



Workforce Issuance

100 DCS 17.110

☒ Policy ☐ Information

To: Chief Elected Officials
MassHire Workforce Board Chairs
MassHire Workforce Board Directors
MassHire Career Center Directors
MassHire Fiscal Officers
MDCS Operations Managers

cc: WIOA State Partners

From: Diane Hurley, Acting Director
MassHire Department of Career Services

Date: November 20, 2023

Subject: **Career Center Certification for MassHire Workforce Boards**

Purpose: To provide guidance to MassHire Workforce Boards, MassHire Career Center (MCC) Operators and other workforce partners related to the criteria and process for Career Center Certification.

The MassHire Career Center Certification criteria creates a baseline of consistency across the Commonwealth. Career Center Certification ensures that MassHire Career Centers meet minimum quality standards related to effective integration of services, customer satisfaction, physical and programmatic accessibility, and continuous improvement.

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.

The workforce development system has a responsibility to increase the availability and delivery of virtual workforce services by integrating the use of modern tools and technology. Massachusetts will ensure a world-class workforce system by increasing the number and types of virtual services and delivery methods available to all job seekers.

WIOA sec. 121(g) requires local workforce boards to certify one-stop career centers under their purview at a minimum of once every three years. The state workforce board must review and update the criteria and procedures every two years in conjunction with review and modification of the WIOA State Plan. The certification process gives local boards the opportunity to make a formal assessment of the local career center service delivery system based on objective standards. Certification ensures continuous improvement and a consistent level of high-quality services provided in the local workforce areas.

20 CFR §678.800 requires that the State Board, in consultation with chief elected officials and local boards establish objective criteria for local boards to use when certifying career centers. These minimum career center standards support the objectives of and are consistent with the Massachusetts WIOA Combined State Plan and vision for the Commonwealth's workforce development system.

The MassHire State Workforce Board, in consultation and cooperation with WIOA Partners, the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD), the MassHire Department of Career Services (MDCS), MassHire (local) Workforce Boards (MWBs) and other stakeholders, developed minimum Career Center Certification criteria. The delivery of virtual services through a virtual service customer flow has been added as a new criterion to ensure career centers have taken steps to maximize services to job seekers through virtual methods.

The One-Stop Career Center Certification criteria assists each MWB to evaluate its MCC(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, the availability and delivery of virtual services and access to partner program services to the maximum extent practicable.

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

- ✓ Cost Effectiveness
- ✓ Integrated Services
- ✓ Federal and Local Performance
- ✓ Business-Driven Strategies and Practices
- ✓ Maximized Access for Job Seeker and Business
- ✓ Effective Leadership and Management
- ✓ Availability and Delivery of Virtual Services

The certification process demonstrates that the MWBs adequately oversee the delivery of employment and training programs and business services in their communities and ensure that MassHire Career Centers are operating at the highest level of effectiveness and sustainability.

The certification process provides the MWB the opportunity to make a formal assessment of the MCC service delivery system based on the established standards. Certification helps to ensure a consistent level of quality in the services provided in the local workforce area and lends to consistency in MassHire services, statewide.

The MassHire Career Center Certification criteria are delineated in Attachment A.

Using the certification standards, criteria, elements, and measures, MWBs will apply a rating to each of the nineteen (19) elements based on each Career Center's documentation submitted in response to the local policy. A minimum score of 57 (60%) is required for One-Stop Career Center Certification designation.

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

MassHire Workforce Boards must establish a policy for the local certification process indicating how each of the elements in 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 MassHire Workforce Board Certification Guidance.

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/files/documents/2018/01/25/08-109.pdf>.

The MDCS Field Management and Oversight checklist (Attachment A of the Accessibility Policy) should be used as a baseline for an initial Accessibility Review.

At the time of MassHire Board Monitoring by MDCS, MDCS 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. MassHire 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 MWB, 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/charter) with the Operator of the MCC(s).

If a MassHire Career Center does not meet the requirements for certification, the notification must include detailed and specific recommendations for improvement and

technical assistance as outlined in the MWBs policy. A follow-up review of the specific items preventing certification must be conducted every 30 days until such certification is achieved.

The MassHire Career Center certification process and results will be reviewed by the MassHire Department of Career Services Field Management and Oversight Unit during the FY24 Career Center monitoring if local scheduling permits. If results are not available at time of monitoring, the results will be reviewed as part of the FY'25 Systems Certification Review.

Action

Required: MassHire Workforce Boards and MassHire Career Centers must ensure compliance with WIOA One-Stop Career Center Certification requirements as well as EOLWD/MDCS policy.

Career Center Certification must be conducted on a three-year cycle. Local areas with current Career Center Certification (July 1, 2021-June 30, 2024), must complete new certification on or before June 30, 2024.

FY25 certification becomes effective July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2027.

MassHire Workforce Boards whose Career Center Certification is on a different cycle are expected to be compliant with the three-year rule and the dates for that cycle.

Attachment C, Career Center Certification Attestation Form, must be submitted to Lisa Caissie: Lisa.J.Caissie@mass.gov by **June 30, 2024**.

Attachments: A. One-Stop Career Center Certification Standards – Review Tool
B. Career Center Certification Optional Suggestions
C. Career Center Certification – Sign-off Form

Effective: Immediately

Inquiries: Please submit comments and/or questions to PolicyQA@Mass.gov