## Guidelines for Demonstrating Student and Labor Market Demand

***Labor Market Supply and Demand and Student Demand***

Making informed, data-driven decisions about what programs to offer is essential to helping all students become college and career ready. A viable program is one that first attracts students to enroll and then offers pathways to occupations known to be in need of skilled workers that lead to careers with family-sustaining incomes.

Labor market supply and demand data analysis is necessary to determine what programs best provide students in a specific region with opportunities to be employed in industries offering a range of entry-level occupations, while student demand data should be collected and examined in order to ensure that new programs, once established, attract sufficient numbers of students.

Through the efforts of the Governor's Workforce Skills Cabinet (<https://www.mass.gov/orgs/workforce-skills-cabinet>), key stakeholders within the Commonwealth have developed workforce development Blueprints for seven Massachusetts regions. These Blueprints can be found at <https://www.mass.gov/regional-workforce-skills-planning-initiative>. The Blueprints identify priority and critical industry sectors and priority and critical occupations within the region.

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) actively encourages Chapter 74 program applications that:

* align with regional industry-sector and/or occupational priorities and critical needs as outlined the above-mentioned Blueprints and
* demonstrate evidence of consultation and collaboration involving regional MassHire Workforce Boards; school districts (including regional vocational technical school districts, member district if the applicant is a regional vocational-technical or agricultural school district and, where applicable, county agricultural school districts); postsecondary educational institutions; and other key regional stakeholders as appropriate.

Proposed programs that do not align with priorities or critical needs as outlined in a regional Blueprint may still be viable if accompanied with an analysis of need grounded in labor market and student demand and supported by the stakeholders listed above.

**REGULATION**

The requirement to provide clear evidence of student and labor market demand as a condition for gaining approval of a new Chapter 74 program is regulatory. Specifically, “the Superintendent shall submit an application to the Commissioner that provides clear evidence of secondary student and labor market demand for the program and demonstrates compliance with the approval criteria.” [603 CMR 4.04 (1)]

**Demonstrating labor market demand and student demand**

In preparation for completion of the Intent to Apply for Vocational Technical Education New Program Approval, prospective applicants need to:

1. Obtain labor market demand data;
2. Obtain student demand data;
3. Obtain labor supply data;
4. Analyze and discuss the data; and
5. Submit a written, data-driven analysis of the viability of the proposed program.
6. **OBTAIN LABOR MARKET DEMAND DATA**

**Extract pertinent labor demand data from the relevant abovementioned regional Blueprint, the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD), and/or other sources.**

If the Chapter 74 program under consideration aligns with industry-sector and/or occupational priorities or critical needs as outlined in the relevant regional Blueprint, no additional labor market data is required. Prospective applicants must still consult with regional MassHire workforce boards; school districts (including regional vocational technical school districts or member school districts if the applicant is a regional vocational technical or agricultural school district and, where applicable, county agricultural school districts); and analyze the viability of the program in the context of student demand (see 2. below) and labor supply (see 3. below).

If the program under consideration **does not align** with industry-sector and/or occupational priorities or critical needs, prospective applicants should review both projected growth and replacement demand both regionally and statewide, using data available on the EOLWD website or other reputable data sources. **Growth** is a forecast of new jobs to be created annually over a span of time. **Replacement** **demand** reflects anticipated needs due to current workers leaving the occupation, most typically due to retirement. The data you extract should reflect projections five or more years into the future because potential graduates would not be entering the job market for several years.

When looking at labor market occupation data, potential applicants should generate a list of **entry-level** occupations for which the prospective Chapter 74 program would, in whole or in part, prepare students. This list should include, as applicable, occupations that require a high school diploma, additional certifications and/or training (including apprenticeships), and postsecondary degrees.

**SOURCE OF LABOR MARKET INFORMATION**

In order to obtain labor market information, the Department recommends the following website:

The Commonwealth’s Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD) provides [labor market demand data tables](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/labor-market-information-for-job-seekers#job-projections-), including **long-term (2020-2030) occupation projections**. These projections calculate, by number and percent, the anticipated change in a wide range of job openings over a ten-year span based on growth in those occupations and the need to replace current workers. The tables include minimum education requirements and average wage information. **Please note** that this website also has short-term occupational information, broad industry information, and STEM fields information statewide and by region. The information you want to focus upon is long-term occupational data. Also, data requests will by default first provide information on the occupations with the most job openings, necessitating an additional step to retrieve information on all occupations.

1. **OBTAIN STUDENT DEMAND DATA**

**Identify reliable measures of student demand and collect data that reflect potential student interest in the program.** The applicant district is free to present all evidence at its disposal to demonstrate student demand.

**Possible ways of demonstrating student demand:**

1. If the school or district currently offers the program as a non-Chapter 74 program and reports students in the Commonwealth’s Student Information Management System (SIMS), enrollment information for previous years may be used as historical evidence of student demand.
2. If the school or district currently offers elective courses that would become part of the proposed Chapter 74 program, enrollment numbers for those courses may be used as historical evidence of student demand.
3. The school or district may survey middle school students in its catchment area to determine interest in the proposed program in relation to other vocational technical programs currently offered by the school or district. **NOTE:** Such a survey is considered by the Department to be a recruitment activity that school districts within the catchment area of regional vocational technical school districts are obliged to accommodate. *See below for a* [*sample survey*](#Sample_Survey) *form.*
4. In addition to surveying middle school students, schools or districts may survey their own ninth grade students to determine interest in the proposed program in relation to other vocational technical programs currently offered by the school or district. *See below for a* [*sample survey*](#Sample_Survey) *form.*
5. Schools and districts will be examining programs that offer preparation for similar occupations in order to address #3 below, “Obtain Labor Supply Data.” Recent student enrollment patterns for those programs are suggestive of general student interest in the program.
6. **OBTAIN LABOR SUPPLY DATA**

**Gather information on other sources of trained or partially trained workers**.While collecting information on the demand for workers in occupations associated with a prospective new Chapter 74 program is necessary, failure also to consider other competing sources supplying trained workers risks creating an oversupply even when documented demand exists. Other sources of trained or partially trained workers include:

* community colleges;
* other degree-granting institutions;
* private training centers;
* community-based not-for-profit workforce development programs and organizations; and
* other secondary schools (see Duplicative Programs).

Compile a list identifying as many sources of regional supply as possible and seek out whatever information is available regarding the number of trained graduates/program completers each institution produces annually. Complete and accurate worker supply data will allow you to make better decisions regarding the viability of the program you are considering.

1. **ANALYZE AND DISCUSS**

**Analyze annual growth and replacement demand projections** from the data you have extracted from the EOLWD data tables or another similar source. Look to see if the various entry-level occupations you have identified exhibit anticipated growth and/or replacement demand over a span of several years. Are the occupations you have identified projected to grow? Will there be a need to replace current workers?

**Determine the number of annual graduates you anticipate from the program under consideration.** Using factors such as the strength of student demand for the prospective program, internal capacity limitations and the average number of annual completers in your existing programs (if applicable), project the number of program graduates you expect to produce in the first graduating class of the program and beyond.

**Examine the other sources of trained or partially trained workers you have identified** in relation to the occupational demand data you have collected. In aggregate, does anticipated entry-level regional demand exceed regional worker supply (including your prospective program), or is the opposite true? Identify and consider other relevant information (for example, is a current training provider about to double the size of its program? Do you have reliable information that prospective employers are unhappy with a current provider? Do you have solid promises that specific employers will hire *x* number of your students upon graduation?).

1. **SUBMIT A DATA-DRIVEN WRITTEN ANALYSIS**

**Produce a written analysis** for the Department and for program stakeholders (including the prospective program’s advisory committee) **demonstrating the viability of the program**.

The document, printed on applicant letterhead, should explain briefly why the proposed program is, in your estimation, viable, given labor market demand, student demand, and labor market supply considerations. The document should include:

* a list of entry-level occupations at various levels of education associated with the program;
* a table or tables outlining statewide and regional multi-year growth and replacement projections for each occupation;
* the number of students you anticipate enrolling in the program each year once the program is fully operational, together with an explanation of how that number was derived;
* a table or tables outlining known information on other sources of regional worker supply.

The document should include any relevant additional information and may also include an independent analysis of the above data provided by an outside entity such as your local MassHire workforce board.

##

*Sample Survey*

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Anytown Regional Vocational Technical School District

123 Elm Street

Anytown, MA 06799

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Name of School: |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Grade: | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |  | Sex: | Male | Female |

Dear Student,

Anytown Regional Vocational Technical High School is interested in determining student interest in the vocational technical education programs we offer and ones we are thinking of offering. The list below contains both current and possible new programs. Please let us know your five top choices by ranking them with the numbers 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5. Your top choice would be marked “1.”

If you are not interested in any of the programs listed below or are not interested in attending Anytown Voc-Tech, please mark the box below labeled “NOT INTERESTED.”

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Automotive Technology |  | Business Technology |
|  | Carpentry |  | Culinary Arts |
|  | Dental Assisting |  | Design & Visual Communications |
|  | Early Education & Care |  | Engineering Technology |
|  | Information Support Services & Networking |  | Machine Tool Technology |
|  | Medical Assisting |  | Metal Fabrication & Joining Technologies |
|  | **NOT INTERESTED** |  |  |