



Executive Office of Labor and
Workforce Development



Massachusetts *Learn at Work* Program Overview

- ❖ \$1.4 million fund to support workplace education
- ❖ Up to 3-year grants, maximum \$225,000 for three years
- ❖ Request for Proposals release November 4, 2009
- ❖ If funds remain, a second release is possible early in 2010.
- ❖ No specific regional allocation
- ❖ Supported by the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD)
- ❖ Administered by the Commonwealth Corporation

The NEED

- ❖ One third of Massachusetts' 3.2 million workers lack adequate literacy skills for workplace success¹. 70% of immigrants lack the literacy skills necessary to fully participate in their workplaces.² Many of them work at least full-time in addition to raising families.
- ❖ Two in five employers say that there are too few qualified workers to fill job openings and that training resources are insufficient to prepare workers to meet their needs.³
- ❖ The waiting list for ABE/ESOL services is nearly 21,000.⁴

The GOAL

- ❖ Provide workers with the basic skills (academic) required to pursue careers in high wage/high demand occupations.
- ❖ Provide businesses with workers who can contribute to the businesses' productivity, performance or competitiveness.

¹ MassINC, "New Skills for a New Economy," 2001.

² MassINC, "The State of the American Dream in Massachusetts," 2006.

³ Workforce Solutions Group, 2006.

⁴ Department of Elementary of Secondary Education, May 1, 2009.

The *Learn at Work* Program will help promote public-private partnerships across industries throughout the Commonwealth that specifically focus on workplace Basic Skills and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), and allow for greater flexibility to meet the needs of workers and businesses. The Program will help bring new businesses, unions and ESOL providers to the table by providing dedicated resources.

Learn at Work partnerships will provide new opportunities for adult learners—who often juggle multiple jobs and family responsibilities—to learn at their jobsite.

Businesses can tailor programs to specific business needs, including improving customer service and teamwork, boosting worker retention and ability to promote from within, and reducing translation time.

Eligible Applicants

- ❖ Employers (public, for- and non-profit)
- ❖ Non-profit educational institutions
- ❖ Vocational technical high schools
- ❖ Community-based organizations
- ❖ Higher education institutions
- ❖ Labor / labor-management organizations
- ❖ Local educational agencies

The following entities may only apply on behalf of a consortium of small employers: One Stop Career Centers, business or trade associations, Workforce Investment Boards, labor councils, WIA administrative entities, and other non-profit intermediary organizations.

Partnership Requirements

- ❖ Partnerships must include at least one employer and one adult basic education provider.
- ❖ Labor must be a partner in cases of unionized workplaces.
- ❖ Priority will be given to new partnerships not previously funded.

Target Population

Workers 16 and older who are not currently enrolled in high school, and

- ❖ have not earned a high school credential, or
- ❖ lack the academic skill level of a high school graduate (as determined by TABE/MAPT scores), or
- ❖ have English language skills that limit their ability to advance (as determined by BEST Plus/REEP scores), or
- ❖ lack the literacy / numeracy skills necessary to begin college-level work

Eligible Program Services

- ❖ ABE: Beginning literacy through ASE/GED (GLE 0 – 12)
- ❖ ESOL: Beginning through Advanced (SPL 0 – 8)
- ❖ Pre-college literacy or numeracy
- ❖ Computer Literacy – in context of ABE/ESOL

Instruction

- ❖ Curriculum must be contextualized to the workplace
- ❖ Class-based with tutoring/distance learning as a support
- ❖ Minimum of 4 hours per week (e.g., 2 x 2-hours)
- ❖ Minimum 7 participants per class

Required Program Elements

- ❖ Contextualized curriculum
- ❖ Assessment
(using DESE required assessments: TABE, MAPT, Best Plus or REEP, as appropriate)
- ❖ Coordination of project management team
- ❖ Program evaluation including participant and employer satisfaction/feedback and measuring business impact
- ❖ Data collection
(participant social security number*, demographics, wages, and skills assessment; outcomes including attendance, learning gains and business impact)
[* lack of SSN will not be a barrier to participation]

Matching Funds

- ❖ Not less than 50% of grant - requirement
- ❖ May include cash, in-kind or other means of supporting the project (incl. release time)
- ❖ May be provided by employers and/or other project partners

For further information about the fund, visit www.commcorp.org or contact:

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