



**MASSACHUSETTS
WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT
JOINT PARTNER COMMUNICATION**

WIOA Joint Partner Communication 02.2024

☒ **Policy** ☐ **Information**

To: MassHire Workforce Board Chairs
 MassHire Workforce Board Directors
 MassHire Career Center Directors
 MassHire Fiscal Officers
 MDCS Operations Managers
 Adult Education Providers
 MassAbility Offices and Providers
 Massachusetts Commission for the Blind Offices and Providers
 SCSEP Providers
 Department of Transitional Assistance Offices and providers of SNAP and TANF services

From: Alysia Ordway, Undersecretary, Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development
 Diane Hurley, Acting Director, MassHire Department of Career Services
 Katie Dishnica, Director, Department of Unemployment Assurance
 Toni Wolf, Commissioner, MassAbility
 John Oliveria, Commissioner, Massachusetts Commission for the Blind
 Wyvonne Carter-Stevens, Associate Commissioner, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Adult and Community Learning Services
 Olga Yulikova, Senior Community Service Employment Manager, Senior Community Service Employment Program
 Jeffrey McCue, Commissioner, Department of Transitional Assistance

Date: October 9, 2024

Subject: **MassHire and NextGen Careers Training Partnership**

Purpose: To notify MassHire Workforce Boards, MassHire Career Center Operators, and other workforce partners of funds available to MassAbility consumers enrolled in the NextGen Careers Initiative.

Updates: The following attachments have been updated:

- Attachment A (Next Careers Service Delivery Regions Crosswalk) - includes new single point of contact information.
- Attachment B (NextGen Careers Referral Form) – includes a section to enter training identified from the Eligible Training Provide List as well as a place to include the youth’s MOSES ID.

Background: In December 2021, MassAbility received \$17M from the Rehabilitation Service Administration for a 5-year demonstration project. The focus of the demonstration project, named NextGen Careers is to improve long term career outcomes for young adults with disabilities between the ages of 18-30. The Massachusetts Commission for the Blind and the Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing are partners in the demonstration project.

Policy: MassHire Department of Career Services and its network of MassHire Career Centers will partner with NextGen Careers to enroll young adults with disabilities between the ages of 18-30 into workforce training from approved vendors on the Massachusetts Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL).

The MassHire Hampden County Workforce Board (MHCWB) will administer the funding for NextGen Careers consumers who enroll into training from the ETPL using the Individual Training Account (ITA) funding mechanism. MHCWB will also administer voucher payment for MassHire Career Centers for each NextGen Careers consumer who has entered and maintained employment for a minimum of 90 days.

Funds may also be utilized for On-the-Job Training (OJT) or Apprenticeships, as appropriate to the NextGen Careers consumer and as approved by MassAbility in conjunction with MHCWB. Contracts for the ITAs are executed between the MHCWB and the individual training providers selected by the NextGen Careers consumer.

NextGen Careers 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 June 30, 2025**.

NextGen Careers funding is accessible through the MassHire Career Centers aligned with the NextGen Career service regions list below:

NextGen Careers Service Regions Aligned to MassHire Career Centers

Next Gen Career Service Regions	MassHire Career Centers
West	MassHire Central MA Career Centers MassHire Holyoke Career Center MassHire Springfield Career Center
North	MassHire Greater Lowell Career Center MassHire North Shore Career Centers MassHire Merrimack Valley Career Centers
South	MassHire Quincy Career Center MassHire Downtown Boston Career Center MassHire Boston Career Center MassHire Metro North Career Centers

Shared Customers

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

Co-enrollment in the WIOA Title I Youth or Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs

Co-enrollment of the NextGen Careers consumer into the WIOA Title I Youth or Adult and Dislocated Worker programs, as appropriate, is strongly encouraged. NextGen Careers consumers must meet applicable WIOA Title I eligibility requirements.

MassHire Career Center staff must ensure that NextGen Career consumers co-enrolled in WIOA Title I Youth or Adult and Dislocated Worker programs do not receive duplicative services.

Eligibility for Training

NextGen Careers consumers must have an Individual Plan for Employment (IPE) developed by MassAbility 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 NextGen Careers training funds is not contingent upon eligibility for the WIOA Title I Adult Program.

Single Point of Contact Designation

MCCs in the NextGen Careers service delivery regions must designate and maintain a staff person to act as the single point of contact (SPOC) responsible for coordination with NextGen regional supervisors and staff to assist the Next Gen Careers consumer to enroll in training. The MCC SPOC will be responsible for providing the appropriate documentation for enrollment in training to the MHCWB. The NextGen Careers staff and regional supervisors will be responsible for providing appropriate documentation to the MCC to initiate training enrollment.

The MCC and NextGen Careers Service Delivery Region Crosswalk is located in Attachment A.

Eligible Training Provider List

In accordance with consumer choice requirements as stated in WIOA 20 CFR 680.340, NextGen Careers consumers will be provided with the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL). NextGen Careers consumers in consultation with the NextGen Careers staff will choose from the approved training vendors listed on the ETPL. NextGen Careers consumers and the NextGen Careers 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.

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

NextGen Careers consumers may participate in training courses offered virtually by training providers approved for the ETPL.

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

The MCC to which the NextGen Careers 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 NextGen Careers consumers who are co-enrolled in the WIOA Title I Adult Program, MCC and NextGen Careers staff must coordinate to determine what support services are needed and which entity can provide them.

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

Individual Training Accounts (ITAs)

NextGen Careers 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 MassHire career center SPOC will complete the attached Individual Training Account request form.

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

A NextGen Careers consumer may choose training providers and programs outside of their assigned NextGen Careers service region provided the training program is on the ETPL within the NextGen Careers service region catchment area. Local workforce boards can supplement the information available on the ETPL 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 NextGen Careers consumer enrollment into a training course approved by another local area, local boards review training course description, performance and cost information and apply any local factors.

On-the-Job Training (OJT) or Apprenticeship

If an opportunity for On-the-Job Training or an Apprenticeship becomes an option for an NextGen Careers consumer, the appropriate MCC SPOC should contact the MHCWB for further instruction.

Referral Process

The NextGen Careers staff will contact the MCC SPOC on behalf of the NextGen Careers consumer when a referral is made to the MCC for training. The NextGen

Careers staff and the MCC SPOC will coordinate a time for the NextGen Careers consumer to complete the career center registration. The MCC SPOC will then initiate the process to enroll the NextGen Careers consumer in training.

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

NextGen Careers staff will keep track of the individual NextGen Careers 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 B) will be completed by MassAbility NextGen Careers staff and must be accompanied by the consumer's Individual Plan for Employment and the Shared Customer Release Form (Attachment C).

MassAbility NextGen Careers 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 D) and MassAbility NextGen Careers Individual Training Request form (Attachment E) and send these forms along with the MassAbility NextGen Careers Referral Form (Attachment B) and the Shared Customer Release Form (Attachment C) 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 NextGen Careers Shared Customers Enrolled in Training

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

MCC staff will ensure NextGen Careers consumers who are co-enrolled in the WIOA Title I Adult Program receive a minimum 30-day contact while in training, assistance with job placement after training completion, and follow up services after placement in employment. NextGen Careers and MCC staff should

coordinate co-case management of NextGen Career consumers to avoid duplication of service.

Tracking NextGen Careers Consumers in MOSES

MCC staff must enter data in MOSES for NextGen Careers consumers enrolled in training. Please see Attachment F: MOSES Tracking Guide for the NextGen Careers for instructions on how to track NextGen Careers consumers enrolled in training.

Voucher Payment

MassHire Career Centers will be eligible for a one-time voucher payment of \$1,000 for each NextGen Careers consumer that has completed training provided through the MassHire/NextGen Careers training partnership, entered and retained employment for a minimum of 90 days, and is currently employed. Placement in employment may have occurred at any point throughout the duration of the grant (beginning August 2024). Employment must be permanent and may be either full-time or part-time and must be consecutive (no break in employment).

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 NextGen Careers consumer's employer verifying the start of employment, 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 G) is the contract document that permits voucher payments to be made to the MassHire Career Center upon placement of NextGen Careers consumers into employment post training.

Voucher Invoices

Voucher Invoices (Attachment H) 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.

Individual Training Account Modification Request Form

MCC SPOCs must complete the NextGen Careers Individual Training Account (ITA) Modification Request form (Attachment I) when a change in the NextGen Careers consumer's plan for training has changed. For example, the NextGen Consumer will not start training as planned or will not complete training as planned. The ITA modification request form must be to Steve Trueman at the MHCWDB.

MassHire Career Center Action

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

NextGen Careers Action

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

Attachment: A. NextGen Careers Service Delivery Regions Crosswalk – updated 2/6/25
B. NextGen Careers Referral Form (Completed by NextGen) – updated 2/6/25
C. Shared Customer Release Form (Completed by NextGen Consumer)
D. Training Justification Form (Completed by MCC)
E. NextGen Careers Individual Training Request Form (Completed by MCC)
F. MOSES Tracking Guide for the NextGen Careers
G. Master Agreement
H. MassHire/NextGen Careers Employment Voucher Invoice
I. NextGen Careers Individual Training Account (ITA) Modification Request
J. PowerPoint Presentation on Training Funds for NextGen Careers Consumers

Effective: Immediately

Inquiries: Please email all questions to PolicyQA@Mass.gov. Also, indicate Issuance number and description.