

Mass Workforce Issuance

Workforce Issuance No. 06-47

☒ **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 Associate Directors
DCS Field Managers

cc: WIA State Partners

From: Susan V. Lawler, Director
Division of Career Services

Date: July 31, 2006

Subject: Rapid Response Set-Aside Funding Proposal and Review Process, Revised

Purpose: To transmit to Local Workforce Investment Boards (LWIBs), One-Stop Career Center Operators and other local workforce investment partners the Commonwealth's updated policy regarding the application and review process for Rapid Response Set-Aside Funding. This policy updates WIA Communication No. 04-39 Rapid Response Set-Aside Proposal and Review Process (issued on May 18, 2004).

Background: This policy updates the contact information for Ken Messina, State Rapid Response Manager and for Norca Disla-Shannon to whom all program reporting questions are to be directed. General questions regarding the policy, should continue to be forwarded to PolicyQA@detma.org.

Policy: The Commonwealth's policy regarding the Rapid Response Set-Aside (RRSA) proposal and proposal review process is described, below. This policy shall apply to all Massachusetts Local Workforce Investment Areas.

Action Required: Please assure that all relevant local policies and procedures are consistent with the requirements described in this policy issuance.

Effective: Immediately

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

Rapid Response Set-Aside Funding Process

Proposal Development

Upon receipt of notification of a mass layoff or plant closing, staff of the Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Division of Career Services (DCS) Rapid Response Unit will notify the Local Workforce Investment Board (LWIB) and the local One-Stop Career Center(s) of the activity.

DCS Rapid Response staff will work with the affected company to gather information regarding the impacted population. Data collected includes but is not limited to:

- Workforce demographic information
- Job titles of impacted workers
- Salary information
- Duration of employment with the company
- Education and skill levels
- Workers' interest in accessing services

Based on the obtained data, Rapid Response and other DCS staff in coordination with the LWIB will develop an initial response plan for the delivery of Rapid Response and other services available from DCS, One-Stop Career Centers, the Division of Unemployment Assistance (DUA), the Department of Economic Development (DED) and other state and local programs. The initial response plan may include:

- aversion strategies,
- turnaround management assistance and/or
- an implementation strategy and schedule for the DCS Rapid Response Team to provide on-site services.

If information gathered during this initial process indicates that a majority of the targeted population has barriers to employment that will require intensive and training services, Rapid Response staff will work with the local board to determine whether a formal proposal to request RRSA funding may be appropriate.

Local areas may request Rapid Response Set-Aside funds to “bridge” the service gap while developing a National Emergency Grant (NEG) proposal or waiting for a decision from USDOL on a previously submitted NEG proposal for a significant workforce dislocation event. RRSA funds may also be requested to provide services for adversely affected workers when the local area's annual Title I Dislocated Worker allocation is insufficient to meet the additional need created by smaller dislocation events that do not merit the submission of a separate NEG proposal or in the circumstance that current local service capacity cannot meet the demands of increased Trade Adjustment Assistance activity.

Note: All proposals requesting Rapid Response Set-Aside funds must be developed in collaboration with the local area Rapid Response Coordinator.

Proposal Criteria

In order for a mass layoff or closing event to be considered for Rapid Response Set-Aside funding, the local area must submit a proposal that has been reviewed and determined to be complete by the local Rapid Response Coordinator. To be considered complete the proposal must:

1. Clearly demonstrate that current local capacity is insufficient to meet the service needs of the targeted group of workers affected by the specified dislocation. Required documentation must include, but is not limited to, the names of all affected workers who are currently enrolled as career center customers and a listing of the services they have received within the previous three months (with dates of service).

NOTE: *The review of each Rapid Response Set-Aside proposal will include an analysis of the obligation and expenditure status of all WIA, NEG, and other Set-Aside funds currently allocated or awarded to the area. Therefore, it is incumbent upon each local area to assure that accounting for each funding source is accurate and up to date.*

2. Clearly demonstrate that a significant percentage of the targeted workers have barriers to employment.
3. Clearly describe the service strategy for the targeted workers, including: the types of services to be provided, an outreach plan and the planned number of participants to be served with the requested funds. The outreach plan shall be implemented within a two week time frame from the date of referral to the designated One-Stop Career Center.

The proposal must fully describe how requested funds will be used. Rapid Response Set-Aside funds may be used for the following purposes:

A. Training – The proposal must:

- ✓ identify the total dollar amount of funds specifically requested for planned training services, and
- ✓ the number of participants proposed to be enrolled in training.

It should be noted that it is the Commonwealth's intent that a *majority of requested RRSA funds be directed to training services.*

B. Staffing – The proposal must:

- ✓ clearly state the total dollar amount of funds specifically requested to cover staff salaries and appropriate related costs.
- ✓ clearly state the total number of individual positions to be supported and must also identify the portion of a full-time equivalent position (FTE) at which each staff position will be funded

- ✓ clearly state whether staff for which funds are requested will need to be hired or are currently employed and supported with another source (or sources) of workforce development funds.
- ✓ must clearly demonstrate that the level of staff funding is appropriate to meet the needs of the targeted customer base, and
- ✓ must clearly demonstrate that requested RRSA funds are not intended to supplant other funds supporting current staff positions.

A request for RRSA funds to support staffing costs must be based on one, or both of the following:

- demonstration of both a high volume of customers eligible for services under current Trade Adjustment Assistance petitions and an insufficient level of current staff resources to meet the increased need,
- demonstration that the local area's current staffing resources are insufficient to provide the level of intensive services needed by the targeted dislocated workers specified in the proposal

4. A Cover Letter summarizing the four elements described above
5. A Signatory Page that includes signatures of both the LWIB Director and Fiscal Agent (see sample below)
6. A Budget and Budget Narrative
7. An attached "Statement of Proposal Completeness" signed by the local area Rapid Response Coordinator (see sample below)

All proposals for Rapid Response Set-Aside funds should be sent to:

Ken Messina
Division of Career Services
Hurley Building
19 Staniford Street
3rd floor
Boston, MA 02114

Proposal may be submitted electronically to kmessina@detma.org followed by a hard copy with original signatures.

Proposal Review Timeline and Notification

Proposals received no later than the 1st Monday of the month will be reviewed on the Friday of the following week. Proposals received no later than the 3rd Monday of the month will be reviewed on the Friday of the following week.

DCS will review the information provided in the RRSA proposal along with other relevant information. Information considered as part of the funding decision includes:

- timing of layoffs,
- size of the dislocation,
- needs of the affected population, and
- the amount of available funds.

As part of the review meeting, DCS will invite a local representative to participate in a question and response period to clarify reviewers' questions.

It is the goal of DCS that written notification will be forwarded to the Local Workforce Investment Board within one week of the date of the proposal review. At that time, additional information and/or planning documents may be requested. Local One-Stop Career Center Directors and the area's designated Fiscal Agent will be copied with regard to either a formal decision or request for additional information.

Funds may be awarded incrementally, based on specific performance criteria.

Grant Reporting Requirements

1. Program Reporting Requirements

Participant data for all funded projects will be entered in the Massachusetts One Stop Employment System (MOSES). A career-center specific program will be developed for each grant for this purpose. Questions related to program reporting should be directed to Norca Disla-Shannon at 978-722-7053 or ndisla-shannon@detma.org.

2. Fiscal Reporting Requirements

Rapid Response Set-Aside funds are considered separate from formula funds and will not be added to the current fiscal year WIA local allocation. Expenditures for Rapid Response Set-Aside funds will be tracked separately. A Fiscal Status Report (FSR) for each grant *must be submitted by the local fiscal agent electronically no later than the 20th of each month via the TAARR/NEG system, only*. Hard copies of a FSR may be submitted only in the circumstance that a technical issue with the TAARRNEG system prohibits electronic submittal. As with electronic submission, all hard copy submittals must be received by DCS *no later than the 20th of the month*.

NOTE: The Commonwealth reserves the right to recapture unexpended funds. Also, when funding is provided as a “bridge” grant pending award of a National Emergency Grant (NEG), it is the option of the Commonwealth to recapture funds expended/obligated from the Rapid Response Set-Aside grant subsequent to the effective date of the NEG.

Rapid Response Set-Aside Funds Proposal

Signatory Page

Name of Local Workforce Investment Area:

WIB Director

Date

Fiscal Agent

Date

RAPID RESPONSE COORDINATOR

STATEMENT OF PROPOSAL COMPLETENESS

The Rapid Response Set-Aside Proposal submitted by the _____ (Local WIB Name) _____ has been reviewed for completeness. The submission includes the required elements:

- ☐ Documentation of limited current resources
- ☐ Documentation of affected workers' barriers to employment
- ☐ Description of proposed service strategy
- ☐ Description/justification of use (training and/or staffing) of requested funds
- ☐ Cover Letter
- ☐ Budget
- ☐ Budget Narrative
- ☐ Signature Page

Rapid Response Coordinator

Date