

DESE
MASWM Meeting Report
October 5-7, 2009
By
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This report is provided to the MASWM Board of Directors and General Membership of the Association on relevant issues and activities of the Extended Employment Sheltered Workshop section of the Missouri Department of Education. The key topics and activities are as follows:

Budget:

As of this writing, it is projected that there may be a budget shortfall of \$1,990,581 which translates to nearly four (4) weeks. As many of you know, there has been a \$778,580 “withhold” placed on the Sheltered Workshop funds to address the less-than-anticipated revenue income stream; this leaves an available FY-10 balance for distribution in the amount of \$24,007,430.

The appropriation remaining in the FY-10 budget (after the three months expenditure) is \$17,507,919. The average monthly state aid paid in the first three months (July, August and September) is \$2,166,500 and, with 9 months remaining in the fiscal year, it may leave us with the projected shortfall of \$1,990,581. Please keep in mind that this projection does NOT take into account the affect of winter weather on the attendance rate in the various regions of the state. The current average Full-Time-Equivalent (FTE) count is nearly 1,000 positions higher than at the same time last year—this is curious due to the “stagnant” economy—however, this may be too early to tell what the rest of the year is going to bring. As usual, we will monitor this very closely and report projections to you on a regular basis.

Just be sure that we all understand that 100% of the Sheltered Workshop budget is derived from “General Revenue” (GR) dollars from receipts of Missouri taxes. GR dollars are the ones that are most likely to be “withheld”, reduced and/or vaporized during periods of low/reduced revenue years such as we are in. GR fund levels are affected by fiscal pressures on the state and may very likely be subject to further changes (up, down or not at all) by the Governor’s Office or Legislature.

US Department of Labor:

All of the Workshops should have conducted a Prevailing Wage Survey by now. The survey was required as part of the wage recalculations due to the change in the minimum wage increase that came into effect on July 24, 2009. If you have not done so, you are still responsible for any back wages to your employees retroactive to July 24, 2009 if an increase is revealed.

All Department of Labor Section 14, (c) Certificates (authority to pay commensurate wages—less than minimum wage based on proven productivity that is less than an industrial standard) are due in the 2010 calendar year. For those Workshops whose certificate expires during the first quarter of 2010, be sure that you begin the application process soon.

Training:

Regional Safety Training has been completed for this year. Training was provided in five locations throughout the state; two sessions were provided in each location. Nearly 200 persons attended the training with an additional 30+ people attending the forklift operator's sessions. This year's focus was on "developing a Safety Culture in the Workshops", Regulatory Compliance and Requirements, and Accident Investigations. A complete and detailed report will be provided in the next quarter's report on attendance and ratings to the Association.

New Manager Training will occur again this spring. We will try to coordinate this with the April MASWM conference; if this is not possible, we will arrange to have it in Jefferson City at the DESE offices as last year.

Personnel:

In a recent e-mail the announcement was made that a contract has been offered to Mr. Chuck Reade to provide services to the western district; however, I regret to report that we were NOT able to obtain approval for the contract given the state's current fiscal situation. Currently, there is no plan to fill ANY vacancies that are funded by General Revenue dollars—all positions are "frozen" at DESE.

Due to the above decision and the current fiscal reality, I have instructed the remaining two TFSs to continue serving their designated districts as usual. The western district will be served by phone or electronically. In case urgent matters occur that require DESE presence or assistance, the requesting workshop must send a written request to me for review and approval prior to committing personnel, travel and time cost allotments to the effort. Thank you for your understanding.

Other:

E-verify: Several Workshops have asked whether DESE does/will require to e-verify all the employees for purposes of receiving state aid funds. The short answer is NO. Due to the type of relationship between the Workshops and DESE, the Sheltered Workshops are exempt from this requirement and are classified in the same category as school districts. However, if the workshop contracts with any other state and/or federal agency or department, you are probably required to e-verify ALL your employees (including certified workers whether they work on the contract or not)). If you are doing work for any state or federal governmental bodies and you have not e-verified your employees, it is highly recommended that you contact them to determine their reporting requirements. Common examples governmental bodies are: MODOT, Mo Department of Conservation, DNR, US Forest Service, USDA, etc. If you contract with county or municipal governmental bodies, you need to contact them to see if they have enacted any "e-verify" requirements in their ordinances so that you may be in compliance.

Certificate of Authority applications: By the end of October 2009 there should be about 45 applications for a Certificate of Authority submitted to the DESE office. Please instruct the auditors that, if they need a verification of DESE payments, they should direct the requests by fax or e-mail to Lindsay Thomas and NOT to DESE Accounting Office to ensure a more timely response.