



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

WIOA Joint Partner Communication XX.XXXX

☒ **Policy** ☐ **Information**

To: Chief Elected Officials
MassHire Workforce Board Chairs
MassHire Workforce Board Directors
WIOA Title I Administrators
MassHire Career Center Directors
WIOA Title I 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: Jennifer James, Undersecretary,
Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development
Alice Sweeney, Director
MassHire Department of Career Services
Richard Jeffers, Director
Department of Unemployment Assistance
Toni Wolf, Commissioner
Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission
David D'Arcangelo, Commissioner
Massachusetts Commission for the Blind
Wyvonne Stevens-Carter, State Adult Education Director
Department of Elementary and Secondary Ed, Adult and Community Learning Services
Olga Yulikova, Senior Community Service Employment Manager
Executive Office of Elder Affairs
Amy Kershaw, Commissioner
Department of Transitional Assistance

Date: February 7, 2020

Subject: **Work Participant Program (WPP) Expansion – REVIEW and COMMENT**

Purpose: To notify MassHire Workforce Boards, MassHire Career Center Operators and other workforce development partners of the WPP Expansion Program (for SNAP only recipients), define minimum services to be provided to WPP Expansion shared customers of the Career Center, MOSES tracking procedures and other applicable information related to the WPP Expansion Program.

Background: Effective October 1, 2019, an Interdepartmental Service Agreement (ISA) was signed between the MassHire Department of Career Services (MDCS) and the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) to provide career planning support and resources to DTA Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) (only) clients. Each DTA Transitional Assistance Office (TAO) and each Career Center have designated lead staff members to work together on behalf of DTA SNAP clients. DTA SNAP and MassHire Career Center staff will work collaboratively to ensure that SNAP clients receive tailored and appropriate job readiness, job matching, coaching and employment supports. This program is identified as the DTA Work Participant Program (WPP) Expansion.

Eligibility and Enrollment: WPP Expansion participant eligibility will require that the participant be receiving SNAP (only) benefits and career center services. Individuals must be a member of the MassHire Career Center and actively seeking work.

Customers must hold U.S. Citizenship or Authorization to work in the U.S.

WPP Expansion participants must be co-enrolled in DTA's SNAP Path to Work Program. Jewish Vocational Services (JVS), a veteran SNAP Path to Work provider, will support WPP Expansion by providing technical assistance and by entering enrollment, participation and outcomes data on DTA's Partner Activity Tracking Hub (PATH) on behalf of MassHire Career Centers.

Once eligibility has been determined:

1. The customer may be enrolled in the Career Center specific program, Work Participant Program Expansion. *See Attachment A: WPP SNAP Enrollment Instructions*
2. The Permission to Share Information (PSI) form must be signed by the WPP Expansion program participant. This form grants permission for the exchange of information between DTA, JVS and the MassHire Career Center about the customer's SNAP Path to Work/WPP Expansion participation for a period of two years or until the customer revokes access. Fillable MassHire

Career Center specific PSI forms are available for download via <http://bit.ly/SNAP-WPP>. See Attachment B

3. When completing the PSI form with the customer:
 - Inform the customer that they will receive a letter from DTA acknowledging receipt of the form. The letter will indicate that permission has been granted for the exchange of information with JVS.
 - Career Center staff should mention how the MassHire Career Center, JVS and DTA are partners for this program and JVS will be entering participation information for the partners (via the PATH system).
4. Send a secure email to Jenny Montague jmontague@jvs-boston.org for each enrollment. See Attachment C and D. The email must contain:
 - the customer's first and last names;
 - the customer's Social Security Number or (preferably) DTA APID number (this can be obtained by having the customer login to their account via DTA Connect or the My Account Page);
 - a copy of the signed PSI form;
 - whether any of the following present as a barrier to participation:
 - transportation
 - dependent care
 - finances
 - other (please describe)
 - the participation plan including:
 - ✓ anticipated start/end dates (best practice is 6 months; however, this is decided between the counselor and the customer)
 - ✓ anticipated number of participation hours per week (this also is decided upon by the counselor and the customer* unless the customer is subject to the ABAWD** work rules.
**Customers who are subject to Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWD) Work Rules must participate for 20 hours each week to comply with the rules via WPP activity. This will be known by the client.
 - a request for DTA SNAP Transportation support if needed including the MA county in which the customer currently resides.

WPP Expansion customers should follow the same customer flow framework as other WPP clients. All WPP Expansion customers shall have access to:

- The Career Center Seminar
- Assessment Tools
- Job Search Assistance
- Training options, if eligible

*A minimum level of participant activity is required for WPP Expansion participants:

- i. At least one (1) check-in contact or non-self-service activity *per week*.
- ii. At least four (4) non-self-service activities *per month* including, but not limited to, in-person counseling, training, job referrals, workshops, resume assistance, or job fair attendance.

Assessment systems that will be utilized for WPP Expansion job seekers include but are not limited to Transferable Occupational Relationship Quotient (TORQ) and the Placement Quizzes in Applied Math, Workplace Documents, and Graphic Literacy through WorkKeys Curriculum. Both of these assessment tools are designed to be individualized and have proven effective in working with individuals across a range of experience and educational levels.

TORQ allows the job seeker to take their transferable skills to the next step for career exploration/options.

WorkKeys Curriculum comprises three courses designed to remediate and enhance numeracy, literacy, and critical thinking skills. It is the updated and revised Career Ready 101, and each of the three courses is aligned with the assessments in WorkKeys 2.0. The courses are delivered via a personalized, mobile-based learning management system. The platform delivers a meaningful learning experience and provides users with a customized study schedule and detailed instructional content. The WorkKeys system promotes sustained success by encouraging career exploration, positive work behaviors, and increasing capability to develop resumes, conduct job searches, and succeed in interviews. WorkKeys Curriculum is the remediation tool, which prepares customers for the WorkKeys exam. Successful completion of the WorkKeys exam earns a customer a National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) at a Bronze, Silver, Gold, or Platinum level.

It is expected that staff will assist customers in utilizing and/or reviewing the assessment outcomes to help the customer in determining appropriate next steps toward reemployment.

Career Planning: Each WPP Expansion participant will develop a career plan in a manner consistent with Career Planning under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. Customers will have access to basic and individualized career services to prepare for re-entry into the labor market.

In addition, some of these customers may also require education and/or training services.

For training participants, including those participating in an OJT or other work-based (Apprenticeship, internship, paid or unpaid work experience) training, there is an expectation of consistent, ongoing communication between appropriate MassHire Career Center staff, the trainee and the employer. MDCS strongly recommends that a visit to the job site be conducted during the first two weeks of the training period and once a month thereafter, to ensure that the all contracted elements are in place.

In-Depth Job Search Coaching: It is expected that WPP Expansion enrollees will receive comprehensive, individualized job search coaching/assistance. Through this process, enrollees will evaluate a wide range of career factors, including talents, aptitudes, interests, values and more, and will be assisted to discover the career that is the right fit for them. Methodologies can include coaching on:

- how to stand out among others
- how to eliminate nervousness
- project confidence and communicate effectively
- how to answer behavioral, situational, & stress questions

Strategies can also include:

- mock interviews
- questions to expect and best answers
- proper body language and energy
- how to explain gaps of employment & job changes

Training: The following is a list of current training capacity already in place to serve WPP Expansion individuals and other targeted groups. These resources include:

- Occupational training supported through U.S. DOL grants with programs in advanced manufacturing in multiple regions of the state;
- On-the-job training supported through U.S. DOL grants or WIOA Title I formula funds that support a training position with a formal training plan at a business;
- Apprenticeship opportunities;
- WorkKeys Curriculum remediation to improve job readiness skills and prepare for the WorkKeys exam, with successful completion of the exam followed by credentialing using the National Career Readiness Certificate which aids in the job interview and job search processes;
- Occupational training supported through individual training accounts for training provided by vendors on the Eligible Training Provider List;
- Guided pathway programs developed through the GPSTEM project that is administered by community colleges;

- Training supported by industry for targeted employment opportunities;
- The Department of Higher Education TRAIN Grant Program (please refer to FY19 Project Summaries & Proposals here);
https://www.mass.edu/strategic/work_train.asp
- Access to training through regional Sector-based partnerships funded through the Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund.

Participation Tracking: WPP Expansion participation hours must be recorded on PATH monthly. Outcomes are entered as they become known. To ensure that JVS has the information needed to enter the information on behalf of the career centers:

- All WPP Expansion Services must be recorded in MOSES timely (i.e. attendance at a workshop, TORQ assessment, counseling session with a career counselor)
- Career counselors must record client's self-reported "homework" hours as a Service in MOSES (See Attachment A).

JVS will use MOSES records data (via a CRYSTAL Report) to report SNAP Path to Work participant hours and other required information to DTA monthly.

Job Development/Placement: Successful completion of services for WPP participants will result in full-time, unsubsidized employment. It is the responsibility of the Career Center to contact the employer to verify entered employment. The Career Center will also be responsible for documenting retention in employment up to 12 months after the first day of employment. All retention and follow-up information must be entered into the MOSES data system. The Career Center must have a menu of post-placement services available to all interested customers who have been exited.

In a case where training does not result in job placement for the trainee, Career Center staff will provide ongoing assistance to facilitate the job search according to Career Center standard operating procedures and the trainee's Career Plan.

Follow-up services can consist of retention workshops, events, networking groups, mini-trainings, advocacy and referral services, or any other service, which would be valued by an employed customer. The Career Center must track utilization of the services, including all contacts made to the exited customer throughout the follow-up period, in MOSES.

Reporting: The Career Center will be required to maintain an electronic record of activities and results in the MOSES computer data system, following procedures established by MDCS. Information in the MOSES system will encompass eligibility determination, basic, individualized and follow-up service delivery, enrollment, career planning, training and job placement for all customers enrolled in WPP Expansion. Information must be entered timely and

accurately. The data collected by the MassHire Career Centers will be used to document performance results for WPP Expansion at the overall project level as well as at the local Career Center level.

Exits: Following completion of activities funded through project and 90 days of no services (excluding follow-up services), trainees will be auto exited from the WPP Expansion program and any other program for which they are enrolled (i.e. WIOA).

Action

Required: Please ensure that all MassHire Career Center staff are aware of the WPP Expansion requirements and funding available for training and education assistance.

Effective: Immediately

Inquiries: Please email questions to Beth Goguen,
Elizabeth.M.Goguen@MassMail.State.MA.US

Attachments: A - WPP SNAP Enrollment Instructions
B - PSI Form
C - JVS Sample Email
D - Secure Email Setup Instructions