

Mass Workforce Issuance

Workforce Issuance No. 09-56

☒ **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

cc: WIA State Partners

From: Suzanne M. Bump, Secretary
Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development

Date: August 25, 2009

Subject: **High Performing Workforce Board Certification Instructions – Round III**

Purpose: To provide Local Workforce Investment Boards with instructional guidance regarding the submission for High Performing Workforce Board Certification.

Background: Beginning in May, 2008, the Commonwealth embarked on an ambitious initiative to aggressively strengthen the capacity of Local Workforce Investment Boards (LWIBs) to address the strategic challenges facing the development of a skilled local workforce. The goal of the High Performing Workforce Board (HPWB) Certification is to develop a measurable set of statewide standards intended to accelerate the continual improvement of the Massachusetts workforce development system in order to:

- Build capacity of the workforce system
- Close the skills gap
- Enhance the youth pipeline

Toward that end, the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD) charged the Department of Workforce Development and the Commonwealth Corporation to develop a set of statewide “high performance” standards by which each local board can be measured with regard to its capacity and effectiveness in addressing local workforce issues from a broad, strategic perspective. In developing these standards, the Commonwealth invited and incorporated input from the broad spectrum of its workforce development partners, stakeholders and consumers including businesses and local elected officials. The proposed standards were vetted through and approved by the State Workforce Investment Board.

This Policy document provides instruction to assist LWIBs in demonstrating that they meet the requirements to achieve High Performing Workforce Board Certification.

Policy: It is the policy of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to implement the High Performing Workforce Board Certification criteria described in this issuance as the first stage in an evolving quality process that recognizes and measures exemplary Massachusetts Workforce Investment Board systems and practices.

To be considered for certification in Round III, a local board must submit a complete certification package by close of business on October 16, 2009 to:

Division of Career Services
Charles F. Hurley Building
19 Staniford Street, First Floor
Boston, MA 02114
Attention: Lisa Caissie

A local WIB must submit a complete certification package that includes all documentation to meet the provisions for the Commonwealth's High Performing Workforce Board Certification. In order to be considered for HPWB certification, local WIBs will already have attained the statutory WIA certification for the period of July 1, 2009 – June 30, 2011.

Local boards not ready to submit a certification package for consideration in Round III will have a final opportunity to submit in Round IV in late winter, 2010 (date to be determined).

Action

Required: Review the contents of this issuance and follow instructions in preparing all submission packages.

Effective: Immediately

Inquiries: Please email all questions to PolicyQA@detma.org. Also, indicate Issuance number and description.

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High Performing Workforce Board Certification

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Introduction

The Patrick Administration set forward three major workforce priorities for the Massachusetts public system. First, work to raise the overall capacity of the workforce system to respond to the labor market needs of our economy. Second, close the skill gap that exists between available workers and employers through a strategic use of resources and full engagement of critical business sectors. Third, enhance the youth pipeline by increasing and aligning youth education, training, and employment programs in order to tap this critical source of workers.

A key strategy in raising the overall capacity of the workforce system is to build upon and ensure a strong, innovative, vibrant, and responsive network of Local Workforce Investment Boards (LWIBs) across the state. Toward this goal, the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD) has launched an initiative to clearly define expectations and standards for the regional system of Workforce Investment Boards, coupled with expectations for a high quality and performance-oriented state system.

Massachusetts has set an aggressive workforce agenda and is looking to local workforce boards to lead regional partnerships to advance this agenda. Through the High Performing Workforce Board (HPWB) Initiative, the strategic leadership and intermediary responsibilities of local workforce investment boards are being encouraged and supported by the Patrick Administration. In this strategic role, each local board, through its business leadership, can enhance its role beyond the limited funding streams it directly controls through the alignment of disparate funding streams and activities, innovative practice and a more robust engagement of employers and regional labor market partnerships under a strategic plan for the region.

Preconditions for Applying

Before submitting an application for the High Performing Workforce Board Initiative, regions must meet four (4) standards. A local board *should not* consider submitting a HPWB application package for review if it is not confident that each of the standards listed below have been met.

- 1. The local WIB must have attained the statutory WIA certification for the period of July 1, 2009 – June 30, 2011, meeting all standard requirements under the Workforce Investment Act.**
- 2. At the time of submission of the High Performing Workforce Board application package, any prior disallowed costs must be cleared or a formal resolution plan, approved by the Division of Career Services, must be in place.**
- 3. The level of local expenditures and obligations for the prior fiscal year is in compliance with all Workforce Investment Act of 1988 (WIA) requirements [20 CFR § 667.150(b) and § 667.150(c)]**
- 4. WIA Title I Performance:**
Regions that have failed performance measures must have in place an approved corrective action plan, including performance benchmarks and timeframes. Demonstrated programmatic effectiveness of the corrective action activities, considered together with the number and prevalence of performance failures will impact the scoring of the performance criteria of category B. (Reference Question #13 and High Performing Workforce Board Criteria/Evidence Matrix, B2b & B2e.)

Note: Each region should review performance data from the FY2009 Fourth Quarter Career Center Performance Reports to determine whether there may be performance issues impacting HPWB application.

Submission Requirements

The Department of Workforce Development (DWD) certifies, on behalf of the Governor, that the composition of the LWIB, including the appointment process, complies with the criteria established in Section 117 of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 and meets all additional requirements of the Governor. DWD will further ensure that workforce investment activities carried out under the board's oversight have enabled the local workforce system to meet established performance measures and to lead a robust effort to address the strategic workforce needs of its region.

Letter of Intent

Workforce Investment Boards that plan to submit a High Performing Workforce Board Certification package for consideration in Round III (October 16, 2009) are **required to submit a Letter of Intent**, signed by the WIB chair, by **September 18, 2009**. The Letter of Intent should be mailed to:

Secretary Suzanne M. Bump
Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development
One Ashburton Place, Room 2112
Boston, MA 02108

Submission of HPWB Application

HPWB applications for Round III must be received by close of business on October 16, 2009. The application package must include all components listed in the application checklist and any/all other supporting documentation.

Applicants will please provide one original and ten (10) copies, plus a CD Rom containing the completed application and supporting documents, as feasible.

NOTE: All submissions should be organized with the Strategic Plan first, followed by responses to the questions by category (use the application as a template), with clearly-referenced evidence at the back of the package.

Review Process

Review of High Performing Workforce Board Application

The process for review of the High Performing Workforce Board application will comprise the following:

Step 1: Application Review and Initial Scoring

The High Performing Workforce Board application package will be reviewed by an inter-organizational review panel comprised of representatives of state and non-state entities, both within and outside of the EOLWD umbrella.

The Review Panel will review the Board's full response to the HPWB certification package, including all narrative responses and documentary evidence presented for consideration. The review employs a quantified scoring system with a maximum achievable score of 200 points. The 200 points are apportioned across each of the four criteria categories on which the High Performing Workforce Board review is based. Within each category, each question is weighted against the total point share for that category.

NOTE:

- A WIB must score a minimum 80% initial rating for *each of the four criteria categories* to be immediately eligible for High Performing Workforce Board certification. This places the WIB in "Tier I" status; the application process proceeds to Step 2.
- A WIB that fails to attain the minimum 80% initial rating for one or more of the high performing criteria categories will not be immediately eligible to attain High Performing Workforce Board Certification.
- A WIB that does not attain the 80% initial rating in each category, but attains a minimum score of 70% or above in all categories will be placed in the new "Tier II" status.

Step 2: Site Visit

Regions that score 80% on each section of the HPWB application will be placed in Tier I status and requested to host a site visit. The site visit will serve to verify the information submitted in the HPWB application and to provide the local board with an opportunity to demonstrate additional HPWB factors which may not have been evident in the application. Site visit teams will meet with board members and other community leaders, as well as with board staff to confirm the strength and meaningful involvement of the board membership versus strong staff, and to determine how non-board leaders in the community view the work of the board. Site visits will not be formally scored, but the findings from the site visit may influence (increase or decrease) the final HPWB application score.

Step 3: Scores Finalized

Reviewers will convene following the site visit to discuss information and observations from the site visit. The HPWB application score is subject to change as a result of the site visit findings. Once the HPWB application score is finalized, representatives of the

review panel will present HPWB certification recommendations to the Secretary. The Secretary will notify HPWB applicants of their certification status.

It is the goal of EOLWD to complete the entire HPWB review process within an eight-week timeframe following submission of the HPWB packages. Therefore, it is anticipated that HPWB Round III Certification will be awarded no later than December 11, 2009.

Tier II Process

HPWB applicants that, at a minimum, score above 70% in every category (but do not attain 80% in all categories) of the HPWB application will be considered to be in Tier II status. Each WIB will receive directed technical assistance toward the development of a plan consisting of actionable items toward the goal of attainment of HPWB certification. The technical assistance will include a clarification meeting with the Executive Director and Board Chair to discuss the positive areas and growth areas of the application. Each WIB will have the opportunity to create a customized action plan to address those points within a self-directed timeframe. Two weeks prior to the WIB's determination that it has appropriately addressed the areas of attention, the WIB will notify EOLWD of its intention to submit a response to the customized questions in the action plan. A smaller review panel comprised of State staff will then assess progress against the action plan and present a recommendation to the Secretary with regard to HPWB designation.

Boards that do not reach Tier II

HPWB applicants who score below 70% in one or more category will receive a technical assistance meeting with the Board and Executive Director to discuss the areas of strength and areas that require technical assistance. These WIB(s) will receive guidance with regard to the specific areas of improvement prior to making the decision to re-apply in Round IV. It will be necessary to submit a full application at that time.

Round IV

There will be an fourth and final opportunity to apply for HPWB certification in late winter, 2010 (date to be determined).

High Performing Workforce Board Criteria

The executive director and the membership of the Workforce Board should review the questions below to evaluate the Board's current capacity to describe and submit evidence for the questions. Applicants must submit evidence that fully demonstrates how the workforce investment board meets the criteria in each of the categories.

Please Note: The letters and numbers referenced in parentheses relate to the High Performing Workforce Board Criteria-Evidence Matrix (Attachment G). The attached matrix is a reference tool to provide Workforce Investment Boards with examples of measurable evidence for each criterion point. In addition, it outlines evidence that must be addressed or is required for each question or section. Certain points of evidence are required and are indicated by an asterisk in the Matrix document.

All questions should be answered (and numbered) in the order in which they appear; since this is a WORD document, it can also be used as a template.

Category A: Strategic Planning and Implementation [80 Points]
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Major Product for Category A: Strategic Plan. Attach a copy of your region's strategic plan. The foundation for the High Performing Workforce Board initiative is the development and use of a regional strategic plan to guide the work of the Board. Effective strategic plans and processes contain key characteristics that are inherent in the HPWB criteria.

Note: If the response to any of the following questions is clearly articulated in your strategic plan, you may opt to reference the location (cite page number(s) and line(s) where the reviewer can identify the response to the particular question).

QUALITY OF STRATEGIC PLAN (30 of the 80 points for this question)

1. Reviewers will score the content of the strategic plan based upon the following:
 - Strong analysis of environmental trends based on labor market information, demographics, economic and social conditions, education and training needs and other trends related to the local workforce development system. Identification of strategic issues that the area faces and initiatives planned by the Workforce Board as part of the plan to address the identified issues.
 - Strength of connection and linkages between the analysis, vision, goals, objectives and strategies outlined in the document.
 - Clearly articulated benchmarks for periodic measurement of progress toward objectives. The benchmarks identify specific measures and time frames that provide the board, local stakeholders and customers with a mechanism for monitoring progress on the implementation of the strategic plan.

STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS (15 of the 80 points for this question)

2. How was the development of the strategic plan evidence-based and data driven?
 - a. Please include a description of the data gathered and the method of analysis and review (A2a and A2c)
 - b. Please describe the key trends or policy implications identified by the Board members based upon the comprehensive analysis of regional labor market and critical workforce populations. What are the key data trends that describe the need to align business needs with labor market supply? (A2a and A2c)
3. How was the development of the strategic plan guided by private sector input (board members and non-board members) from critical sectors in the region? (A1a)
4. How was the strategic planning process inclusive of all of the key stakeholders? (A1b; A1c; A2b; A4b; A5)
5. How does the allocation of the region's resources (e.g. personnel, financial, educational) support the strategic plan to ensure that each partnership is aligned with the Board's strategic objectives? (A4)
6. How does the Workforce Investment Board communicate progress on the strategic plan to stakeholders? (A3)

ALIGNMENT (10 of the 80 points for this question)

7. How is the strategic plan aligned with the vision and priorities of regional economic development partners? What strategies in the strategic plan support regional economic priorities in the region? (A1a; A1b; A1c)
8. How is the strategic plan aligned with the workforce priorities established by Governor Patrick, which were built on input from the state and regional workforce system? List the strategies in the strategic plan that supports the Administration's priorities for (A1b)?
 - *Building the Capacity of the Workforce System*
 - *Closing the Skills Gap*
 - *Enhancing the Youth Pipeline*

REGIONAL TARGET GOALS (25 of the 80 points for this question)

9. Identify the specific policies, objectives and service strategies developed for your region to meet the needs of key workforce populations (individuals with disabilities, ex-offenders, TANF populations etc.). (A2a; A2c)

10. What are the strategic objectives, policies and service strategies that address the youth population in the region? (A2c)
 - a. As a result of these objectives and policies, what strategies and partnerships have resulted in employment opportunities for youth in your region?
 - b. Describe target goals (number of youth etc.) to increase youth employment in the region set by the Board. How will the region implement new strategies to achieve these goals.

11. Identify the specific policies, objectives and service strategies developed to meet the talent needs of employers in the region? (A2c) As part of your response, please address the following areas:
 - a. List the number, purpose and quality of business-driven partnerships¹ formed in collaboration with the Board to address skill alignment needs for critical sectors in the region (articulated in the strategic plan) (A5a; A5b). List the key organizations included in each partnership (business, educational, economic development organizations, organized labor, community-based organizations, etc.).
 - b. Describe the strategies that are in place to increase the number of businesses served in the region, including the use of One-Stop Career Centers (A5a)

Category B: Measuring Success [40 Points]
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Major Product for Category B: A Performance Management Plan or information on documented performance management processes in response to the questions below.

Performance Management: A High Performing Workforce Board continually and methodically measures and analyzes its own organizational success. The Workforce Board may submit a Performance Management Plan if this already exists. Alternatively, the region can provide *information* on performance management strategies and practices for the region through the questions below. The Performance Management Plan or responses to questions should explain:

12. How does the board assess/measure its own impact, growth and relevance to both the community at large and to its own members in particular? (B1a; B1b; B1c; B1d; B3a; B3b)

13. What Continuous Quality Improvement practices has the board implemented for the region's OSCC(s) and youth program? (B2a; B2b; B2c; B2d; B2e)

14. What is the process followed by the board to analyze customer use of the area's service delivery system and its performance, with emphasis on business customers? (B1c; B2c)

15. What policies and practices have been implemented by the Board to improve overall performance, or address actual or potential performance issues? What policies and practices have been implemented by the Board to improve WIA performance and/or other regional measures designed by the Board? (B1a, B2d, B2e, B3b)

¹ These partnerships would primarily focus on partnerships between business, education (secondary, vocational and post-secondary) institutions, and workforce intermediaries to solve skill needs in a region. Other key organizations included as appropriate (economic development organizations, organized labor, community-based organizations)

16. What is the formal process that is in place by which the performance of the Workforce Board's executive director is evaluated by the board?

Category C: Managing the Work of the Board [50 Points]

Major Product for Category C: The Board's Operating Plan or information on board management and operations that delineates business planning, budgeting and procedures. Include the Board's budget and budget narrative. (C2)

A High Performing Workforce Board will systematically organize and formally plan how it manages the work and business of the board. The Board may submit an Operating Plan if this already exists. The Operating Plan or information provided will describe how the board operationalizes its functional responsibilities and measures its progress against established goals.

17. Describe and provide evidence of the methods used by the Workforce Investment Board to assess compliance with its business plan. (C2b)
18. Describe the Continuous Quality Improvement practices the Board implemented for itself as an organization. (C1a & C1b)
19. Identify and describe the specific Workforce Investment Board functions that support the service delivery infrastructure to better serve business and workers, including the promotion of key services like the Workforce Training Fund. (C3a)
20. How does the makeup of the board membership (type of organization and level of decision making authority within the organization) align with strategic objectives for the region?
- a. How do the Board Chair, Executive Director and Chief Elected Official work to assure the alignment of Board membership with the strategic objectives of the Board? (C4a; C4b)
 - b. Describe the role and level of engagement of the board members in the process for recruiting new members to assure the continued relevance and viability of the Board? (B1d; C4c)
21. What policies and procedures did the Board adopt to encourage and ensure active participation of Board members in Board activities? (B1c; B1d; C4d)
- a. Attach evidence that demonstrates active member participation.

Category D: Oversight & Development of Financial Resources [30 Points]

Major Component of the Application: A Revenue Plan or information on strategies and practices to bring resources into the region.

A High Performing Workforce Board develops and implements a fiscal strategy that looks beyond limited federal and state funding allocations to assure a level of revenues and fiscal resources sufficient to meet the actual workforce needs of the local area. A High Performing Workforce Board will submit a Revenue Plan or revenue/fiscal-related information that describes:

22. How do the region's revenue goals align with local strategic objectives. (D1a; D1b; D2a)
23. Describe how existing financial resources (grants) are aligned with targeted industries or occupations in the region. (D1b)
24. Describe the Board's system(s) to organize and track existing regional financial resources. (D2b)
25. Describe the specific strategies to increase or leverage resources for strategic objectives. (D2a; D2b)
26. Describe the specific measures established by the Board to assess progress in achieving its revenue generation goals. (D2a)
27. Describe the basic "Return on Investment" measures, procedures or methods established by the Board to assess and communicate the value of the region's invested resources. (D3a)