys Curriculum is the remediation tool that prepares customers for the WorkKeys exam. Successful completion of the WorkKeys exam earns a

customer a National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) at a Bronze, Silver, Gold, or Platinum level. Career Ready 101 comprises career exploration and soft skills lesson modules. It is no longer a valid preparation tool for the WorkKeys exam, but it does contain useful content separate from WorkKeys exam preparation.

Additional guidance on WorkKeys will be issued soon..

Staff will assist customers in utilizing and/or reviewing the assessment outcomes to help the customer in determining appropriate next steps towards their career goals.

Career Planning: Each WPP participant will develop a career plan in a manner consistent with Career Planning under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. Customers will have access to basic and individualized career services to prepare for entry or growth with the labor market. In addition, some of these customers may also require education and/or training services. For training participants, including those participating in an OJT or other work-based (Apprenticeship, internship, paid or unpaid work experience) training, there is an expectation of consistent, ongoing communication among the appropriate DTA and MassHire Career Center staff, the trainee and the employer. MDCS strongly recommends that a visit to the job site is conducted during the first two weeks of the training period and once a month thereafter, to ensure that all the contracted elements are in place.

MDCS and DTA encourage co-enrollment of WPP customers (a priority population) as deemed necessary to provide the supports required as outlined in the customer's career plan.

In-Depth Job Search Coaching: WPP enrollees will receive comprehensive, individualized job search coaching/assistance. Through this process, enrollees will evaluate a wide range of career factors, including talents, aptitudes, interests, values and more, and will be assisted to discover the career that is the right fit for them.

Methodologies can include coaching on:

- how to stand out among others
- how to eliminate nervousness
- project confidence and communicate effectively
- how to answer behavioral, situational, & stress questions

Strategies can also include:

- mock interviews
- questions to expect and best answers
- proper body language and energy
- how to explain gaps of employment & job changes

Training: The following is a list of training opportunities that may be available to WPP customers and other targeted groups:

- On-the-job training supported through various grants with a formal training plan at a business;
- Apprenticeship opportunities;
- Occupational training supported through individual training accounts provided by vendors on the Eligible Training Provider List;
- Training supported through the Workforce Training Fund Program (WTFP). Information can be found at: [On-The-Job Training \(OJT\) through the Workforce Training Fund Program](#) Issuance: 100 DCS 07.100.1, issued: 1/17/18.

Career Center staff will refer appropriate and eligible participants to training programs and direct individuals to resources to assist in applying for financial aid for training and education programs not provided under WIOA.

Job Development/Placement/Follow-Up: MassHire Career Center staff will provide job placement assistance that includes imparting information on employment opportunities across industries including nontraditional ones. Successful completion of services for WPP customers will result in full-time, unsubsidized employment. It is the responsibility of the Career Center to develop a local process for confirming employment and to notify the designated DTA staff person. The Career Center will also be responsible for documenting retention in employment as described in local policy. All retention and follow-up information must be entered into the MOSES data system. The Career Center must have a menu of post-placement services available to all interested customers who have been exited.

In a case where training does not result in job placement for the trainee, Career Center staff will provide ongoing assistance to facilitate the job search according to Career Center standard operating procedures and the trainee's Career Plan.

Follow-up services must be made available as appropriate and can consist of retention workshops, events, networking groups, mini-trainings, advocacy and referral services, or any other service, which would be valued by an employed customer. The Career Center must track utilization of the services, including all contacts made to the exited customer throughout the follow-up period, in MOSES.

Reengagement

In collaboration with the FEW, MassHire Career Center staff will be responsible for providing the necessary support to WPP customers who need one-on-one attention to maintain consistent engagement and participation in the WPP. FEWs

and Career Center staff will provide a combination of individualized customer support services focused on engagement to mitigate challenges that could interfere with a participant's regular attendance, progress on their career plan and/or participation in a training activity. WPP customers who miss two or more required activities in a 30-day period will be referred to the FEW for a re-engagement meeting.

Reporting

The MassHire Career Center will maintain an electronic record of activities and results in the MOSES computer data system following procedures established by MDCS. Information in the MOSES system will encompass eligibility determination, basic, individualized and follow-up service delivery, enrollment, career planning, training and job placement for all customers enrolled in WPP. The information entered must be timely and accurate. The data collected by the Career Centers will be used to document performance outcomes for WPP at the overall project level as well as at the local Career Center level.

Career Center staff will also notify the FEW when a WPP customer becomes employed to ensure DTA benefits and services are up-to-date.

Exits

Following completion of agreed upon and required WPP activities and 90 days of no services (excluding follow-up services), WPP customers will be auto exited from the WPP program and any other program for which they are enrolled (e.g., WIOA).

Action

Required: Please ensure that all relevant MassHire Career Center and DTA staff are understand the WPP requirements and minimum service offerings.

Effective: July 1, 2018

Inquiries: Please forward inquiries to PolicyQA@MassMail.State.MA.US.