



MASSACHUSETTS WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT JOINT PARTNER COMMUNICATION

WIOA Joint Partner Communication 04.2020

Policy **Information**

To: Chief Elected Officials
MassHire Workforce Board Chairs
MassHire Workforce Board Directors
MassHire Career Center Directors
MassHire 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: Rosalin Acosta, Secretary of Labor and Workforce Development
James Peyser, Secretary of Education
Michael Kennealy, Secretary of Housing and Economic Development

Date: September 24, 2020

Subject: **Regional Planning - A Workforce Skills Cabinet Initiative 2020-2021**

Purpose: To provide workforce, education, and economic partners the 2020/2021 SOW for the implementation of the regions approved Regional Labor Market Blueprint.

Background: The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) was signed into law on July 22, 2014. WIOA supersedes the titles I and II of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, and amends the Wagner-Peyser Act, and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. WIOA requires States to designate “regions” for the purpose of aligning

workforce development activities and resources with larger regional economic development areas and available resources to provide coordinated and efficient services to both job seekers and employers.

The Governor and the Secretaries engaged Chief Elected Officials (CEOs), MassHire Workforce Boards, other Workforce Partners and stakeholders to establish seven planning regions utilizing the required WIOA Regional Planning criteria.

The Massachusetts regional planning process, called the “Regional Workforce Skills Planning Initiative”, is a signature strategy of the Workforce Skills Cabinet (WSC). The Cabinet, created by [Executive Order No. 560](#), brings together the Secretaries of Education, Labor and Workforce Development, and Housing and Economic Development. The WSC has the task of building collaborative solutions that align Massachusetts economic, workforce and education initiatives to better meet the needs of regional economies. The WSC has developed a regional planning process that both meets WIOA requirements and serves as a key strategy to align and coordinate multi-Secretariat investments, policies, and programs.

The WSC regional planning process aligns with a number of Secretariat-level initiatives at the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development (EOHED), Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD), and Executive Office of Education (EOE).

- The Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development published [“Opportunities for All”](#) the statewide economic development plan. The plan speaks to an enhanced role for EOHED and the Massachusetts Office of Business Development to connect business with MassHire Workforce Boards, MassHire One-Stop Career Centers, public post-secondary institutions, and vocational technical schools to develop talent. The WSC regional planning process will advance statewide strategies contained in “Opportunities for All” with on-the-ground leadership in the business, education, and workforce communities. The Economic Development Summit, held in October 2016, further advanced the objectives of Opportunities for All and WSC regional planning.
- The Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development published the statewide Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) [Massachusetts Combined State Plan](#) that was built from the foundation laid by “Opportunities for All” and outlined a set of strategies ensuring that our statewide workforce programs are responsive to the demands of jobseekers and business alike. Additionally, the State Plan integrates the

required WIOA regional planning process into the WSC regional planning process outlined within this document.

- The Executive Office of Education launched a new, historic, strategic framework planning process to identify statewide and regional higher education capital investment needs and funding considerations. The process reviewed facility condition and capabilities, industry collaboration as well as alignment of higher education academic programs to support workforce and economic development.

The Executive Offices will align statewide activities to integrate the economic, workforce, and higher education state-level plans into a unified WSC regional planning process, engaging leadership across major systems.

Policy:

Convene and facilitate at least 3 virtual or (if circumstances allow) in-person *follow up regional sessions* and additional communication or work related to ensuring that the team maintains **continuous communication** and **joint accountability** related to regional plan implementation. This includes a follow-up session that a WSC Secretary will attend in 2020-2021, and/or convenings with representatives from all teams with WSC Secretaries in the same time period.

Participation and convening of regional teams in state-sponsored regional planning restart in 2021, timeline pending labor market context as noted in overview. If/when the regional planning process restarts with a state-led set of meetings, regional teams do not need to simultaneously convene partners.

Joint application for grant funds with economic development, education, and workforce partners to meet priority industry/occupational talent goals articulated in Blueprint. Joint grant application is defined as **the regional team coordinating local applications for grants**. It is preferred, but not required, that the application originate from multiple entities representing the regional teams across WDAs and/or economic development/education entities. Alternately, the applicant can be a single organization applying with the full support and in service of a priority of the regional team, evidenced through a letter of support or MOU. Joint grant fund opportunities may include, but are not limited to:

- a. Skills Capital Grants
- b. High Quality College and Career Pathway Applications
- c. Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund
- d. Adult Basic Education
- e. ESL Workforce Training

Joint input into the following ongoing planning processes:

- a. Higher Education Capital Planning
- b. EOHED Advanced Manufacturing Training
- c. Healthcare Collaborative strategy implementation

Continuous communication with state-level industry organizing structures (Workforce Skills Cabinet, Healthcare Collaborative, TBD for manufacturing and tech).

Identification of and engagement with businesses within the identified high priority industries/occupations to confirm/ finalize Blueprint.

Direct implementation of strategies in approved Blueprint. Budget narrative must identify and reference specific strategies or groups of strategies outlined in Blueprint and articulate how funds will execute against those strategies.

Provision of feedback on 2017-2021 regional planning structure to inform modification and updates to regional planning processes in future years, and participation in material development for any state-sponsored regional planning sessions.

Action

Required: See Attachment A – Regional Planning SOW for required submission dates.

Effective: Immediately

Inquiries: Please contact Marina Zhavoronkova by email at Marina.R.Zhavoronkova@MassMail.State.MA.US with any questions. Please reference the Issuance Number and Subject in the subject line of your inquiry.

Attachment: A: Regional Planning SOW – 2020/2021

References: [WIOA Ch. 2 § 106\(a\)\(2\)\(B\)-\(C\)](#)
[Executive Order No. 560](#)
[WIOA Massachusetts Combined State Plan](#)
20 CFR 679.200, 679.500, 679.510