

Mass Workforce Issuance

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Policy Information

To: Chief Elected Officials
Workforce Development Chairs
Workforce Development 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: June 30, 2015

Subject: **Youth Eligibility: High Poverty Area**

Purpose: To notify Local Workforce Development Boards, One-Stop Career Center Operators and other local workforce investment partners of the process to determine whether a youth lives in a High Poverty Area for low-income eligibility purposes for participation in programs funded by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

Background: In accordance with WIOA sec. 129 (a)(2) and 20 CFR §681.260, a youth who lives in a High Poverty Area is automatically considered to be a low-income individual. A High Poverty Area is a Census Tract, a set of contiguous Census Tracts, Indian Reservation, tribal land, or Native Alaskan Village or county that has a poverty rate of at least 30 percent as set every 5 years using American Community Survey 5-Year data.

All In-School Youth and certain Out-of-School Youth who: (a) have a secondary diploma or it's recognized equivalent and are either basic skills deficient or an English language learner; or (b) require additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment must be low-income to be eligible for WIOA program services. In-School Youth and the aforementioned Out-of-School Youth who live in a High Poverty Area are considered low-income.

Using Census Tract data from the American Community Survey 5-Year data, the Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance Economic Research Department has developed a Poverty Threshold Census Tract Database for Career

Center staff to use in the determination of whether a youth lives in a High Poverty Area.

Policy: The following process is to be used in the determination of whether youth live in a “High Poverty Area” for the purposes of satisfying the low-income eligibility criterion:

Step 1: Click on the link to go to the [Poverty Threshold Census Tract Database](#) located on the Massachusetts Workforce Development System’s Youth Program Resource page.

Step 2: On the Poverty Threshold Census Tract Database use the *Address Census Tract Look Up* website to find the Census Tract that a youth lives in.

- Enter the youth’s complete home address (Street Address, City, State, & Zip) in the gray bordered box, then press the gray “GO” button to the right.
- A blue “*Geography Results*” box will appear. Five rows down the middle “*Geography Type*” column note the words “Census Tract.” The column to the LEFT also contains the words Census Tract followed by a number, county name, and state. The number which follows the words Census Tract is the Census Tract associated with the youth’s address.

Step 3: Print the page containing the youth’s address and the Census Tract number and retain for source documentation.

Step 4: Enter the youth’s Census Tract number into the Census Tract box located on the Poverty Threshold Census Tract Database and hit enter. A result of “Pass” or “Fail” will appear in the Poverty Threshold Results table. A result of “Pass” verifies that the youth’s address is in a High Poverty Area and a result of “Fail” means that the youth’s address is not in a High Poverty Area.

Step 5: Print the results from the Poverty Threshold Census Tract Database and retain for source documentation.

Action

Required: Local Workforce Boards must follow the process above to determine and document the use of the High Poverty Area special rule in establishing WIOA Title I Youth eligibility. Local boards must incorporate the High Poverty Area criterion, and process for determination and documentation thereof into local policies and procedures.

Please ensure that all appropriate individuals are knowledgeable of the content of this Policy.

Effective: July 1, 2015

References: [Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act](#)

[Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration; 20 CFR Parts 601, 651, 652 et al. Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act; Notice of Proposed Rulemaking; Proposed Rules](#)

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