**Context:** The Executive Office of Education (EOE), the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD), and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) seek to ensure that Chapter 74 program approvals are driven by regional workforce needs and labor market information (LMI). 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 [Regional Blueprints](https://www.mass.gov/service-details/view-your-regions-blueprint) for the seven regions across Massachusetts.

The Administration envisions a process in which regional stakeholders consult and proactively determine which types of [High Quality College and Career Pathways](http://www.doe.mass.edu/ccte/ccr/hqccp/) are needed in a region and how best to provide them before any school develops specific plans for submitting a Chapter 74 Partnership “After Dark” program application.

DESE seeks Chapter 74 Partnership “After Dark” program applications that:

* Are driven by regional occupational priorities as outlined in the Blueprints or otherwise are able to demonstrate strong labor demand;
* Are clearly aligned to school and/or district priorities; and
* Demonstrate evidence of consultation and collaboration, preferably through an in-person meeting or video-conference call, involving:
	+ regional [MassHire Boards](https://www.mass.gov/service-details/connect-with-your-local-masshire-workforce-board);
	+ partnering school districts;
	+ Close-by school districts that offer one or more of the programs being proposed; and, where appropriate,
	+ county agricultural school districts); postsecondary educational institutions; and other key regional stakeholders

Proposed programs that do not align with priorities as outlined in a regional Blueprint may be viable if accompanied with an analysis of need grounded in labor market information and student demand.

DESE requires districts, prior to submission of a Chapter 74 Partnership “After Dark” application, to **engage in regional** **consultation and planning with** **key stakeholders.**

**This Appendix includes:**

* Guidance to assist districts in meeting this requirement; and
* An Evidence of Consultation template, which is designed to serve as evidence of consultation.

**Regional Consultation Guidance**

**What is meant by regional consultation and planning?**

While partnering school districts may already have an idea of what Chapter 74 Partnership “After Dark” program(s) they wish to open, the expectation is that the prospective applicant districts (or schools and school district, if the application is for an intra-district “After Dark” partnership) will engage all stakeholders in discussions to ascertain the needs of the region as well as the existing resources in order to make the most informed decision. The [Regional Blueprints](https://www.mass.gov/service-details/view-your-regions-blueprint) must be the primary reference point and driver for consultation and planning. Ultimately, we hope that districts will use a collaborative, consultative process with their MassHire Board and other stakeholders to determine what is most needed in the region based on labor market and student demand.

**Who are stakeholders?**

* Your MassHire workforce board
* School districts interested in partnering to develop an “After Dark” application
* Representatives from other RVTSD member towns
* Close-by districts with school(s) that offer the program, if applicable.[[1]](#footnote-1)

Stakeholders should note that their decision to support or oppose the program under consideration does not bind DESE in any way regarding the decision to approve or not approve the “After Dark” partnership.

**How do we meet?** Because there can be multiple stakeholders, it is advised that the district and stakeholders meet at the same time in person or by video-conference call. If an applicant wishes to invite a representative from the Office for College, Career, and Technical Education, please contact Larry DeSalvatore at Lawrence.DeSalvatore@mass.gov to discuss.

**Guiding Questions for Discussion:**

The Regional Blueprints must be the primary reference point for discussion, but the district or stakeholders may wish to bring additional data and information to the discussion.

* What occupations are identified in the Regional Blueprint as high priority for the region?
* What occupations in the region lack an adequate talent pipeline from regional education and training providers, resulting in an insufficient supply to meet employer demand?
* What factors make this partnership and this/these program(s) appropriate for the expansion of access to Chapter 74 programming?
* How does creation of this program align with established school and/or district priorities?
* What data has the district used in selecting the program(s) for application?
* If the occupations the district has in mind are not identified in the Regional Blueprint, what is the evidence that there is regional demand and insufficient supply for the program?
* If the intended program is not aligned with a priority occupation, is there sufficient labor market need to warrant submission of an application? (*Note: If the program is not aligned with a priority occupation, the “After Dark” application will require submission of a written analysis of the viability of the proposed program that considers labor market and student demand, as well as other sources of labor supply. The applicant may request assistance from their local MassHire Board to help in the development of that analysis).*

**Providing Evidence of Consultation**

School districts proposing an After Dark partnership are required to submit, as part of the After Dark application, a summary of the consultation. That summary should include a description of the format of the consultation, a description of the participants that includes their institution and role, the agenda for the consultation, and a synopsis of key discussion points. Where attendees are not in agreement, differing perspectives should be outlined.

1. DESE requires that applicants consult, **and provide evidence of consultation**, when the “After Dark” partnership program under consideration duplicates one or more Chapter 74 programs offered in close-by a school.

Consultation with school districts offering the same Chapter 74 program at a close-by high school in close is intended to encourage cooperation in the provision of technical programming, the coordination of efforts, and strategic alignment with regional workforce needs.

The Department suggests the following geographical boundaries to assist districts in determining “close-by” as follows:

	* For school districts in areas east of Route 495, any Chapter 74 programs within 5 miles of the proposed Chapter 74 program
	* For school districts west of 495, to the east border of Berkshire County, any Chapter 74 programs within 10 miles of the proposed Chapter 74 program
	* For school districts in Berkshire County, any Chapter 74 programs within 20 miles of the proposed Chapter 74 program [↑](#footnote-ref-1)