

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

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Jeffrey C. Riley
Commissioner

August 13, 2021

Dear Connecting Activities Leaders,

I want to thank you for the excellent work that each MassHire Workforce board has done to impact the future workforce in Massachusetts. Together in FY21, our ever-expanding network focused on improving awareness of Connecting Activities, deepening our advocacy efforts and equity lens through intentional planning, increasing our communications and engagement efforts, improving strategic partnerships with schools, delivering high quality work-based learning experiences especially in STEM fields, increasing our capacity to support pathways, and showcasing our expertise via conferences and panel discussions.

Further, the MassHire Workforce boards put hundreds of students in paid education internships where youth gained valuable work-based learning, took advantage of professional development, and helped to address learning gaps in K-8 students due to the pandemic. The work that CA leaders did with districts helped to build the pipeline of future educators, a high priority for DESE. We could not have offered this program without your dedication to expanding access to quality programming for students. In FY22, we will continue the work above while enhancing our efforts to develop and sustain partnerships with high priority industry sectors.

The purpose of the memo is to provide insight into the development of the CA budget for FY22 and offer each MassHire Workforce board their revised allocation for FY22.

Allocation Process

In an effort to promote transparency, equity, and inclusion in decision-making and to increase the number of students participating in high quality career development opportunities, the process was iterative and data-driven.

Initial Allocation

To intentionally allocate and develop a longer-term approach to more equitable funding and to wait for the legislature to pass the final budget, the initial allocation was developed. This resulted in level funding for the MassHire Workforce Boards from FY21 minus the FY21 Innovation Pathways funding and the one-time CA expansion funding.

Final allocation

The following sources of data were utilized to develop the final methodology for the budget. In the Spring of 2021, MassHire Workforce Boards were offered the opportunity to propose programs and funding levels to serve the students in their regions. The proposals were reviewed internally at DESE. Reviewing data sets on student enrollment and criteria including high needs and

economically disadvantaged were utilized to inform budget decisions. Additionally, student outcome data from the MA Career Ready database helped to inform the budget. Researching other approaches to educational grant funding was another strategy to support the rationale for the decisions made on the budget.

The budget is broken up by the following:

- 1) **Initial Allocation:** Level funding for the MassHire Workforce Boards from FY21 minus the FY21 Innovation Pathways funding and the one-time CA expansion funding.
- 2) **Regional Student Data:** The average of the percentage of enrolled students in grades 6-12 and percentage of high needs students in grades K-12 in each region.
- 3) **Employer Engagement:** \$60,000 to all 16 MassHire Workforce Boards to hire a FTE or contract position that focuses on employer engagement.
- 4) **Innovation Pathways:** To continue to support Innovation Pathways, a priority strategy, 14 MassHire Workforce Boards will receive \$30,000. MassHire Central will receive \$80,000 to support 46 IPs and to continue to offer substantial support to other districts in the development of high-quality pathways. Money can be utilized flexibly but is strongly suggested to be spent on supporting districts with IP applications, teacher stipends for common planning, capstone course development, and efforts to secure internships for IP students.

FY22 and beyond

The allocation process outlined about will provide regions with a more equitable stream of funding to help support students while keeping historically allocated funding intact. In addition to introducing a new allocation process and after reviewing similarly structured grants, DESE is investigating tying funding levels to performance measures. This could include basing portions of funding levels on meeting the performance goals listed below.

Accountability Measures for FY22

- Increase the number of students placed in WBL immersive experiences (e.g. internships, whether paid or unpaid) and youth employment compared to the number placed in FY21, and the number of employers engaged, especially in STEM fields, as reflected in new goals, by developing new strategies and efficiencies for the region's Connecting Activities (CA) initiative.
- Deliver a 200% match in wages for the students from the private sector.

Regional Allocations

The following tables outline the breakdown of CA funding and then the revised allocation amount for each region. As a result of the increased funding, each MassHire Workforce board will have to amend their budgets beginning in October. Kerry Akashian will reach out to you with further details.

The FY22 budget has now been finalized at \$7.5M, broken down as follows:

Table 1

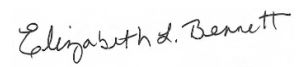
FY22 Appropriated Connecting Activities Budget	
<i>Distributed through Fund Code 428 to MassHire Boards</i>	
Base Funding Per Historical Allocation Levels	\$4,791,015
IP Pathways	\$500,000
Connecting Activities Employer Engagement Full time or contract position(s)	\$960,000
Funding based on the average enrollment and high needs.	\$531,360
Legislative Earmarks	\$500,000
ANF Required Reserve	\$50,024
DESE Administrative Costs	\$167,601
Total	\$7,500,000

Table 2

Region	FY22 Original Award	FY22 Employer Engagement	FY22 IP Allocation	FY22 Enrollment and High Needs	FY22 Total Budget	FY22 Amendment Amount
Berkshire	\$227,746	60,000	30,000	\$8,884	326,630	\$98,884
Boston	\$1,437,225	60,000	30,000	\$45,400	1,572,625	\$135,400
Bristol	\$234,618	60,000	30,000	\$29,099	353,717	\$119,099
Brockton Area	169,706	60,000	30,000	24,434	284,140	\$114,434
Cape & Islands	164,072	60,000	30,000	15,511	269,583	\$105,511
Central Mass	186,214	60,000	80,000	51,470	377,684	\$191,470
Franklin/Hampshire	257,708	60,000	30,000	12,663	360,371	\$102,663
Greater Lowell	212,958	60,000	30,000	25,515	328,474	\$115,516
Greater New Bedford	169,869	60,000	-	19,013	248,882	\$79,013
Hampden County	416,273	60,000	30,000	48,653	554,926	\$138,653
Merrimack Valley	224,135	60,000	30,000	32,747	346,882	\$122,747
Metro North	215,463	60,000	30,000	51,409	356,873	\$141,463
North Central	216,478	60,000	30,000	21,436	327,914	\$111,436
Northshore	225,391	60,000	30,000	34,399	349,790	\$124,391
Metro Southwest	238,677	60,000	30,000	74,434	403,111	\$164,434
Southshore	194,482	60,000	30,000	36,291	320,773	\$126,291
Total	4,791,015	960,000	500,000	531,360	6,782,375	991,357

We again are grateful to our programs and partners as we all try to continue to deliver high impact programs. Please contact Kerry Akashian at kerry.akashian@mass.gov with any questions.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth L. Bennett
Associate Commissioner
Office for College, Career, and Technical Education