



MASSACHUSETTS

# Workforce Investment Act

---

**WIA Communication No. 04-33**

☒ **Policy**   ☐ **Information**

---

**To:** Chief Elected Officials  
Workforce Investment Board Chairs  
Workforce Investment Board Directors  
Title I Administrators  
Career Center Directors  
Title I Fiscal Officers  
DCS Regional Directors  
DCS Area Directors

**cc:** WIA State Partners

**From:** Jane Edmonds, Director  
Department of Workforce Development

**Date:** April 27, 2004

**Subject:** Education Rewards Loan Program

---

**Purpose:** To set forth the policies, procedures and implementation schedule for the Education Rewards Loan Program which will provide another option for Career Center customers in need of education or training resources.

**Background:** To ensure continued success in the primary labor market, unemployed and underemployed workers in the Commonwealth are increasingly in need of opportunities to upgrade and refine their occupational skills. The workforce development system lacks sufficient resources to provide these education and services to all who need it. While non-traditional students are the fastest growing segment of the post secondary population, many post secondary financial aid programs are targeted for full time students working toward a degree and are not available for these students. And while industries require workers with ever increasing levels of skill, a degree is not always a necessity. Many workers can successfully update their skills through certificate programs, work related training and professional development activities. However, since financial aid is limited for these types of activities, some workers may be stymied in their efforts to acquire needed skills.

In an effort to address this problem, the Commonwealth will pilot the Education Rewards Loan Program. The Commonwealth will make one million dollars (\$1,000,000) available to provide loans through the Massachusetts Educational Financing Authority (MEFA) for

Career Center customers in occupational training leading to a certificate, license, or other industry-recognized credential or enrolled less than half time in Associate Degree programs which have been identified as eligible programs of study. Eligible programs of study provide training for occupations with known job vacancies.

Loans may cover tuition, books, and/or living expenses while enrolled in training. Loans will be limited to pre-approved programs of study which lead to jobs that are in high demand. The minimum loan amount is \$1,000 and loans are capped at \$10,000 and are contingent on credit approval.

**Policy:** The Education Rewards Loan Program is an added option for Career Center customers who are looking for resources to obtain training and education to improve their occupational skills and opportunities for employment.

### **Customer Eligibility**

To be eligible for an Education Rewards Loan a Career Center customer must be a resident of Massachusetts and must be accepted for enrollment in an approved training program that will lead to either a certificate or Associates Degree in any of 55 vocational areas which have been identified as high growth industries or occupations (see attached list). The loan applicant must also pass the MEFA credit check which will look at a negative credit record as reason for denial. Applicants may also have a co-applicant to enhance their opportunity for loan application approval.

### **Loan Application Process**

Career Center customers who are seeking opportunities for training and who are not eligible for other programs that provide these resources should be advised of the availability of the Education Rewards Loan Program for training in those occupations that meet the criteria for program eligibility. The processes and services available to all customers in assessing education and training needs and assistance in identifying and researching prospective training providers should be provided for customers who wish to apply for the Loan Program. The customer should be given a copy of the Education Rewards Loan Program brochure that provides information on the loan amounts, interest rates and repayment terms and an official loan application. The customer should also be given access to the list of eligible occupations and approved training programs.

*Note: Loan funds may be accessed to provide additional funds needed for individuals eligible for ITAs where local funding is limited or capped.*

*Individuals who wish to potentially access Section 30 benefits must ensure that the training provider and training program are approved for Section 30. Career counselors can ascertain this information from MOSES. Please ensure that customers complete all required forms and obtain necessary signatures. Training provider status should be verified before completing forms or applications.*

The Career Center customer should fill out the loan application. The Career Center counselor will sign the application form certifying that the program selected meets the criteria established for this loan. MEFA will not process the application without this certification by the Career Center. The Customer will submit the loan application directly to MEFA. A review of the loan application will be completed by MEFA within 48 hours.

MEFA will review the applicant's credit history, confirm the eligibility of the

course of study and program vendor, and verify the MEFA funding eligibility of the program.

MEFA will notify the customer and the Career Center counselor of the loan decision and the expected start and end dates of the training which has been approved.

The amount of the actual loan and payment schedule will be determined by MEFA. All financial transactions will be between MEFA and the eligible school. Any refunds of loan proceeds will be made back to MEFA and be credited to the borrower's loan balance. Borrowers will repay MEFA or its designee.

### **Vendor Eligibility**

In order for a training provider to be eligible and to have its training program(s) approved for MEFA loans, the vendor must apply through *TrainingPro* and meet the following criteria:

- Provide training in one of the designated vocational areas that leads to a recognized certificate or credential.
- Be a not-for-profit institution.
- The training program must be a minimum of 45 hours.
- Have the financial aid capacity to work with MEFA and handle federal student loans.

Modifications as necessary will be made to the *TrainingPro* vendor application to obtain all the information necessary for a training provider to be determined eligible for this program. Therefore, a customer or the Career Center counselor will need to assure through its MOSES record that a training vendor and its program of study has been approved for the Education Rewards Loan Program before a loan application is submitted.

### **Role of the Career Center**

The Career Centers will be the entry point for customers wishing to access the Loan Program. Potential applicants may only obtain Loan Program applications at a Career Center. Career Center staff will add this opportunity to the menu of support services available to customers and ensure that customers are informed of and have access to these resources if appropriate. Customers will be enrolled electronically by Career Center staff into the Education Rewards Loan Program through MOSES once the loan has been approved. As always customers may continue to use the resources of the Career Center and staff throughout their training period as necessary.

The Division of Career Services (DCS) will generate letters to enrollees periodically to remind them of the services available in the Career Centers and encourage them to return when they are ready for employment or other job search activities upon completion of their training. A six-month follow-up survey will be conducted (centrally) with all participants to determine the effectiveness of the Loan Program.

Training will be provided to Career Center staff on the data entry requirements related to the Loan Program enrollment and tracking. MEFA will also meet with Career Center staff to discuss the loan process, training vendor issues, and the process for information sharing and facilitation of the loan process between the Career Centers and MEFA.

### **Timeline for Implementation**

Modifications to *TrainingPro* and MOSES have been made so that training vendors could begin submitting applications for training program approval the week of April 19.

The current target date to formally introduce the Loan Program to Career Center customers is the week of May 17. If necessary, we may delay the introduction a few weeks to permit vendors more time to submit their training program information to provide a good selection for customers.

Training for Career Center staff will occur during the last week of April and the first two weeks in May at sites across the state. The specific dates, times and locations will be sent under separate cover.

**Action**

**Required:** Please disseminate this policy to appropriate staff.

**Effective:** This policy is effective immediately.

**Inquiries:** Inquiries about the Education Rewards Loan Program in general should be directed to Alice Sweeney at (617) 626-6449 or [asweeney@detma.org](mailto:asweeney@detma.org).

Training vendors who have questions about the eligibility of their programs for the Education Rewards Loan Program should contact Bill McClory at (617) 626-5327 or [wmccclory@detma.org](mailto:wmccclory@detma.org).

Inquiries related to *TrainingPro* or MOSES should be directed to the MOSES Help Desk at (617) 626-5656.

**Filing:** Please file this in your notebook of previously issued WIA Communication Series Issuances as #04-33.

**Attachment:** *List of Approved Occupations*. This list reflects vacancy survey data for 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2003.

## **Education Rewards Loan Program**

### **List of Eligible Occupations**

**Effective: April 2004**

#### **Eligible Occupations**

Below is the list of occupations eligible for the Education Rewards Loan Program. Occupations are organized by vocational area. Some of the occupations require an Associate's Degree, while others require shorter term training resulting in a certificate, license or credential.

*Note: A student enrolled in an Associate's Degree program must be enrolled less than half-time to qualify for an Education Rewards loan.*

#### **Healthcare**

Cardiovascular Technologists and Technicians  
Dental Assistants  
Dental Hygienists  
Diagnostic Medical Sonographers  
Emergency Medical Technicians and Paramedics  
Health Technologists and Technicians  
Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses  
Medical and Clinical Laboratory Technicians  
Medical Assistants  
Medical Records and Health Information Technicians  
Medical Transcriptionists  
Nuclear Medicine Technologists  
Occupational Therapist Assistants  
Physical Therapist Assistants  
Psychiatric Technicians  
Radiation Therapists  
Radiologic Technologists and Technicians  
Registered Nurses  
Respiratory Therapists  
Respiratory Therapy Technicians  
Surgical Technologists  
Veterinary Technologists and Technicians

#### **Architecture/Engineering/Computer**

Architectural and Civil Drafters  
Mechanical Drafters  
Civil Engineering Technicians

Electrical and Electronic Engineering Technicians  
Electro-Mechanical Technicians

Environmental Engineering Technicians  
Industrial Engineering Technicians  
Mechanical Engineering Technicians  
Engineering Technicians  
Computer Specialists

### **Construction/Production**

Carpenters  
Construction Laborers  
Electricians  
Glaziers  
Hazardous Materials Removal Workers  
Highway Maintenance Workers  
Jewelers and Precious Stone and Metal Workers  
Operating Engineers and Other Construction Equipment Operators  
Painters, Construction and Maintenance  
Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters  
Semiconductor Processors  
Sheet Metal Workers  
Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers

### **Installation, Maintenance, and Repair**

Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics  
Bus and Truck Mechanics and Diesel Engine Specialists  
Electric Motor, Power Tool, and Related Repairers  
Electrical and Electronics Repairers, Commercial and Industrial Equipment  
Electronic Equipment Installers and Repairers, Motor Vehicles  
Mobile Heavy Equipment Mechanics  
Security and Fire Alarm Systems Installers  
Telecommunications Equipment Installers and Repairers

### **Life, Physical, and Social Science**

Biological Technicians  
Chemical Technicians  
Nuclear Technicians  
Environmental Science and Protection Technicians  
Life, Physical, and Social Science Technicians

### **Office and Administrative Support**

Legal Secretaries  
Medical Secretaries

Desktop Publishers

**Personal Care and Service**

Hairdressers, Hairstylists, and Cosmetologists

Manicurists and Pedicurists

Fitness Trainers and Aerobics Instructors

**Other Industries**

Appraisers and Assessors of Real Estate

Paralegals and Legal Assistants

Broadcast Technicians

Sound Engineering Technicians

Chefs and Head Cooks

Travel Agents

Real Estate Sales Agents

**Note:** The list of eligible occupations will change periodically based on updated labor market information. This list is current as of April 2004. Check [www.mass.gov/educationrewards](http://www.mass.gov/educationrewards) for an updated list and the eligible programs that provide training for these occupations.