

# MassWorkforce Issuance

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**100 DCS 03.103**

☒ **Policy**   ☐ **Information**

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**To:** Chief Elected Officials  
Workforce Board Chairs  
Workforce 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:** December 23, 2015

**Subject:** **Proposed Regional Designations under WIOA: Request for Input**

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**Purpose:** To engage Chief Elected Officials (CEOs), Local Workforce Boards (Local Boards) and all Workforce Partners in meeting the requirement for the Governor to assign Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDAs) to regions prior to the submission of the State Combined Plan in order for the State to receive WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth allotments in compliance with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014.

**Background:** The Governor has established 16 Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDAs) for initial designation through a process established in accordance with Section 107 of WIOA and MassWorkforce Issuance 100 DCS 03-100

<http://www.mass.gov/massworkforce/issuances/wioa-policy/03-legal-regulatory/>

Execution of this WIOA policy required that Local Chief Elected Officials (CEOs) establish Local Workforce Development Boards (Local Boards), through membership in accordance with Section 107 of WIOA and MassWorkforce Issuance 100 DCS 17-100 <http://www.mass.gov/massworkforce/issuances/wioa-policy/17-wib-certification/>

WIOA §679.210 includes a new mandate requiring the Governor to assign local workforce areas to a region prior to submission of the State Combined Plan in order for the state to receive WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth allotments.

The purpose of identifying regions is to align workforce development activities and resources with larger regional economic development areas and available resources to provide coordinated and efficient services to both job seekers and businesses.

WIOA further requires that CEOs and Local Boards plan, design and govern the system regionally, aligning workforce policies and services with regional economies and supporting service delivery strategies tailored to these needs. WIOA describes basic activities for regional planning (outlined in Attachment B), however the Administration will continue to develop a draft process for regional planning in order to go beyond the WIOA requirement to include the Executive Office of Education (EOE) and the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development (EOHED) and build out an integrated regional planning process across three systems.

MassWorkforce Issuance 100 DCS 03.103 “Process for Assigning Local Workforce Development Areas to Regions”

<http://www.mass.gov/massworkforce/issuances/wioa-policy/03-legal-regulatory/>,

issued on November 19, 2015 describes the process that will be followed in Massachusetts to designate planning regions under WIOA.

### **Policy:**

This policy describes the proposed Massachusetts WIOA Regions as required by WIOA sec. 106 and provides the opportunity for input related to the proposed regional designations. The policy proposes to utilize the seven regional configurations currently designated under the Workforce Competitive Trust Fund as the Massachusetts WIOA Planning Regions. The policy is being disseminated via the MassWorkforce Issuance process to Local Boards, local Chief Elected Officials and Workforce Partners for review and consultation per WIOA sec. 102(b)(2)(D)(i)(II) and WIOA sec. 106(a)(1); and (2). Please follow the process delineated below to provide your input by January 8, 2016.

### **Criteria Considered**

In accordance with WIOA §106 and NPRM §679.210, the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, in consultation with the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development, the Executive Office of Education and the Governor, reviewed potential regional configurations of the 16 local workforce areas that meet the WIOA criteria to: (i) share a single labor market (ii) Share a common economic development area; and (iii) possess the Federal and non-Federal resources, including appropriate education and training institutions, to administer activities under WIOA subtitle B.

In addition, in compliance with WIOA requirements, other factors the Governor considered included:

1. Existing Workforce Investment Area boundaries
2. Existing economic development regions
3. Voluntary regional partnerships between regions (through sector grants such as the Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund or other initiatives)
4. Alignment with higher education strategic planning
5. Industrial composition (including Gateway Cities)
6. Labor force conditions
7. Geographic boundaries
8. Commuting patterns along major highways (90 Mass Pike, I91, 495, 95, 93, Route 20, etc.)

## 9. Population Centers

### Massachusetts WIOA Regions

After consideration of all the factors identified above, the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD) on behalf of the Governor has presented the draft proposed regions to the Workforce Skills Cabinet (Secretary of Labor and Workforce Development; Secretary of Economic Development; and Secretary of Education) for review.

In consideration of the above factors, the seven regional configurations currently designated under the Workforce Competitive Trust Fund are proposed as the Massachusetts WIOA Planning Regions. The Massachusetts WIOA Regions either consist of (1) one local area or (2) two or more contiguous local areas within the Commonwealth. Please refer to **Attachment A** for the regional map.

The proposed WIOA Planning Regions support the WIOA criteria to determine regional boundaries for regional planning activities in the following ways:

1. **Existing Workforce Area boundaries:** The proposed regions roll up the 16 local areas without breaking up a local area as well as group contiguous local areas.
2. **Alignment with economic development regions:** The proposed regions better align with the seven Massachusetts Office of Business Development (MOBD) regions, except that the Southeast and the Cape will be maintained as separate regions under this model due to the different labor force conditions and industry concentrations within those two unique local workforce areas. EOHED is considering the option to set up MOBD regions in the same fashion.
3. **Voluntary regional partnerships between regions:** Many of the local areas have worked with one another within the proposed regional configuration to administer competitive grants such as sector grants through the Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund or other initiatives. There is a history and natural partnership between the local areas that in many cases reflects the proposed WIOA regions.
4. **Alignment with higher education strategic planning:** The Executive Office of Education (EOE) is kicking off a strategic planning process for higher education. EOE will align this process with the proposed WIOA regions, which would include at least one Community College, several vocation technical schools and other four-year institutions.
5. **Industrial composition (including Gateway Cities):** Each of the proposed regions has communities that share industry patterns of growth and historical deindustrialization that has impacted the cities. Each proposed region includes at least 1 “gateway” city.
6. **Labor force conditions:** Generally, the proposed regions bring together the smaller local workforce investment areas into a regional structure that aligns communities with similar labor force conditions.
7. **Commuting patterns:** The proposed regions reflect the impact of major highway routes (e.g. 90 Pike, I91, 495, 95, 93, Route 20 etc.), where roadways become a defining characteristic in access to jobs or communities, for example, the I91 corridor connects Franklin Hampshire and Hampden local areas and shows relevant location of manufacturers along the corridor even into Connecticut.

8. **Population Centers:** Each of the proposed regions contains a city with highly concentrated population centers to ensure adequate WIOA formula resources covering the region. No one region is solely rural.

This document is now being forwarded to the State Board, Local Chief Elected Officials, and Local Boards for their review and comment.

EOLWD will review comments and finalize regional designations to be submitted to the Governor and State Board for approval. The finalized Massachusetts Regional Designations policy will be posted on the MassWorkforce Issuance system.

**Action**

**Required:** Please review **Attachment A: Proposed Regional Designations** and Attachment B: Regional Planning Requirements specified in WIOA (this is provided as background information). Please submit comments and/or questions only on Attachment A, “Proposed Regional Designations” per the instruction below.

**Inquiries/**

**Comments:** Please email all questions and comments to [PolicyQA@detma.org](mailto:PolicyQA@detma.org) by close of business on **January 8, 2016**. Please indicate the Issuance title: “Regional Designations under WIOA” in the email title and be specific with regard to topic, comment with supporting information and any suggested revision.

**Effective:** Immediately