



MASSACHUSETTS  
**Workforce Investment Act**

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**WIA Communication No. 04-39**

☒ **Policy**   ☐ **Information**

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

**From:** Susan V. Lawler, Commissioner  
Division of Career Services

**Date:** May 18, 2004

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

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**Purpose:** To transmit the Commonwealth's policy regarding the application and review process for Rapid Response Set-Aside Funds (this policy updates WIA Policy Issuance #03-25, dated November 13, 2003).

**Background:** The discretionary funds available for dislocated worker projects in Massachusetts are WIA Rapid Response 25% set-aside funds. WIA Policy Issuance 03-25 had been previously issued when the Department of Workforce Development delegated the responsibility for the management and distribution of these funds to the Division of Employment and Training (DET) in FY 2003. With the restructuring of DET, the Division of Career Services now has the responsibility for management and distribution of the Rapid Response Set-Aside (RRSA) funds.

This policy is intended to clarify and replace the process for local workforce investment areas impacted by mass layoffs and closings to request Rapid Response Set-Aside funds.

**Policy:** The Commonwealth's policy regarding the distribution of Rapid Response Set-Aside (RRSA) funds is attached. This policy shall apply to all Massachusetts Local Workforce Investment Areas.

**Effective:** Immediately.

**Inquiries:** Questions related to this policy should be directed to Ken Messina at (508) 890-3218 or at [kmessina@detma.org](mailto:kmessina@detma.org)

**Filing:** Please file this in your notebook of previously issued WIA Communication Series Issuances as #04-39.

# **Rapid Response Set-Aside Funding Process**

## **Proposal Development**

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

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

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

Using this information, Rapid Response and other DCS staff in coordination with the LWIB develops a 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. This 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 process indicates that a majority of the targeted population has barriers to employment that will require intensive and training services, then DCS Rapid Response staff work with the local board to determine whether a 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 allocation of Title I dislocated worker funds 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 the mass layoff or closing event to be considered for Rapid Response Set-Aside funding, the local area must submit a proposal which 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 and the planned number of participants to be served with the requested funds
4. 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

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

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

Ken Messina  
Division of Career Services  
340 Main Street, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Worcester, MA 01608

*Proposal may be submitted electronically to [kmessina@detma.org](mailto:kmessina@detma.org) followed by a hard copy with original signatures.*

### **Proposal Review Timeline and Notification**

Proposals received no later than the 1<sup>st</sup> Monday of the month will be reviewed on the Friday of the following week. Proposals received no later than the 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 factored into the funding decision will include timing of layoffs, size of the dislocation, needs of the affected population and the amount of available funds. 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.

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 Joan Boucher at 617-626-6737 or [jboucher@detma.org](mailto:jboucher@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 electronically by the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month to Vito Amorelli (Infrastructure Operations Group) at [vamorelli@detma.org](mailto:vamorelli@detma.org).

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**

**Local Workforce Investment Area:**

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**WIB Director**

**Date**

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**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

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Rapid Response Coordinator

Date