

Massachusetts Workforce Association Public Policy Committee Meeting Notes

Tuesday, March 16, 2021

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Participants:

- Participants: Ron Iacobucci, Joe Peters, Robert Bower, Rebecca Bialecki, Raija Vaisanen, Lisa Vermette, Kevin Lynn, Mary Sarris, Teri Anderson, Tonja Mettlach,

Committee Check-In/UI Update:

- Ron provided an update on UI and a conversation he had with three state senators (Timilty, Jehlen, and Keenan). Ron noted that Senators/Reps are just as frustrated with the UI system as MassHire is.
- This topic is also very important as if career centers are going to return to in person services we must ensure that things at DUA are under control before then.
- Ron asked the committee for additional information and ideas about how UI could be approved. Committee members were asked to share any additional information or ideas they might have to Ron directly.
- Bobby shared the issues he is seeing with union members and the massive fraud issue.
- Mary shared what she is seeing in the North Shore. Her fear is people lining up with DUA issues at the career center and them not being able to resolve issues (this is what happened during the last recession).

State and Federal Policy Updates

- AVTE legislation (see two bills attached to follow up email).
 - Action Item: Please review using MWA's issue selection sheet and be prepared to talk about potential endorsement of these bills at our next meeting.
- Diverse teachers workforce coalition (see bill attached to follow up email).
 - Teri shared information and proposed legislation from the Diverse Teachers Workforce Coalition her and Rebecca are a part of. The legislation relates to diversification of the teacher workforce and is sponsored by Latinos for Education. While this would be a lift for many school districts, it is on an important topic.
 - Action Item: Please review using MWA's issue selection sheet and be prepared to talk about potential endorsement of legislation at our next meeting.
- Federal: Tonja noted to committee members that MWA shared a summary of the American Rescue Plan that was recently passed in D.C. and hoped members found it helpful. The hope is that now Congress will begin to think about a Recovery plan and that is where workforce funding will be included. MWA will continue to provide updates.

FY22 Budget

- Tonja talked about the FY22 budget and the recent testimony Secretary Acosta shared with the Joint Committee on Ways and Means. One of the questions a legislator asked and that MWA and its members should be prepared to answer is "why do we need more funding when we are serving less customers"?



- This also led to a conversation around the career center line item and why it is under funded by the Governor each budget. When the Governor underfunds the line items, it leads to more work with the legislature as we are beginning at a lower number than where we left off the last budget cycle.
 - Committee members talked about doing the same amount of work but with much less staff.
 - Some regions have been particularly hard hit, for example, the North Shore has seen a drop in its federal funding by almost 50%.
 - Another important point is that career centers aren't just serving WIOA customers but many other grants they receive don't support hiring of additional full time staff.
 - Kevin talked about employers served and how the numbers and our narrative don't accurately reflect that.
 - This led to a discussion about CTI and some of the problems with the funding levels included in the grant.
 - Tonja to review a prior career center survey about one stop line item and how regions use the funding. As a committee we will keep thinking about how we talk about the system's work and the need for at least \$10M into the career centers.
- Tonja also shared about a virtual workforce briefing being held on March 22nd to release a white paper on rapid reemployment in hopes committee members could make it.
- Finally, please see [here](#) for a recent OpEd Raija wrote for the Boston Business Journal. Great job, Raija!

Public Policy Framework/Campaign

- The committee was over time and did not get to the public policy draft framework. Tonja and Raija will make some changes and send an updated draft to the committee.