



# WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS ACT OF 2005

## OUTLINE OF PROPOSALS

### **SECTION 1. Training Massachusetts Workers**

#### **SECTION 1A Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund**

- Provides \$20 million funding for
  - Sectoral Training Projects including a Health Care Training Initiative
  - WIB/CBO/Labor-Management Partnerships
  - Out of school youth programs
  - Creates Trust Fund to allow for multi year funding of projects

#### **SECTION 1B - Employment Services Program**

- Increases funding for welfare-to-work programs efforts to \$25 million and increases revenue through the Food Stamp Training Program

#### **SECTION 1C- Dislocated workers and Section 30**

- Provides opportunity for continued benefits for those in education or training programs

#### **SECTION 1D Workforce Training Fund**

- Extends Workforce Training Fund through 2010
- Supports regional sector and economic development projects
- Requires voluntary policy be developed for self insured organizations—e. g. hospitals, educational and public sector institutions and others

#### **SECTION 1E One-Stop Career Centers**

- Provides \$5 million in funding to expand training and services to unemployeed workers

### **SECTION 2. Educating Massachusetts' youth and families**

#### **SECTION 2A Increases funding for Adult Basic Education and English as a Second Language**

- Increase funds to \$35 million
- Requires funding to be allocated to workplace education in partnership with employers

#### **SECTION 2B Education Rewards Grant Program**

- Proposes \$6 million higher education grant program for low wage/low skilled students to improve affordability of higher education in high demand occupations

#### **SECTION 2C Amends MGL Chapter 15A Section 26 to allow funding of evening, weekend, and summer classes and Section 15F to allow Incentive program to support credit course offerings**

#### **SECTION 2D Support for in school youth**

- Supports \$9 million for the school to career connecting activities

### **SECTION 3. Performance standards and accountability**

#### **SECTION 3A Performance Standards and Workforce Accountability Task Force**

- Accountability and the development of performance standards for workforce development and job training programs receiving state funding including self sufficiency standards and common reporting requirements for all agencies/programs
- Task Force created to review Programs, Governance and Funding

## SUMMARY WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS ACT OF 2005

Total Program	Current FY 2005 Appropriation	Proposed FY06
Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund	\$6,000,000 <sup>^</sup>	\$20,000,000
Employment Service Program	\$18,998,978	\$25,000,000
Dislocated Workers and Section 30	-	-
Workforce Training Fund	\$21,000,000	\$21,000,000
One Stop Career Centers	\$3,750,000	\$5,000,000
Adult Basic Education	\$27,813,209	\$35,000,000
Educational Rewards Grant Program	\$0	\$6,000,000
Connecting Activities	\$4,129,687	\$9,000,000
Workforce Accountability Task Force*	\$0	\$0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$81,691,874</b>	<b>\$121,000,000</b>
Revenue from Food Stamp Training Grant Program		(\$)
<b><u>NEW FUNDING REQUESTED</u></b>		<b><u>\$39,308,126</u></b>

<sup>^</sup> Funding from the Economic Stimulus Bill Chapter 141 of the Acts of 2003

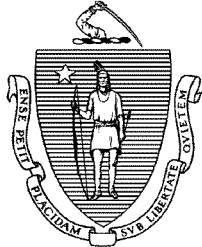
\*Proposed existing WIA 15% funds be used

*The Workforce Solutions Group advocates for an effective workforce development system that increases workers' skills, advances families to self-sufficiency and promotes job creation and economic growth. Funded by.....*



**CHIEF SPONSORS:**

REPRESENTATIVE LIDA E. HARKINS of NEEDHAM (HOUSE)  
SENATOR THOMAS M. MCGEE of LYNN (SENATE)



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

IN THE YEAR TWO THOUSAND FIVE

**AN ACT**

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:*

**WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS ACT OF 2005**

**AN ACT MAKING INVESTMENTS IN EMPLOYER AND COMMUNITY-BASED WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN AND INCREASE ECONOMIC VITALITY IN MASSACHUSETTS AND TO PROMOTE BUSINESS COMPETITIVENESS, WORKER SELF-SUFFICIENCY, AND ECONOMIC PROGRESS.**

The purpose of this Act is to promote and support activities and programs that will increase the competitiveness of Massachusetts companies and improve worker skills and productivity.

Whereas employers choose Massachusetts and stay in Massachusetts because of the quality of its workforce, and whereas Massachusetts also leads the nation in innovation, technology utilization, and attracting capital, all reflecting a quality workforce, the workforce is a critical asset of Massachusetts' economic well-being. However, recent trends in employer demands, demographic shifts within the United States, and immigration into Massachusetts, point to a need to protect our most competitive asset, the skills of our workforce. More than 1.1 million Massachusetts residents do not possess the skills necessary to meet the requirements of the new economy, according to MassINC's 2002 report, and more than 27% of Massachusetts's residents do not earn the income necessary to provide economic self-sufficiency for their families according to a recent study by the Center for Labor Market Studies.

Whereas the workforce development system in Massachusetts consists of a number of uncoordinated programs with multiple and differing priorities; and those programs span twelve state agencies responsible for over \$250 million in federal and state resources annually; and whereas these agencies, which may have overlapping, competing, conflicting or simply unaligned missions, must address the needs of 180,000 people out-of-work, 746,000 people without a high school diploma or GED, and 152,000 people without strong enough English language skills to succeed in most workplaces; and whereas an additional 700,000 incumbent workers lack the new basic skills employers seek, even though they already possess a high school diploma, the need to make better use of current activities is paramount. Whereas close to zero labor force growth (0.1%) except for the foreign born, and over half (53%) of those leaving the state comprising middle-class, college educated families, there is no alternative if Massachusetts is to remain a competitive and healthy economy. This Act responds to that need with active and intensive investment in human capital conducted according to the needs of the state's employers and done in an integrated, coordinated and cost effective manner.

The Workforce Solutions Act of 2005 will establish an effective, demand-driven workforce system in the Commonwealth through specific strategies, investments and activities set forth in the Act, including a continuum of services, employer led sectoral initiatives and improved coordination of funds and policies for workforce agencies. The Workforce Solutions Act of 2005 prepares Massachusetts residents for high demand, high wage occupations, and directly involves employers, service constituents, and education and training providers in a process to develop policy and practice recommendations that will create a workforce development system that supports the competitive stature of Massachusetts in the global

business and technology marketplace. The Act seeks to achieve the maximum level of coordination and coinvestment in each of the sections by the agencies named herein, private sector employers and philanthropic organizations in Massachusetts. The Act is divided into 3 sections:

## **SECTION 1. Training Massachusetts Workers**

**Provide a coordinated continuum of education and training for Massachusetts workers to meet regional workforce needs at all skill levels and expand opportunities for residents to benefit from education and training that leads specifically and directly to employment with self-sustaining wages. This legislation emphasizes sector initiatives, which involve employers, workers, educators and others in developing industry-specific programs, targeted to high demand occupations. In addition, the legislation increases the likelihood of success for low-income residents and dislocated workers who participate in training programs by providing tuition and other supports that aid program retention and completion.**

**Section 1A Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund** *Whereas*, the competitive stature of Massachusetts in the global marketplace is largely dependent on maintaining and enhancing the quality of the Commonwealth's workforce; and workforce development strategies are most effective when they address the current and emerging needs of employers together with the skills and educational deficits of workers; and effective workforce development interventions that support career ladder success and the wage progress of individuals to a family-sustaining wage level require multiple years of operation; and long-term economic impact requires that pipelines of skilled workers be available as companies need them, and workers and emerging workers in those pipelines must have access to skill enhancement opportunities as the need arises; there shall be established a separate fund to be known as the Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund, administered by the Department of Workforce Development which shall contract with the Commonwealth Corporation to administer the fund. The fund shall support, in conjunction with other private, public and philanthropic resources, the development and implementation employer-and worker responsive programs to enhance worker skills, incomes, productivity and retention and to increase the quality and competitiveness of Massachusetts firms; train and help the unemployed (particularly low-income unemployed) find employment, improve employment for low income individuals or low wage workers, improve wages to a level sufficient to support a family or place individuals on a career path leading to such employment and wages; train vulnerable youth (18-24 years old) to master basic academic skills including the attainment of a high school credential, develop occupational skills, and become employed in jobs that have career potential; train older workers (ages 45 and older) for new occupations. The department of workforce development shall use these projects to improve the workforce development system by integrating employer and worker needs more fully in program design and delivery, and will support, through grants, partnership program and planning grant applications from the following eligible applicants to provide an integrated continuum of education and training: employers and employer associations; local workforce investment boards; labor organizations; community based organizations including adult basic education providers; institutions of higher education; vocational education institutions, and education, training or other service providers.

The fund will be used to leverage employer, public, philanthropic and other contributions, and will be available as state match for federal funds that meet the parameters of the Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund. The Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund shall be an expendable trust fund and shall not be subject to appropriation. Project grants will be offered competitively, for amounts up to \$500,000 and for no longer than 3 years in duration.

The operation and oversight of the Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund will adhere to the following subsections:

(a) An advisory committee will be established which represents significant constituencies and beneficiaries of the Fund, including, but not limited to high growth or critical industries; the workforce development system, public education, adult basic education, department of transitional assistance, public higher education, labor, economic development, and advocates of customer populations, including a minimum of 2 labor representatives selected by the President of the Massachusetts AFL-CIO, and 2 representatives of the Massachusetts Workforce Board Association. The advisory committee will supply constituent-focused labor market information, review general programmatic parameters and guidelines, assist with the identification of issues and barriers to the Fund's success and effectiveness and the dissemination of relevant information about the Fund to constituents, and support the general oversight of Fund implementation. Commonwealth Corporation will convene the advisory committee at least quarterly.

(b) Commonwealth Corporation will be the administrator of the Fund, and shall maintain the Fund as a separate fund, and shall cause it to be audited by an independent accountant on an annual basis in accordance with accepted accounting principles.

(c) There shall be credited to the fund, revenue from appropriations or other monies authorized by the general court and specifically designated to be credited to the fund, and gifts, grants, private contributions, investment income earned on the fund's assets, and all other sources. Money remaining in the fund at the end of a fiscal year shall not revert to the general fund.

(d) Partnership programs may include costs for support services including, but not limited to transportation and childcare, to eliminate barriers to participation in the training program. For any unionized employer participating as a partner in a grant application, the impacted union must be an active participant in the design and implementation of the grant.

(e) A competitive grant program will be established that provides support to partnerships and eligible applicants as described above, and that leverages applicant co-investment of at least 30% of the grant amount, from employers, philanthropic, public or private organizations. The period of grant operations may be up to three years in duration. Grants may be targeted to specific populations, such as educationally or economically disadvantaged youth, low-income, low skilled and low-wage workers, and disabled citizens, or industries that are deemed to be of critical consequence to the Commonwealth. Special grant programs and funding allocations will be determined by the Advisory Committee established under section (a) above will be distributed via regionally-based competitive bid, which will require the defining of economic regions of the Commonwealth based on labor market factors as determined by the advisory committee. Every Massachusetts municipality will be accounted for in a designated region. A formula for regional distribution will be created, and competition for formula grant funds will occur within each identified region, and will be subject to parameters established by the advisory committee in consultation with regional partners. A planning grant may be offered for partners to define employer needs, to make necessary curriculum and other programmatic improvements to align with employer and worker needs, or to determine the feasibility of a proposed workforce development intervention, to plan for and coordinate strong partnerships amongst stakeholders, to identify educational and skill needs of workers/program participants, to link training initiatives with employer-based career ladders, to develop case management and additional support services that would address barriers to participation.

(f) A portion of the grant fund will be established to support the current and future labor force needs of the Commonwealth's healthcare industry. Massachusetts' healthcare industry, which is a world leader in research education and the provision of quality patient care, is critical to the public health and public safety of all residents, represents the state's largest employment sector and is a tremendous economic driver for the life sciences sector of the economy. The Healthcare Workforce Development Fund will support projects that address evidence-based barriers and gaps in the healthcare workforce development pipeline. Small planning and needs assessment grants may be offered. A project grant program will be designed by Commonwealth Corporation in consultation with a Healthcare subcommittee of the Fund advisory committee, which must include at a minimum appointments made by the following organizations the Massachusetts Hospital Association, the Massachusetts Extended Care Federation, the Home and Health Care Association of Massachusetts, the Massachusetts Workforce Board Association and the Massachusetts AFL-CIO, as well as representatives of the other mandatory advisory committee constituencies.

(g) Project grants will be offered competitively, for amounts up to \$500,000 and for no longer than 3 years in duration. The advisory committee will determine how to apportion the grant fund between the healthcare industry fund and the general grant program fund. That up to 7.5 percent of the funds appropriated herein may be expended for administration of each grant.

(h) The director shall annually, by September 31, 2006, report to the secretary of administration and finance, the house and senate committees on ways and means, the joint committee on education, arts and humanities, the joint committee on state administration, and the joint committee on commerce and labor the status of grants awarded under this section, including the number of educational and eligible service providers receiving grants, the number of participants receiving services, the number of participants placed in employment, the salary and benefits that participants receive post placement, and the cost per participant, and job retention or promotion rates one year after training ends. \$20,000,000

## **SECTION 1B Employment Services Program**

4401-1000 For a program to provide employment and training services for recipients of benefits provided under the program of transitional aid to families with dependent children; provided, that certain parents who have not yet reached the age of 18, including those who are ineligible for transitional aid to families with dependent children and who would qualify for benefits under chapter 118 of the General Laws, but for the deeming of the grandparents' income, shall be allowed to participate in the employment services program; provided further, that funds from this item may be expended on former recipients of the program for up to one year after termination of their benefits due to employment or subsection (f) of section 110 of chapter 5 of the acts of 1995; provided further, that funds from this item shall be expended for the purposes of the young parents program, transportation costs, pre-employment skills training and education programs, and structured subsidized employment services; provided further, that the department of transitional assistance may use funds from this item and shall collaborate with the department of workforce development to access funding through Title I of the federal Workforce Investment Act to ensure that sufficient resources are available to provide substantive, pre-employment skills training, including training that integrates basic education and English as a second language instruction, to recipients of transitional aid to families with dependent children who are in need of such services; provided further, that funds from this item may also be expended for re-employment services, job search assistance, vocational training services, job retention services, adult basic education, general educational development courses, English as a second language courses and training programs for persons with limited English proficiency, and emergency work-related expenses for recipients, including emergency transportation costs; provided further, that the department shall inform all recipients and applicants of the full range of programs and of skills training programs funded by Title I of the federal Workforce Investment Act accessible through the one-stop career centers and adult education programs funded by the department of education available under this program; provided further, that funds may be allocated from this item to other agencies for the purposes of this program; provided further, that within 90 days of a recipient without a high school degree or a general educational development credential or proficiency in English who is subject to subsection (f) of section 110 of chapter 5 of the acts of 1995 becoming eligible for benefits, the department may offer to the recipient a skills assessment to identify barriers to employment; and provided further the Commissioner of the Department of Transitional Assistance will identify food stamp recipients enrolled in education and training programs in order to allow the Commonwealth to apply for the matching federal funds it is eligible for under the Food Stamp Employment Training Program; and provided further, the Department of Transitional Assistance will take steps to develop an increased education and information campaign to increase the number of residents eligible for food stamps to apply; and provided further, any new funds appropriated under this act which are for training and education programs for food stamp recipients would also be eligible for additional federal matching funds; and provided further, all federal matching funds gained from the Food Stamp Employment Training Program will be made available for job training and adult basic education programs to serve additional recipients of benefits provided under the food stamp program, including but not limited to the program of transitional aid to families with dependent children, and provided further, that all of this item is subject to appropriation and, in the event of a deficiency, nothing herein shall give rise to or shall be construed as giving rise to any enforceable right or entitlement to services in excess of the amounts appropriated by this item. \$25,000,000

### **SECTION 1C- Dislocated workers and Section 30**

SECTION 1. Subsection (c) of section 30 of chapter 151A of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2002 Official Edition, is hereby amended by striking out the first paragraph and inserting in place thereof the following new paragraph:-

If in the opinion of the commissioner, it is necessary for an unemployed individual to obtain further industrial, vocational, adult basic education or English for speakers of a second language training to realize sustainable employment, the total benefits which such individual may receive shall be extended by up to eighteen times the individual's benefit rate, if such individual is attending a retraining course approved by the commissioner; provided that the length of the training program shall not be the basis for the commissioner's decision to deny approval; provided, further, that such additional benefits shall be paid to the individual only when attending such course and only if such individual has exhausted all rights to regular and extended benefits under this chapter and has no rights to benefits or compensation under this chapter or any other state unemployment compensation law or under any federal law; provided, further, that such extension shall be available only to individuals who have applied to the commissioner for training no later than the fifteenth week of a new or continued claim but the commissioner shall specify by regulation the circumstances in which the 15 week application period shall be tolled, including, but not limited to, where staff of the Division of Unemployment Assistance, or its agents, have given the applicant misinformation that causes the applicant to miss the 15 week deadline; the applicant is working with, or has

attempted to initiate a working relationship with, a one-stop career center for the purpose of securing a spot in a training program, but has not yet been able to enroll in an appropriate program; the applicant's need to address the physical, psychological and legal effects of domestic violence; and other good cause to be determined by the commissioner; provided that the claimant shall begin training in the first available appropriate program for which funding is available and which is a reasonable distance from the claimant's residence, as determined by the commissioner; provided, further, that the commissioner, in his discretion, may extend the period once for not more than two weeks for any applicant whose initial application is denied; and provided, further, that any benefits paid to an individual under the provisions of this paragraph which would not be chargeable to the account of any particular employer under the provisions of section fourteen shall be charged to the solvency account. An individual eligible to receive a trade readjustment allowance under Chapter 2 of Title II of the Trade act of 1974, as amended, shall not be eligible to receive additional benefits under this section for each week the individual receives such trade readjustment allowance. An individual eligible to receive emergency unemployment compensation, so-called, under any federal law, shall not be eligible to receive additional benefits under this section for each week the individual receives such compensation.

## **SECTION 1D Workforce Training Fund (amendment)**

### **Chapter 29: Section 2RR insert after (2) (k)**

(i) For grants and technical assistance administered by the department of workforce development, pursuant to section 2RR of chapter 29 of the General Laws; and provided further, the fund may be used to support regional sectoral strategies and projects by companies and organizations to achieve key economic and workforce development goals including the expansion of the employment and skill base in the region and the state; provided further that self insured and public sector organizations and institutions shall be encouraged to contribute to the workforce training fund pursuant to section 2RR of chapter 29 of the General Laws to support the elimination of skill and labor shortages in their industry and others; and provided further that said self insured and public sector organizations and institutions which contribute to the fund and will be eligible to apply for workforce training fund grants after a period of contributions as specified by the department; and provided further that up to 7.5 percent of the funds appropriated herein may be expended for administration of each grant. The workforce training fund is extended through December 31, 2010.

## **SECTION 1E One-Stop Career Centers**

7003-0803 One-Stop Career Centers, chartered by Local Workforce Investment Boards are a major source of information, training and labor exchange and job placements in Massachusetts. Each career center shall inform unemployed or underemployed residents and individuals with low educational skill levels and/or limited English proficiency who seek assistance from the center of the full range of education and training programs that are available to them, the availability of jobs in the professions for which such programs prepare participants, and the average wage rates in such professions within the commonwealth. The Department of Workforce Development will conduct an evaluation of the use of one-stop career centers including but not limited to the numbers of individuals and employers served in each region; the services provided by each one stop career center; the number of persons and costs of operating the connecting unemployment insurance claimant initiative in one-stops; the costs of providing each of the range of one stop career services; and provided further, the department will provide an analysis of the level of funds needed to adequately support the services at one stop career centers; and provided further the director shall annually, by September 31, 2005, report to the secretary of administration and finance, the house and senate committees on ways and means, the joint committee on state administration, and the joint committee on commerce and labor the status of the evaluation herein requested and the allocation of said funds. Said appropriation will support the operations of existing one-stop career centers. \$5,000,000

## **SECTION 2 Educating Massachusetts youth and families**

### **SECTION 2A Adult Basic Education and English as a Second Language**

7035-0002 For grants to provide and strengthen adult basic education services, including reading, writing and mathematics, and English language learning, to a diverse network of organizations which have demonstrated commitment and effectiveness in the provision of such services, and that are selected competitively by the department of education; provided, that such grants shall support the successful transition of students from the various types of adult basic education programs to community college certificate and degree granting programs and employment opportunities and advancement in the workplace; provided further, that such grants shall be contingent upon satisfactory levels of performance as defined and determined by said department; provided further, that in no case

shall grants be considered an entitlement to a grant recipient; provided further, that said department shall consult with the community colleges, workforce boards and other service providers in establishing and implementing content, performance and professional standards for adult basic education programs and services; provided further that these funds will be used to reduce the waiting lists for such services and better connect these services to skills and occupational training including workplace based and worker education programs and pathways to higher education; and provided further, that not less than 10% of new funds using the preceding fiscal year as a base year, will be used to provide grants specifically for workplace education and workers education programs by eligible providers and partnerships; and provided further that such grants will expand the flexibility of offerings to include weekend classes and offer classes that meet needs of low-wage workers with varying work schedules; and provided further that not more than 7.5 percent of the funds appropriated herein may be expended for administrative purposes. \$35,000,000

## **SECTION 2B Education Rewards Grant Program**

Whereas critical vacancies remain in selected occupations and part-time students are ineligible for most financial aid programs, the Education Rewards Grant Program is hereby established.

There shall establish a grant program, to be known as the Education Rewards Grant Program, hereafter referred to as the Grant Program. The Grant Program shall provide grants to students in accredited postsecondary certificate or vocational technology programs or Associate degree programs in targeted high-demand occupations. The Department of Workforce Development and the Board of Higher Education in consultation with the Massachusetts Workforce Board Association, The State Workforce Investment Board, the Reach Higher Initiative and the Workforce Accountability Task Force shall determine the eligible high demand occupations. If a Bachelor's degree program is needed for a profession in critical demand, it may be added to the eligible programs. Of the appropriation for grants, up to one third may be used for students enrolled full-time; at least two-thirds of the total grant amount is reserved for students enrolled half time or less.

Grant recipients shall be limited to dislocated workers or those with incomes at or below 200 percent of the poverty level or other standards or criterion as may be established by the department and the board in consultation with the Workforce Accountability Task Force in Section 3 of this act. These income levels shall be used as the measure for eligibility.

Grant amounts will be limited to a maximum of \$3,000 to cover tuition, fees, books, and up to 30% of the grant amount for living expenses. The Grant Program shall serve as a last resort, after other federal and state grants have been exhausted. The Department of Workforce Development and the Board of Higher Education, or their designees, will jointly administer the grant program. \$6,000,000

## **SECTION 2C Amends MGL Chapter 15A Section 26 to allow funding of evening, weekend, and summer classes and Section 15F Community college workforce training incentive program**

Chapter 15A Public Education is hereby amended by striking Section 26 and inserting in its place the following language " Chapter 15A: Section 26 Summer sessions; evening classes, Section 26. Each public institution of higher education may conduct summer sessions and evening classes."

Chapter 15A Public Education is hereby amended by adding in Section 15F following each occurrence of the phrase "not-for-credit vocationally-oriented courses" the words "or for credit courses approved by the college".

## **SECTION 2D Support for in school youth**

7027-0019 for school to career connecting activities in an effort to significantly expand the opportunities to impact all schools districts in Massachusetts through the provision of foundation funding to insure all regions have the responsibility and capacity to connect school districts, students and employers; provided further to improve the mathematics, technology, engineering and science educational offerings available in public and private schools. For school-to-career connecting activities; provided, that notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, the board of education, in cooperation with the department of workforce development and the state workforce investment board, may establish and support a public-private partnership to link high school students with economic and learning opportunities on the job as part of the school-to-work transition program; provided further, that such program may include the award of matching grants to workforce investment boards or other local public-private partnerships

involving local community job commitments and work site learning opportunities for students; provided further, that the grants shall require at least a 200 per cent match in wages for the students from private sector participants; provided further, that the program shall include, but not be limited to, a provision that business leaders commit resources to pay salaries, to provide mentoring and instruction on the job and to work closely with teachers; and provided further, that public funds shall assume the costs of connecting schools and businesses to ensure that students serve productively on the job. \$9,000,000

## **SECTION 3. Performance standards and accountability**

### **SECTION 3A Performance Standards and Workforce Accountability Task Force**

Notwithstanding the provisions of any general or special law to the contrary, there is hereby established the Workforce Accountability Task Force. The Task Force shall develop and recommend policies that advance skills and workforce development opportunities for incumbent, unemployed and underemployed older youth and adult workers whose lack of skills prevent or limit their successful employment. Lack of skills may include, but are not limited to English, mathematics, reading, writing, science and technology, and such other skills as Massachusetts employers identify. Especially targeted are adult workers with no post-secondary education, adult immigrants who seek to learn English and adults without a high school diploma, displaced and older workers and individuals not currently connected to the workforce, and youth between the ages of 16 and 21 who have either dropped out of school or at risk of dropping out, or who are academically at-risk of not completing the requirements for high school graduation. The task force shall develop recommendations that include, but are not limited to, the following: (1) developing a basic-skills program that establishes an employer-defined qualifications for entering the workforce; (2) strategies to increase the number of academically under-prepared students who obtain associate degrees at state community colleges, particularly in occupations with anticipated expanding needs; (3) developing a statewide plan to improve English language instruction through the use of technology, public/private partnerships, increased employer involvement in workplace literacy programs, and co-investment and financing strategies; (4) strategies to increase training opportunities for incumbent workers; (5) strategies to increase training opportunities and resources for unemployed, displaced and older workers individuals insufficiently employed, and individuals disengaged from the workforce altogether; (6) strategies to increase federal resources available for education and training such as the food stamp training fund; temporary aid for needy families and other resources; and strategies to maximize the participation of eligible workers who receive the earned income tax credit; (7) strategies to reduce barriers to education, training and employment for low skilled, low-wage workers and other targeted populations in the state including transportation, child care, elder care or other barriers; (8) strategies that support business start-up and ownership among low-income and dislocated workers; (9) strategies to increase private sector resources available for worker education and training; improve career ladders and employer support; identifying state and regional gaps in education and training services; and (10) strategies to make information about education and training services more accessible to Massachusetts workers and employers; (11) employer and worker tax credits and incentives.

The Task Force shall design and conduct an evaluation and analysis of the present governance and coordination of workforce development agencies and programs in Massachusetts. On the basis of that study, the Task Force shall recommend to the General Court and appropriate agencies policies and changes to policies likely to improve the results of the Massachusetts workforce development efforts. Recommendations may address improving coordination, oversight and maximizing resources. The goals of the Task Force study shall include, to help Massachusetts citizens make better use of the state's workforce development system, define clearer lines of responsibility and accountability, and to analyze the management of the system in an effort to both improve service delivery and increase the scarce resources available for education and training. The Task Force shall publish, or cause to be published, a resources guide for consumer and employers of all workforce education and training resources in the Commonwealth.

It shall be the responsibility of the Department of Workforce Development, through the Commonwealth Corporation, in consultation with the Workforce Accountability Task Force to evaluate existing and develop additional performance standards for workforce and job-training programs receiving state funding in the areas of employment, skill/education, business, the self-sufficiency standard and customer satisfaction impact for the agencies of the Commonwealth that provide workforce development resources, education or training programs as defined by the Task Force. The Department shall complete the implementation of the wage record matching system to facilitate analysis based upon the measures detailed below. The specific measures shall include job placement rate, job retention rate, career ladder advancement, wage gain, employer business goals, credentials including education, industry, and employability credentials, increases in literacy, numeracy, English language or occupational skills, and individual and employer

customer satisfaction rates. The Department shall develop the economic self-sufficiency measure, and shall contract with a research unit or organization that has experience in studying what is necessary to attain self-sufficiency in the Commonwealth for the purpose of developing a self-sufficiency measure for the Commonwealth. As used in this section, the term "self-sufficiency standard" or "standard" as defined by Wider Opportunities for Women (WOW) and The Women's Union, shall mean the amount of income needed by a family or household in the commonwealth to provide for adequate housing, food, child care, health care, transportation and employment-related expenses, and to pay taxes. The standard shall be determined according to family size and age of children, and shall take into account regional variations in the costs of housing and child care, the differential inflation rates that affect the growth of these costs, and the effect of existing tax laws, including state sales tax, payroll taxes, federal and state income tax, child care tax credits and the earned income tax credit. The Standard shall not be used to increase the amount of entitlement benefits provided by the Commonwealth, unless enacted by the Legislature and subject to appropriation, and said Standard shall not give rise to enforceable legal rights in any party to services or entitlements or an enforceable entitlement to services or benefits not currently provided. The Workforce Accountability Task Force shall advise the Department on all matters relating to the development of a self-sufficiency standard and future revisions to it. The performance standards shall be distributed to each of the state executive offices and state agencies; local service providers and vendors that provide any education, training or employment related services.

Commencing July 1, 2005, all workforce development services and job skills training programs receiving state funds must prepare for the submission by June 30, 2006, and each year thereafter, an annual performance report using the employment, education, business, customer satisfaction, and economic self-sufficiency impact measures and standards agreed upon to the department, the state workforce investment board, the house and senate committees on ways and means, the joint committee on education, arts and humanities, the joint committee on state administration, and the joint committee on commerce and labor.

The task force shall consist of the following members: 2 members to be appointed by the governor, 1 of whom shall be the director of the department of workforce development, or her designee, 2 members to be appointed by the president of senate, 2 members to be appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives, the chancellor of the board of higher education or her designee, the Secretary of the Executive Office of Health and Human Services of his designee; 1 member from the Massachusetts Business Roundtable, 1 member from the Associated Industries of Massachusetts, 1 Member of the Massachusetts Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives; 1 member of the Massachusetts Institute for a New Commonwealth; 1 member from the Massachusetts Taxpayer Foundation; 1 member from the Massachusetts Hospital Association; 2 members selected by the President of the Massachusetts AFL-CIO; 1 member from the Center for Labor Market Studies; 2 employer members from the Massachusetts Workforce Investment Board Association; 1 member from the Organizing and Leadership Training Center; 1 member from The Women's Union Massachusetts Family Economic Self-Sufficiency Project; 1 Member from the Workforce Investment Association of MA; 1 member from SkillWorks; 1 member from the Massachusetts Coalition for Adult Education; 1 member from representatives of consumers of ABE and job training programs from the Massachusetts Alliance for Adult Literacy; 1 member from the Executive Office of Community Colleges; 1 member from the Department of Education; 1 member from the Massachusetts Workforce Investment Board; 1 member from the Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center; and 2 members representing community based organizations and immigrant populations with 1 member from the Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition and 1 member from the Massachusetts Workforce Alliance; 1 member from the Massachusetts Association of Community Development Corporations; 1 member from the Commonwealth Corporation; and 1 member from the Division of Career Services. Members of the task force shall serve without compensation. The task force shall be co-chaired by a Massachusetts business representative and Massachusetts labor representative, appointed jointly by the president of the senate and the speaker of the house of representatives and shall file a report to the clerk of the house and senate, the house and senate committees on ways and means and the joint committee on commerce and labor, the joint committee on education, arts and humanities, not later than December 31, 2005. The Department of Workforce Development shall provide the funds necessary to carry out the activities of this section through workforce investment act funds and shall provide adequate staff to the Task Force so that it can perform its functions effectively.