

Mass Workforce Issuance

100 DCS 06.103.1

☒ Policy ☐ Information

To: Chief Elected Officials
Workforce Development Board Chairs
Workforce Development Board Directors
Title I Administrators
Career Center Directors
Title I Fiscal Officers
DCS Operations Managers

cc: WIOA State Partners

From: Alice Sweeney, Director
Department of Career Services

Date: April 3, 2018

Subject: Massachusetts Disaster Hurricane Response Dislocated Worker Grant

Purpose: To notify Local Workforce Development Boards, One-Stop Career Center Operators and other local workforce investment partners of guidance with respect to the Massachusetts Disaster Hurricane Response Dislocated Worker Grant (MA Disaster Hurricane Response DWG).

Background: Disaster Worker Grants (DWG) are discretionary grants awarded by the Secretary of Labor, under Section 170 of WIOA to provide resources to states and other eligible applicants to respond to large, unexpected layoff events causing significant job losses. This funding is intended to temporarily expand capacity to serve dislocated workers, including military service members, and meet the increased demand for WIOA employment and training services, with a purpose to reemploy laid off workers and enhance their employability and earnings. Disaster DWGs provide funding when an area impacted by disaster is declared eligible for public assistance by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) or otherwise recognized by a Federal agency with authority or jurisdiction over Federal response to the emergency or disaster.

The Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD) Department of Career Services (DCS) applied for Disaster DWG funding to assist local One-Stop Career Centers in serving people who have relocated to MA due to the recent hurricanes (Irma and Maria – October 2017).

DCS has received a DWG award in the amount of \$862,837, with the ability to apply for additional funding, up to \$2,588,511, upon demonstrated fiscal and programmatic performance.

The local operator for the MA Disaster Hurricane Response DWG is the Regional Employment Board of Hampden County, Inc. (REBHC). REBHC will operate a “vouchering” component, whereby eligible individuals can receive grant-funded services at any One-Stop Career Center in the state.

Policy: The operating dates for the Commonwealth MA Disaster Hurricane Response DWG are December 1, 2017 through November 30, 2019. Grant funds will be accessible to all sixteen Massachusetts local workforce areas through an executed Master Agreement with REBHC.

To be eligible to participate in the MA Disaster Hurricane Response DWG project, individuals must meet the following WIOA Title I Eligibility requirements as well as one of the Hurricane Response DWG Eligibility requirements.

WIOA Title I Eligibility:

- A 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).

Hurricane Response DWG Eligibility:

1. Individuals who have lost employment due to the Disaster (including formerly self-employed individuals who become unemployed or significantly underemployed as a result of the disaster). To prove Unemployment status, eligible individuals must be Puerto Rico or U.S. Virgin Islands UI benefits recipients or exhaustees (other documentation of unemployment connected to the disaster will be considered on a case by case basis) or;
2. Individuals who have evacuated from the Declared Disaster Areas resulting from Hurricanes Irma and Maria. To prove evacuation status, eligible individuals must have a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) identification number (other documentation, such as airlines tickets or boarding passes will be considered on a case-by-case basis).

Veterans' preference applies within these eligible groups.

The Commonwealth's MA Disaster Hurricane Response DWG project will include the following elements:

Master Agreement:

Each local area fiscal agent will enter into a Master Agreement (based on the Commonwealth's vouchering model) with the Primary Operator for reimbursement for costs associated with the provision of Career Services related to the MA Disaster Hurricane Response DWG project and providing related services including career services to eligible individuals participating in MA Disaster Hurricane Response DWG project.

Single Point of Contact Designation:

Each local area will designate up to two single point(s) of contact (SPoC) responsible for each component available through the MA Disaster Hurricane Response DWG project. In accordance with the Master Agreement, the SPoC(s) will coordinate all activities undertaken in conjunction with this grant as outlined in the Master Agreement.

Voucher Component:

All local Workforce Areas are eligible to receive a voucher payment of \$1,500 for providing individualized Career Services and follow-up services to *Authorized eligible* enrollees. Voucher reimbursement payments will be made to the local area only for non-training individualized career services provided by the local One-Stop Career Center system. The Regional Employment Board of Hampden County (REBHC) 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 the REBHC will not have access to voucher payments described above.

Individual Training Accounts:

Eligible Participants will have access to Individual Training Accounts (ITA) for Occupational Training or Integrated Occupational/ABE/ESOL training for approved courses listed on the State Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL). Contracts for the ITA will be executed between the REBHC and the Training provider.

On-the-Job Training:

Eligible participants will have access to On-the-Job Training (OJT) opportunities in accordance with Mass Workforce Issuance 100 DCS 07.101.1. Contracts for the OJT will be executed between the REBHC and the Eligible Employer that is providing the training.

Adult Basic Education/English for Speakers of Other Languages (ABE/ESOL):

The MA Disaster Hurricane Response DWG project includes funding for ABE/ESOL Services. These types of services, if delivered as a stand-alone service, are considered Career Services. As such, they are not eligible to be provided through the ITA process.

The REBHC will need to procure these services on behalf of the eligible participants within each of the 16 workforce regions with a documented need for such services.

The REBHC will require input from the Workforce Development Board of each area that has a documented need to identify the Scope of the need, the desired services to best address the need, and then will determine the appropriate procurement methodology to effectively and efficiently secure these services. The REBHC will contract directly with service providers selected as a result of the procurement process.

Support Services:

For the MA Disaster Hurricane Response DWG, supportive services are allowable for participants to participate in Career and Training services. Support Services shall be available to eligible participants based on funding availability and in accordance with the pertinent local area's Support Services Policy.

Support Services will be paid "up front" by the local area either to the individual directly or to a third-party provider in a manner consistent with the area's local policy. The local area shall subsequently invoice the Regional Employment Board of Hampden County (REBHC) for Support Services reimbursement.

Action

Required: Please assure that individuals in your workforce area are notified of this policy and take necessary steps to ensure compliance with its content.

Effective: Immediately

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

Attachments: A. Master Agreement

B. Hurricane NDWG Justification Form

C. Individual Training Account Request Form

D. Training Justification Form

E. Voucher – Cash Request Form

F. Support Services – Cash Request Form