



Massachusetts Workforce Association Public Policy Committee Meeting Notes

September 14, 2021

In attendance: Rebecca Bialecki, Chris Albrizio-Lee, Bob Bower, Karen Pelletier, Kathleen Weislein, Ron Iacobucci, Raija Vaisanen, Tonja Mettlach

Notes

ARPA Funding Updates and Discussion

- Tonja provided an update on the ARPA funds process. The Legislature continues to hold hearings and we anticipate those hearings to go through September. We will likely see some sort of bill in mid to late fall and it is unclear whether the Legislature will spend all the funds at once or in multiple bills over a longer period.
- Committee was provided with a copy of the PowerPoint from EOLWD which provided an overview of the Baker Administration's proposal for how they would like to see \$240 million invested into workforce development. Tonja shared how she had learned through EOLWD that these funds cannot be directly allocated via formula and must have some competitive aspect (RFP like) to the distribution.
- Committee discussion -
 - Tonja started the conversation with two questions: (1) reactions to the administration's proposal; and (2) what are your capacity needs, what else do you need that MWA could be advocating for?
 - Rebecca - discussed some frustrations in terms of needing the money locally and how best to pass along input that will then be incorporated into recommendations. Also, currently issues with the timing of the manufacturing line item. Tonja reminded committee members that we still have a chance to influence how the legislature spends ARPA funds so any specific recommendations would be helpful.
 - Chris - still some uncertainty about the market maker positions but the navigator role in the career center would be helpful. Additional funding would be prioritized for career center staffing in Metro North at this point. Biggest takeaway, local flexibility is really important. Could funding be allocated similar to YouthWorks?
 - Next Steps: The committee would appreciate any feedback on needs for regional funding. What do you want to see with the ARPA funds? What do you support or disagree with in the Administration's proposal?

Guest Speaker: *Chris Andresen, Updates from DC*

- Chris shared insights about the current situation in D.C. The House education and labor bill, which was recently passed, included \$80 billion in workforce funding and is 4 year money. Another Ways and Means bill included about \$9 billion for TAA and TAACCCT. Altogether, that makes a pretty good bill out of the House for workforce development.

- Difficulty is in the Senate. More traditional funding level is around \$15 billion dollars. There is another \$25 billion for a civilian climate corps which is not in the House bill. Reconciliation can be hard with new programs.
- Committee talked a bit about what we can do federally and what we are hearing from our delegation.

Updates on legislation for committee approval/review

- As a reminder, MWA previously sent the committee recommendations for the following bills (approval for both): the AVTE legislation and the teacher diversity legislation. Let us know if you have any questions.
- Next week MWA will send to the committee with recommendations - the protected at work legislation and wage gap/equal pay legislation.