



MASSACHUSETTS
WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT
JOINT PARTNER COMMUNICATION

WIOA Joint Partner Communication 01.2021

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
Richard Jeffers, Director
Department of Unemployment Assistance
Toni Wolf, Commissioner
Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission
David D'Arcangelo, Commissioner
Massachusetts Commission for the Blind
Wyvonne Stevens-Carter, State Adult Education Director
Department of Elementary and Secondary Ed, Adult and Community Learning Services
Olga Yulikova, Senior Community Service Employment Manager
Executive Office of Elder Affairs
Amy Kershaw, Commissioner
Department of Transitional Assistance

Date: February 5, 2021

Subject: **MassHire and Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission Training Partnership**

Purpose: To notify MassHire Workforce Boards, MassHire Career Center Operators, and other workforce partners of funds available to Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) consumers through the MassHire and MRC Training Partnership.

Background: MRC has committed \$400,000 in funding during FY2021 to support workforce training for MRC consumers. MassHire Department of Career Services (MDCS) and MRC will continue to partner to assist training-ready MRC consumers to enroll in workforce training that will lead to increased employment opportunities. Funds provided by MRC for training are supplemental to WIOA training funds.

The MassHire Hampden County Workforce Board (MHCWB) will continue to administer the funding for Individual Training Accounts (ITA), and new this year, for “voucher payments” to MassHire Career Centers. Funds may also be utilized for On-the-Job Training (OJT), as appropriate to the individual circumstance and as approved by MRC in conjunction with MHCWB.

Policy: FY21 MRC training funds became available July 1, 2020 and will remain available through September 30, 2021 and are accessible to all sixteen local workforce areas. Contracts for the ITAs are executed between the MHCWB and the individual training providers selected by the MRC consumer.

MRC training funds are not subject to a cap on training costs. Funds will be distributed on a first come first-served basis and must be **fully expended by September 30, 2021.**

Shared Customers

All MRC consumers referred to the MassHire Career Center system will be required to complete a career center registration. Career center registration allows MRC consumers access to basic services including labor exchange services, information on programs and services, and referrals. MRC consumers who enroll in MassHire/MRC Training Partnership are Shared Customers.

Staff must check off the “MRC” button on the Basic Screen to indicate the consumer is a Shared Customer.

Co-enrollment in the WIOA Title I Adult Program

Co-enrollment of the MRC consumer into the WIOA Title I Adult program, as appropriate, is strongly encouraged. MRC consumers enrolled in the WIOA Title I Adult program are shared customers who will receive access to individualized career services including but not limited to:

- Specialized Assessments
- Development of Individual Employment Plan
- Individualized Counseling
- Career Planning

WIOA Title I Eligibility for Individualized Career Services

To be eligible to receive individualized career services, MRC consumers must meet the following WIOA Title I Eligibility requirements. Priority for individualized services must also be applied.

Title I Eligibility:

- 18 years of age or older.

- Citizen or national of the United States, lawfully admitted permanent resident alien, refugee, asylee, parolee, or other immigrant authorized by the Attorney General to work in the United States.
- In compliance with the Military Selective Service Act. (WIOA Sec. 189(h)). (This applies to males 18 or older who were born on or after January 1, 1960).

Priority of Service:

Included within one of the following priority groups:

- **Covered persons** (Veterans and eligible spouses)
- **Public assistance** (TAFDC, EAEDC, SNAP, SSI, Chapter 115 benefits)
- **Other low income** (in accordance with Federal Poverty Guidelines and Lower Living Level Standard Income Levels)
- **Basic skills deficient** - English, writing, or computation skills at or below 8.9 grade level or are English Language Learners or an individual that meets one of the following criteria:
 - Lack a high school diploma or high school equivalent and is not enrolled in secondary education.
 - Enrolled in a Title II Adult Education/Literacy program
 - Lack basic computer literacy or basic financial literacy skills.

Eligibility for Training

MRC consumers must have an Individual Plan for Employment (IPE) developed by MRC in order to be eligible for training. The IPE contains results of career assessments and will be provided to the MassHire Career Center (MCC) single point of contact upon referral. The IPE will be used in place of the MCC individual employment plan that would otherwise be developed during individualized career services.

Please note: eligibility for MRC training funds is not contingent upon eligibility for the WIOA Title I Adult Program.

Single Point of Contact Designation

Each MCC must designate and maintain a staff person to act as the single point of contact (SPOC) responsible for coordination with MRC staff to assist the MRC consumer to enroll in training. The MCC SPOC will be responsible for providing the appropriate documentation for enrollment in training to the MHCWB.

MRC also identifies staff to act as the SPOC for local MRC offices that refer MRC consumers to the MCCs for training. The MRC SPOC will be responsible for providing appropriate documentation to the MCC to initiate training enrollment.

The MCC and MRC SPOC List is found [here](#). Local areas should review the SPOC List to ensure contact information is current.

Training

In accordance with consumer choice requirements as stated in WIOA 20 CFR 680.340, MRC consumers will be provided with the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL). MRC consumers in consultation with MRC staff will choose from the approved training courses listed on the ETPL in Training Pro. MRC consumers and MRC staff will identify appropriate trainings from the (ETPL) prior to referrals to the MCCs.

Click link here: [Eligible Training Provider List](#)

Please note there are no geographical restrictions on accessing training.

MRC consumers may seek training services at any MCC. The selected training course may be located outside of the local workforce area to which the MRC consumer has been referred. For example, an MRC consumer referred to the Worcester local workforce area can access training that is located in the Hampden County local workforce area as long as commuting to and from the training does not cause a barrier to participation and successful completion of the training.

MRC consumers may participate in training course offered virtually by training providers approved for the ETPL.

MRC staff must ensure the identified training is appropriate and the MRC consumer meets training vendor requirements such as testing levels, CORI background checks, etc.

The MCC to which the MRC consumer is referred is responsible for initiating enrollment into training regardless of training location.

Training funds may be used to pay for tuition, fees, and other reasonable expenses directly related to the training program such as books and lab fees. For MRC consumers who are co-enrolled in WIOA Title I Adult Program, MCC and MRC staff should coordinate to determine what support services are needed and which entity can provide them.

For MRC consumers only enrolled in training and not co-enrolled in the WIOA Title I Adult Program, MRC will address the provision of support services.

Individual Training Accounts (ITA)

MRC consumers eligible for training will have access to ITAs for training for approved courses listed on the ETPL. Contracts for the ITAs will be executed

between the MassHire Hampden County Workforce Board (MHCWB) and the training provider. The career center SPOC will complete the attached Individual Training Account request form.

Training programs appearing on the Statewide ETPL are authorized for ITA training services for WIOA Title I participants, statewide.

An individual may choose training providers and programs outside of the local area provided the training program is on the state list, in accordance with local policies and procedures. Local workforce boards can supplement the information available from the State ETPL in order to support consumer choice and the achievement of local performance indicators {20 CFR §§680.510 & 680.520}.

Regardless of the funding source, it is a recommended practice that, prior to approving customer enrollment into a training course approved by another local area, local boards should review training course description, performance and cost information and apply any local factors.

On-the-Job Training (OJT)

If an opportunity for OJT becomes an option for an MRC consumer, the appropriate SPOC should contact the MHCWB for further instruction.

Referral Process

The MRC SPOC will contact the MCC SPOC on behalf of the MRC consumer when a referral is made to the MCC for training. The MRC and the MCC SPOC will coordinate a time for the MRC consumer to complete the career center registration. The MCC SPOC will then initiate the process to enroll the consumer in training.

In a case where an MRC consumer is identified for training by MCC staff, the MRC consumer will be referred to the MRC SPOC to ensure the IPE is in place and MRC agrees with the consumer's appropriateness for training. All referrals for training will come from the MRC SPOC.

MRC SPOCs will keep track of the individual MRC consumers referred to the MCCs for training, including the date of referral and the career center to which the referral is made. The attached referral form (Attachment A) will be completed by MRC staff and must be accompanied by the consumer's Individual Plan for Employment and the Shared Customer Release Form (Attachment B).

MRC consumers must sign the attached Shared Customer Release form agreeing to share career assessment results with career center staff.

To initiate enrollment into the training, the MCC SPOC will complete the Training Justification (Attachment C) and MRC Individual Training Request (Attachment D) forms and send these forms along with the MRC Referral Form (Attachment A) and the Shared Customer Release Form (Attachment B) to:

Steve Trueman
Vice President of Workforce Operations
MassHire Hampden County Workforce Development Board
1441 Main Street, 1st Floor
Springfield, MA 01106
FAX (413) 755-1364
strueman@MassHireHCWB.com

Co-Case Management of MRC Shared Customers Enrolled in Training

MCC and MRC staff will determine the local process for co-case management of MRC shared customers enrolled in training to ensure continuous contact while in training as well post training.

MCC staff will provide MRC consumers co-enrolled in the WIOA Title I Adult Program a minimum 30-day contact while in training, assistance with job placement after training completion, and follow up services after placement in employment. MRC and MCC staff should coordinate co-case management of MRC consumers to avoid duplication of service.

Tracking MRC Consumers in MOSES

MCC staff must enter data in MOSES for MRC consumers enrolled in training. Please see Attachment E: MOSES Tracking Guide for the Mass Rehab Training Fund (MRF) for instructions on how to track MRC consumers enrolled in training.

Voucher Payment

MassHire Career Centers will be eligible for a one-time voucher payment of \$1,000 for each MRC consumer that has completed training offered through the grant and placed in employment. Placement in employment may have occurred at any point throughout the duration of the grant (beginning March 2019). Consumers must retain employment for a minimum of 90-days and must be currently employed. Employment must be permanent and may be either full-time or part-time and must be consecutive.

Proof of employment and 90-day retention must be documented as part of the voucher payment process.

Documentation of employment includes:

- An employment verification letter from the consumers employer verifying the start of employment, amount of wages, and full or part time employment; or
- Pay stubs for the employee demonstrating at least 90 days of employment.

Documentation of 90-day retention in employment includes:

- Employment follow-up for 90-days in MOSES

Master Agreement

The fiscal agent for each local area participating in this partnership must enter into a Master Agreement with MHCWB. The Master Agreement (Attachment I) is the contract document that permits voucher payments to be made to the MassHire Career Center upon placement of MRC consumers in to employment post training.

Voucher Invoices (Attachment J) are to be sent to the MHCWB for processing and payment. The MassHire Hampden County Workforce Board remits payment to the Career Center’s fiscal agent upon receipt of the voucher payment invoice. Any local area that has not executed a Master Agreement with MassHire Hampden County Workforce Board will not have access to voucher payments.

**Local
MassHire
Action**

Required: Please notify staff of this policy and take the necessary steps to ensure compliance with its content.

**Local MRC
Partner
Action**

Required: Please notify staff of this policy and take the necessary steps to ensure compliance with its content.

- Attachment:**
- A. MRC Referral Form (Completed by MRC)
 - B. Shared Customer Release Form (Completed by MRC Consumer)
 - C. Training Justification Form (Completed by MCC)
 - D. MRC Individual Training Request Form (Completed by MCC)
 - E. MOSES Tracking Guide for the Mass Rehab Training Fund (MRTF) - Updated
 - F. Q&A - Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission Training Funds
 - G. PowerPoint Presentation on Training Funds for MRC Consumers

- H. MRC Individual Training Account Modification Request
- I. Master Agreement
- J. MassHire/MRC Employment Voucher Invoice

Effective: Immediately

Inquiries: Please email all questions to PolicyQA@MassMail.State.MA.US. Also, indicate Issuance number and description.