

MassWorkforce Issuance

100 DCS 17.103.1

☒ 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: January 26, 2018

Subject: Career Center Certification for Local Workforce Development Boards

Purpose: To notify Local Workforce Development Boards (Local Boards), One-Stop Career Center Operators, and other local workforce partners of guidance related to the criteria and process for One-Stop Career Center Certification

The Massachusetts Career Center Certification criteria create a baseline of consistency across the Commonwealth. Career Center certification ensures that One-Stop Career Centers (OSCCs) meet minimum quality standards, related to effective integration of services, customer satisfaction, physical and programmatic accessibility, and continuous improvement.

This policy has been revised as follows:

- Guidance related to compliance with WIOA Section 188 has been amended to clarify OSCC certification as relates to accessibility.
- An extension to the timeline for Local Board certification of One-Stop Career Centers is offered. Please refer to page 4 for instructions for obtaining an extension, if needed.

Background: The Massachusetts workforce development system is critical to the Commonwealth's competitiveness in today's knowledge-based economy. Workforce development systems and programs must meet employer demand and produce skilled workers for emerging workforce opportunities. The workforce development system must be comprehensive, flexible, innovative, business-driven, customer-focused and performance-based. The system must also be responsive to customer needs as they shift with a changing economic landscape, and adaptable to the rapid shifts in the global economy.

WIOA sec. 121(g) requires Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) to certify the One-Stop Career Centers (OSCCs) under their purview at a minimum of once every three years. The State WDB must review and update the criteria and procedures every two years in conjunction with review and modification of State plans. The certification process gives LWDBs the opportunity to make a formal assessment of the local OSCC service delivery system based on objective standards. Certification ensures continuous improvement and a consistent level of high quality of services provided in the local workforce area.

20 CFR §678.800 requires that the State Board, in consultation with chief elected officials and LWDBs, establish objective criteria for local Boards to use when certifying OSCCs. These new minimum career center standards will further the objectives of and be consistent with the Massachusetts Combined State Plan and vision for the Commonwealth's workforce development system.

The Massachusetts Workforce Development Board (MWDB), in consultation and cooperation with WIOA Partners, the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, the Department of Career Services, LWDBs and other stakeholders, has developed minimum OSCC Certification criteria.

The MWDB's WIOA Steering Committee established several subcommittees and workgroups to address key priorities, strategies, and policies pursuant to the implementing provisions of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

The Jobseeker and Employer Subcommittee established four working groups to focus on key aspects of WIOA implementation:

- Career Center Standards and Process
- Employer Engagement
- Performance Measurement
- Workforce Development Board Certification Standards

The Career Center Standards and Process Workgroup, staffed by DCS and comprised of representatives of LWDBs, OSCCs and Community Colleges worked over an eight-month period to develop the Massachusetts Career Center Certification standards.

The One-Stop Career Center Certification criteria will assist each LWDB to evaluate its OSCC(s) for effectiveness in addressing business and job seeker needs, physical and programmatic accessibility, continuous improvement, cost-efficient operation, service coordination among the one-stop partner programs and access to partner program services to the maximum extent practicable.

Policy: The Massachusetts Career Center Certification Policy requires an evidence-based system of:

- Cost Effectiveness
- Integrated Services
- Federal and Local Performance
- Demand Driven Strategies and Practices
- Maximized Access for Job Seeker and Business
- Effective Leadership and Management

The certification process will demonstrate that the LWDBs adequately oversee the delivery of employment and training programs and business services in their communities and ensure that Career Centers are operating at the highest level of effectiveness and sustainability. The certification process gives the LWDB the opportunity to make a formal assessment of the local OSCC service delivery system based on the established standards. Certification will help to ensure a consistent level of quality in the services provided in the local workforce area.

The OSCC Certification criteria are outlined in the attached Chart (Attachment A). These criteria are also in Attachment F of the [State Plan](#).

Using the attached certification standards criteria, LWDBs will apply a rating to each of the eighteen (18) elements based on each Career Center's documentation submitted in response to the local policy. A minimum score of 54 is required for One-Stop Career Center Certification designation.

It is the responsibility of each LWDB to certify every local Career Center(s) at least once every three (3) years (i.e. the certification process must be completed by June 30 of year three).

Local Boards must establish a policy for the local certification process indicating how each of the elements in the chart (Attachment A), as well as any locally developed criteria, will be analyzed, reviewed, and contribute to the certification of the Career Center, based on evidence. The development of a local Career Center Certification policy is a requirement within the Workforce Development Board Certification Guidance for Phase II (MassWorkforce Policy Issuance [100 DCS 17.102](#) issued February 1, 2017).

As part of the certification criteria and required by WIOA, all Career Center sites, Comprehensive, Affiliated or Specialized Centers are to be physically and programmatically accessible to individuals with disabilities.

Local areas are required to have a policy on accessibility addressing the provisions identified in the Accessibility within the Massachusetts Workforce System WIOA Section 188, #100 DCS 08.109 <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/massworkforce-wioa-oscc-operations-policy-issuances>

The DCS Field Management and Oversight checklist (Attachment A of the Accessibility Policy <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/massworkforce-wioa-oscc-operations-policy-issuances>) should be used as a baseline for an initial Accessibility Review.

At the time of Local Board Monitoring by DCS, DCS will review documentation of the boards' initial assessment, and plan to address deficiencies with benchmarks and timeline, as well as a local plan for ongoing review of accessibility and accommodations. Local Boards should give themselves and the career centers sufficient time between the initial accessibility assessment and Career Center Certification to implement any necessary corrective actions.

The LWDB, with agreement from the chief elected official for the local area, should include the requirements for OSCC Certification in the legal document/agreement (i.e. contract/chapter) with the Operator of the OSCC(s).

The policy herein originally stipulated that LWDB certification of OSCCs must be concluded as part of the Phase III LWDB Certification requirements by March 30, 2018. Hereupon this policy revision, local boards may take additional time, up to June 29, 2018, to complete the local Career Center Certification.

Local boards that wish to take advantage of the additional time must request an extension in writing to Diane Hurley at Diane.L.Hurley@MassMail.State.MA.US.

Please be advised that the local workforce board full certification is contingent upon the completion of career center certification; i.e. approval of the Phase III workforce board certification package would be "conditional" pending the completion of career center certification.

If an OSCC does not meet the requirements for certification, the notification must include detailed and specific recommendations for improvement and technical assistance as outlined in the LWDBs policy. A follow-up review of the specific items preventing certification must be conducted every 30 days until such certification is achieved.

If certification is not achieved by the time the one-stop procurement process commences, non-certification of the present operator shall be negatively considered if the operator should apply.

The local career center certification process and results will be reviewed during the local systems certification review conducted by the Department of Career Services' Field Management and Oversight Unit.

Action

Required:

1. Local OSCC Certification Policy submitted to DCS by August 4, 2017*

**The state policy was released later than anticipated; therefore, the due date for the local career center certification policy was amended to August 4, 2017.*

2. Local OSCC Certification Process completed by March 30, 2018**

***Unless taking advantage of the extension request process outline above.*

Attachments:

- A. One-Stop Career Center Certification Standards
- B. Career Center Certification Models and Ideas

Effective:

Immediately

Inquiries:

Please email all questions to PolicyOAC@MassMail.State.MA.US; indicate Issuance number and title.

Non-Active