MASS WORKFORCE ASSOCIATION
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Massachusetts Workforce Association
Public Policy Committee Meeting Notes
Tuesday, March 14, 2023

In attendance: Ron Iacobucci, Ron Marlow, Judi Vigna, Kevin Lynn, Kathleen Weislein, Mary Sarris, Bob Bower, Kevin Coughlin, Maura Geary, Rebecca Bialecki, Chris Albrizio-Lee, Kelly Joseph, Raija Vaisanen

Notes

Introductions and check-ins

- Raija updated the committee on conversations with Chair Cutler and his team regarding support for $15M for the Career Center Line Item.
- Raija to share stories from recent line item legislative report which was delivered late last week.
- Chair Cutler shared concerns about Commonwealth Corporation and the timeliness of fund distribution writ large. Asked for an update on the report request in the Economic Development Bill. EOLWD and the MWA Impact Measurement Task Force met last week and discussed it. LWD will be requesting an extension from the legislature as the report is set to be due in June and will take much longer than that to complete.
- Ron Marlow shared that ABCD included the line item in their budget priorities at their recent legislative breakfast and supports the $15M.

Guest: *Tim Sullivan, Project Director, and Lauren Nwgaboli, Deputy Director, Workforce Solutions Group*

- Tim gave an overview of the WSG policy agenda and budget priorities. See attached budget sheet.
- Committee discussion included challenges with staffing turnover, competitive wages, DUA communication and impact on career center services/customers.
- Mary asked if the labor market conditions and issues were coming up in conversation at the state house. Tim answered that a lot of the conversations regarding the tight labor market and finding workers has included housing access/affordability, Transportation, and Child Care access and affordability. Tim shared that the Governor has included $475M in C3 grants to expand childcare.
- Mary asked about immigration and Bob Bower shared that Rick Rendon has been working with individuals who are on temporary protected status with Greater Boston Legal Services. Need to breakdown barriers to work - Senator Markey is interested in streamlining the paperwork from a federal level. Mary shared she has heard it can take a year for legal immigrants to gain the approval and paperwork necessary to work.

- Kevin Coughlin shared the importance of an available workforce for Lowell defense industry companies. Both Mary and Kevin said they are concerned about companies leaving the state if they can't find workers.
- Judi shared that employers should also be thinking about engaging with younger workers through YouthWorks, Connecting Activities and Innovation pathways - investing in the pipeline of workers from an earlier age.

Legislative Agenda 2023-2024

- Time ran out before Raija could update - Document that is currently on the MWA website needs to be updated to reflect priorities in the Vision Document. Raija will do this and let the committee know when complete.

NAWB

- Seven regions are sending people to the National Association of Workforce Board Forum in D.C. later this month. They are currently working to schedule meetings with MA delegation. We'll ask for an update at the next meeting and will also invite Chris Andresen to a future meeting to get the latest on federal policy/budget. See attached update from him.