



Maryland
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR



MARYLAND'S
Workforce Innovation
and Opportunity Act
ANNUAL REPORT

WIOA
2022

MARYLAND ANNUAL REPORT
Workforce Innovation and
Opportunity Act Titles I and III
Program Year 2022

January 2, 2024



Wes Moore
Governor



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MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

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DIVISION OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND ADULT LEARNING

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Maryland Department of Labor is to connect Marylanders to good jobs; protect workers, consumers, and the public; support Maryland businesses; and foster economic growth and competitiveness.

The *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)* is landmark legislation designed to strengthen and improve our nation's public workforce system and help put Americans, especially those with significant barriers to employment, back to work.



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As required with the Stevens Amendment, federal funding details for Program Year 2022/Fiscal Year 2023 are provided at this link: <https://labor.maryland.gov/employment/wdfedfunding.pdf>.



January 2, 2024

On behalf of Governor Wes Moore, it is my pleasure to present Maryland's Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Program Year 2022 Annual Report Narrative – Titles I and III. This publication illustrates Maryland's successful job placement and training activities for the period of July 1, 2022, through June 30, 2023, as required by United States Department of Labor's Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 5-18.

Governor Moore's vision is to leave no one behind. That vision drives the collaborative efforts of the Maryland Department of Labor (MD Labor) as well as our state and local workforce partners. The *2020 – 2024 WIOA State Plan* demonstrates the commitment of partners to learn together, discuss pressing issues, and come to lasting solutions for the business and jobseeker customers we collectively serve. This commitment has been especially vital during the challenges of mass unemployment and business impacts caused by the pandemic. I am proud to report that with every regulation promulgated pursuant to the federal Act, with every piece of guidance issued by the federal agencies charged with oversight of the programs included in this Plan, and with every technical assistance and training received, Maryland's workforce system is making Governor Moore's vision a reality.

I am excited to share with you the many successes of the workforce system as contained in this report. Through partnerships formed in the state's 33 American Job Centers (AJCs), 13 Local Workforce Development Areas, and WIOA partnerships, Maryland is providing services fundamental to Maryland's economic stability and growth.

During this year, Maryland has made key strategic investments in the work-and-learn model of Registered Apprenticeships, reaching over 11,600 apprentices. Thanks to Maryland's innovative EARN Maryland (EARN) program, more than 12,000 incumbent workers have received training that enabled them to gain new skills and credentials that will supply Maryland employers with the talent their businesses need to compete and grow.

By fostering open communication and collaboration among state and local partners and implementing effective strategies to engage populations with significant barriers to employment, we are empowering citizens with the skills and expertise they need to secure and advance in family-sustaining employment on career pathways. In short, we are leaving no one behind.

Best regards,



Portia Wu
Secretary
Maryland Department of Labor



Maryland has made key strategic investments in the work-and-learn model of Registered Apprenticeships, reaching over 11,600 apprentices.

Maryland's Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act PY 2022 Annual Report Narrative – Titles I and III

Based upon Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) No. 5-18

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) is landmark legislation designed to strengthen and improve our nation's public workforce system and help put Americans, especially those with significant barriers to employment, back to work. WIOA's central mission is to reach jobseeker customers with career services, training, and educational services and to connect employers with the resources and skilled workforce their businesses need to thrive. WIOA promotes program coordination and the alignment of key employment, education, and training programs at the federal, state, local, and regional levels. Furthermore, this legislation ensures that federal investments in employment and training programs are evidence-based, data-driven, and accountable to participants and taxpayers.

The prompts listed in TEGL 5-18 precede each response.

4.a Identify each waiver that the state has had in place for at least one program year and provide information regarding the state's progress toward achieving the goals and performance outcomes in ETA's letter of approval for the waiver (sec 189(i)(3)(C)(ii)) and outlined in the state's waiver request (when applicable). Discuss how activities carried out under each approved waiver have directly or indirectly affected state and local area performance outcomes. To the extent possible, provide quantitative information.

Maryland currently does not have any waivers in place related to WIOA.

4.b Identify the two approaches the state has chosen for the Effectiveness in Serving Employers performance indicator pilot. If the state is piloting a state-established measure of Effectiveness in Serving Employers, or has any other metrics to assess employer engagement, describe the measure or metric as well.

WIOA Effectiveness in Servicing Employers Measures

States must select two of the three measures below to report on for PY 2022. Maryland has chosen to track and report on all three measures.

WIOA Effectiveness in Servicing Employers Measures

- Employer Penetration Rate - Addresses the programs' efforts to provide quality engagement and services to all employers and sectors within a State and local economy. Percentage of employers using WIOA core program services out of all employers in the State.
 - Repeat Business Customers - Addresses the programs' efforts to provide quality engagement and services to employers and sectors and establish productive relationships with employers and sectors over extended periods of time; the percentage of employers who have used WIOA core program services more than once during the last three reporting period.
 - Retention with Same Employer in the 2nd and 4th Quarters after Exit - Addresses the programs' efforts to provide employers with skilled workers; percentage of participants with wage records who exit and were employed by the same employer in the second and fourth quarters after exit.
- 4.c** Include brief descriptions of: (a) current or planned evaluation and related research projects, including methodologies used; (b) efforts to coordinate the development of such projects with WIOA core programs, other state agencies and local boards; (c) a list of completed evaluation and related reports and links to where they were made accessible to the public electronically; (d) State efforts to provide data, survey responses, and timely

site visits for Federal evaluations; and (e) any continuous improvement strategies utilizing results from studies and evidence-based practices evaluated.

(a) Current or planned evaluation and related research projects, including methodologies used;

The Division of Unemployment Insurance (DUI) set-aside funds from the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) grant to evaluate Maryland's RESEA for program years PY 2019 and 2020. The W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research working with the Jacob France Institute (JFI) at the University of Baltimore for MD Department of Labor (MD Labor) delivered the following reports:

- Process Analysis Report PY 2019
- Formative Evaluation Report PY 2019
- Plan for Annual Assessments with Incremental Improvements PY 2019
- Impact Evaluation Report PY 2020

(b) Efforts to coordinate the development of such projects with WIOA core programs, other state agencies and local boards;

The Office of Workforce Development (OWD) and DUI work to improve coordination of current data systems between programs. This was identified in the PY 2019 Process Analysis as a need for future successful management and evaluation of RESEA and other WIOA programs. The Maryland Workforce Exchange (MWE) has recently been re-procured with emphasis placed on coordination with DUI systems and services. In addition, DUI continues work to adapt BEACON to integrate with the MWE. BEACON ultimately will have greater coordination with the MWE, and Unemployment Insurance (UI) claimants will experience a seamless experience related to reemployment. Local boards and staff are knowledgeable about the RESEA program as related to the evaluation team and use this knowledge and partnership with reemployment staff to refer eligible claimants to the WIOA Title I program.

The addition of subsequent RESEA activities has generated discussion around adapting MWE and BEACON to the changes in Maryland's RESEA activity.

(c) A list of completed evaluation and related reports and links to where they were made accessible to the public electronically.

Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessments (RESEA) in Maryland—PY 2020 Evaluation
https://research.upjohn.org/up_technicalreports/47/

Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessments (RESEA) in Maryland—Plan for Annual Assessments with Incremental Improvements https://research.upjohn.org/up_technicalreports/46/

Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessments (RESEA) in Maryland—PY 2019 Evaluation
https://research.upjohn.org/up_technicalreports/43/

Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessments (RESEA) in Maryland—Process Analysis
https://research.upjohn.org/up_technicalreports/41/

(d) State efforts to provide data, survey responses, and timely site visits for Federal evaluations;

The Process Analysis Report notes the disparities between RESEA data in the ETA 9128, the Participant Individual Record Layout (PIRL), and program administrative data. These sources should be harmonized, or the differences should be explained. Perhaps the federally required formatting and timing of reports explains the differences, but each of these three sources gives a dramatically different picture of RESEA program activity in Maryland. We plan to use the RESEA administrative data because it provides the most complete picture.

(e) Any continuous improvement strategies utilizing results from studies and evidence-based practices evaluated.

The PY 2019 and PY 2020 reports provide the foundation for the next wave of Maryland RESEA evaluation studies. In the near term we will conduct a new post-Covid process analysis, and another retrospective quasi-experimental evaluation based on PY 2021 program data. Those two studies have relatively quick turn-around and should be completed within 12 months of contract signing. Given the increased RESEA funding to Maryland, we will also start randomized controlled trial (RCT) evaluations on two-tracks: 1) nudges for participation which will have relatively quick turnaround for near term outcomes, and 2) unpacking separate effects of the RESEA services bundle. We intend to begin a cost analysis during work on the new process analysis. Ultimately, cost data will be combined with impact estimates from the quasi-experimental evaluation and the RCT of services components to produce cost-effectiveness estimates. Following is an outline of planned evaluation activities starting in fall 2023.

1. PY 2021 quasi-experimental evaluation based on administrative data
 - a. Impacts on UI dollars, UI weeks, exhaustion, employment, earnings
 - b. Subgroup impacts on UI dollars and weeks
 - c. Hazard analysis (time to UI exit) for first unemployment spells
2. Post-Pandemic RESEA process analysis
 - a. Visit selected local offices
 - b. Document RESEA procedures for services and data recording
 - c. Set up cost data collection procedures
3. Plan RCTs
 - a. Behavioral nudges for participation
 - i. Short-term outcomes--participation
 - ii. Medium-term outcomes—employment, earnings, exhaustion
 - b. Alternative bundles of RESEA services
 - i. Medium-term outcomes
4. Begin RCT evaluations
 - a. Enrollment
 - b. Data collection
 - c. Analysis

4.d Describe the state's approach to customer satisfaction, which may include such information used for one-stop center certification, in accordance with 20 CFR 678.800. This description should include: 1) the state's methodologies; 2) the number of individuals/employers who were provided customer satisfaction outreach, the response rate, and efforts made to improve the response rate; 3) the results and whether the results are generalizable to the entire population of customers; and 4) a description of any continuous improvement processes for incorporating the customer satisfaction feedback.



The United States Department of Labor (USDOL) requires that states conduct customer satisfaction to both jobseekers and business customers. A survey was administered via an email solicitation with a link to an online survey delivered through Survey Monkey.

For customer satisfaction, 2,091 surveys were sent, and 63 responses were received, which is a 3.0% response rate. The Customer Satisfaction survey consisted of 10 questions. These questions were relating to the level of satisfaction with services, and whether the customer's satisfaction was met and if services received were close to the ideal set of services customers would like to see for a person in their situation. If the customer accessed the MWE, we inquired if the system was helpful and if they would recommend the system to a friend.

For business customers, 1,131 employers that received staff-assisted services were contacted, with 41 employers responding, which is a 3.6% response rate. The employer survey consisted of 10 questions, which included how employers learned about business services available through American Job Centers (AJCs). Also, the employer survey inquired about their overall satisfaction with services they received, if staff were available for them and had a genuine interest in serving them, and would they recommend our services to others.

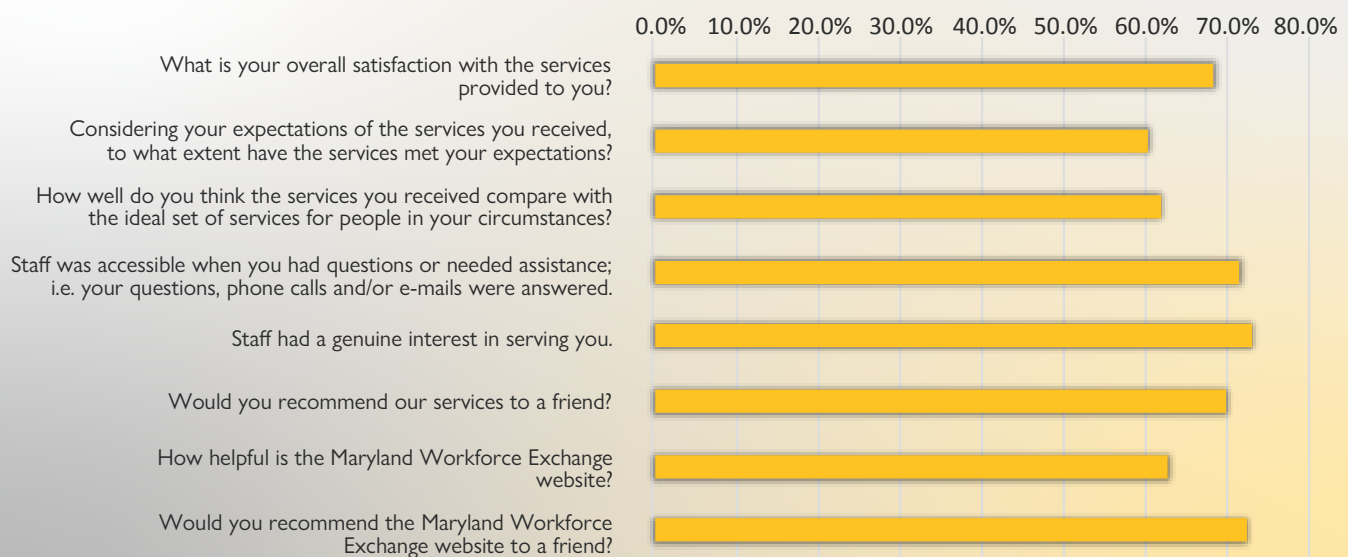
Overall for jobseekers, 68.3% of the customers are somewhat or very satisfied with the services we provided. Over 60.3% of customers felt the services they received met or exceeded their expectations. A little over 61.9%

felt the services they received were ideal for individuals in their circumstances. 71.4% felt the staff was accessible and reachable, and 73.0% of customers trusted staff had a real interest in serving them. 69.8% would recommend our services. Of those who visited MWE, 62.7% found the site helpful or very helpful. Of those who visited the MWE, 72.4% would recommend it to a friend. Overall, a majority of customers who utilized our services found them useful and helpful in supporting their needs.

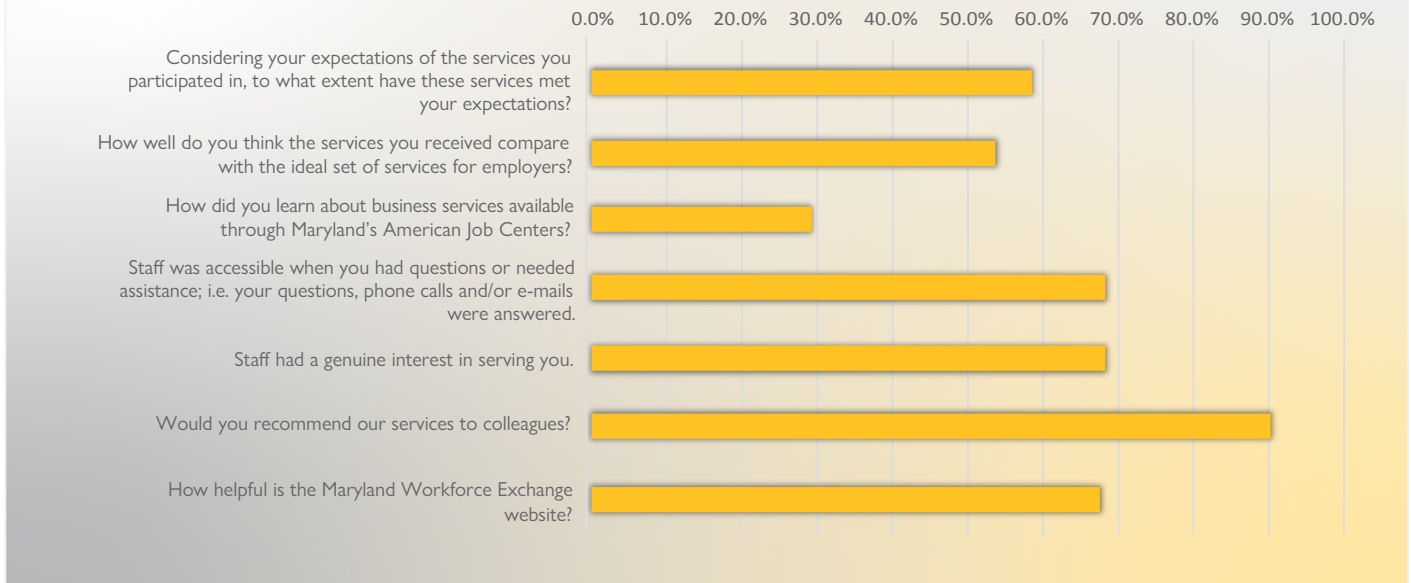
For employers, 58.5% felt the services they received met and exceeded their expectations. About 53.7% felt the services they received were ideal for employers in their circumstances. A majority of employers surveyed, 29.3%, were introduced to Maryland AJCs through MWE. Over 68.3% felt the staff was accessible and reachable, and 68.3% of employers trusted staff had a real interest in serving them. 90.2% of employers would recommend our services to colleagues. Of employers who used MWE, 67.6% found the site helpful or very helpful.

These survey results show there are areas that may require some growth and improvement. These surveys allow us to see if any issues exist. Once all areas are thoroughly examined, and issues determined, a resolution can later be implemented. Customers commented on the invaluable services Maryland is providing through the AJCs and MWE. What stands out in these survey results is that our staff, our system, and the services provided were a beneficial and valuable asset to our customers and employers alike.

Customer Satisfaction - Question by Percent



Employer Satisfaction - Question by Percent



4.e Progress made in achieving the state's strategic vision and goals, as described in the state's Unified or Combined State Plan, for developing its workforce and meeting employer needs in order to support economic growth and economic self-sufficiency.

The State's workforce system is committed to implementing the *Benchmarks of Success for Maryland's Workforce System* (Benchmarks of Success), a strategic initiative that focuses on a shared vision of excellence.

As described in Maryland's 2020 - 2024 State Workforce Plan, the Benchmarks of Success defines five strategic goals to increase the earning capacity of Marylanders by maximizing:

1. Access to employment;
2. Skills and credentialing;
3. Life management skills;

And by:

4. Eliminating barriers to employment; and
5. Strengthening and enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of Maryland's workforce system.

Each of the strategic goals has a series of benchmarks that the State tracks to gauge progress and to better understand the system's success in working towards this shared vision. Maryland's workforce system uses the *Benchmarks of Success* as a framework, guiding the shared objectives and activities of the WIOA system. The *Benchmarks of Success* encourages partners to think systematically about how workforce services are delivered, whether services are reaching priority populations, and where to eliminate gaps to build a more prepared, responsive workforce for Maryland's businesses.

To implement the *Benchmarks of Success* and the vision articulated in the State Workforce Plan, Maryland partner agencies created a system of committees, including:

- **Executive Steering Committee** – responsible for providing agency leadership-level strategic oversight and direction to the *Benchmarks of Success* initiative, and governing the WIOA Alignment Group;
- **WIOA Alignment Group** – responsible for ensuring the strategic vision of the Executive Steering Committee is realized by providing operational guidance to the other *Benchmarks of Success* committees;

- **Data and Dashboard Committee** – responsible for developing a consistent, sustainable system all workforce partners can use to measure, analyze, display, and apply the *Benchmarks of Success* data to continuously improve the quality and effectiveness of services;
- **Communications Committee** – responsible for fostering the integration of Maryland’s workforce system by broadly promoting the activities of the *Benchmarks of Success* committees and the services and resources of partner agencies and programs;
- **Policy Committee** – responsible for identifying opportunities to support the implementation of the *Benchmarks of Success* via policy change; and
- **Professional Development and Technical Assistance Committee** – responsible for producing, disseminating, and facilitating professional development and technical assistance programming that supports Maryland’s WIOA partners in what the *Benchmarks of Success* are and how they can be used to drive continuous improvement; additionally, this committee is responsible for conducting a stakeholder analysis.

These committees work collaboratively to continuously improve services, data collection and applications.

Several years ago, the WIOA partners recognized a need for streamlined professional development across the Maryland workforce system. In 2019, they established the Chief Learning Officer (CLO) position to create and maintain a comprehensive, statewide professional development and technical assistance portfolio that supports the strategic goals set forth in the WIOA State Workforce Plan. As defined in the State Workforce Plan, the CLO works to support the Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning (DWDAL) as well as the State’s workforce system as a whole by delivering integrated services to staff, partners and customers.

The CLO chairs the Professional Development and Technical Assistance Committee, which developed and distributed virtual professional development training across the state’s workforce system. Nine professional development training modules are currently available to over 1,400 users representing more than 40 organizations in Maryland (including State agencies). The training modules teach, refresh and test the knowledge of workforce system staff on a range of programs and subjects within the State’s workforce system. Each of the nine modules focus on a different aspect of the WIOA system, including topics such as the *Benchmarks of Success*, the *Governor’s Workforce Development Board* (GWDB), and the WIOA Title programs (Titles I-IV). Additional topics and modules are developed on an ongoing basis based on staff needs. With a completion rate of 79% across users, the professional development training modules have demonstrated great success in improving understanding and collaboration across all organizations engaged in the workforce system, allowing staff to better serve both jobseekers and employers.

In the first five implementation years of the *Benchmarks of Success*, the committees brought local and state stakeholders together and developed and executed the following deliverables:

- A communications plan for sharing the *Benchmarks of Success* vision and updates, including monthly newsletters, videos, collateral materials, and presentations to Local Workforce Development Boards and other stakeholders;
- Collection and analysis of *Benchmarks of Success* data from the partner agencies, programs, and systems, including a baseline across the multi-agency system (in progress);
- Regional and Local Planning Guidance for WIOA Regions and Local Areas to correspond to the State Workforce Plan in 2018, 2020, and for 2022;
- A series of policy recommendations concerning: (1) jobseeker advisory groups: including customer voice in decision-making, (2) workforce solutions to the opioid epidemic, (3) youth apprenticeship, (4) transportation, (5) abating the benefits cliff, (6) measurable skill gain, and (7) engaging employers around priority populations;
- Creation of a CLO position to oversee professional development for the workforce system as a whole, as well as a professional development framework for the system; and,

- Research and recommendations regarding the continuation of virtual services for Maryland’s workforce system, including Community Services Block Grant (CSBG), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment & Training (SNAP E&T) as partners in Maryland’s Combined WIOA State Plan.

4.f *Progress made in implementing sector strategies and career pathways. The discussion may include business engagement strategies, work-based learning (including apprenticeship), work experiences for youth and adults, transitional jobs, and incumbent worker training strategies and policies in the state.*

Maryland Apprenticeship and Training Program (MATP)

MATP has continued to make significant progress in implementing sector strategies and career pathways. Registered apprenticeship was transferred to DWDAL from another Division within MD Labor in October 2016. Since that time, Maryland has focused on making the MATP a key component of its workforce strategy.

Initially, MATP came to DWDAL with a total of three staff, 400 registered apprenticeship sponsors, and 8,500 apprentices listed. After a thorough evaluation, MATP was overhauled to bring the program into compliance and to help facilitate growth. This process included reinitiating compliance and quality reviews of existing registered apprenticeship sponsors and provisional reviews of newly approved registered apprenticeship sponsors. As a result of these reviews, numerous overdue apprentices, cancelled apprentices, and apprentices who should have completed were found to still be on the apprenticeship roster. MATP staff worked with USDOL and the number of registered apprentices was adjusted to a new baseline number of 7,340. The process of conducting these reviews has continued, and as a result, 372 reviews have been conducted from January 2017 through September 2022. This process is more than just ensuring that the apprenticeship program data is accurate or that apprenticeship continues to be the highest quality workforce training system. This process is also designed to provide sponsors and signatory/participating employers with the highest level of customer service. During the review process, sponsors/employers are given information on grants, tax credits, local workforce areas, and Maryland business services. Direct interaction with the sponsors/employers has assisted them in expanding their existing

apprenticeship programs, enhancing recruitment, and increasing diversity.

MATP staff continue to provide a customer service approach that includes regular engagements with each registered apprenticeship sponsor (business) along with continued outreach to prospective new businesses. These engagements include site visits, round tables, industry conferences, and other events that allow staff and businesses to exchange information.

As a result of this engagement, Maryland has experienced the largest growth of new registered apprenticeship sponsors in the program’s history. There have been 134 new registered apprenticeship sponsors added since November of 2016, with an additional 32 reactivated for a net gain of 166 before adjusting for cancelled apprenticeship programs. (For comparison, the previous combined activity for the years 2012 through November 2016 in Maryland showed 23 new sponsors and six reactivated, for a net gain of 30 before adjusting for cancelled programs.) Additionally, Maryland has increased the number of apprentices working for businesses to over 12,100 as of August 31, 2022. Maryland first crossed the 11,000-apprentice threshold in 2020 and achieved 11,000 again in 2021, marking the first time in Maryland history the program had over 11,000 active apprentices. This record was surpassed in August 2022 when the program reached 12,000 active apprentices for the first time in state history. To reinforce this growth Maryland has now maintained over 10,000 registered apprentices, working and learning, for over 27 consecutive months and over 11,000 registered apprentices for 13 consecutive months as of August 2022.

The diversity of Maryland’s program has also improved. In the first eight months of Calendar Year (CY) 2022, through August 31, there were 3,705 new apprentices registered, up 56.13 % as compared to the full CY 2014. Of the 12,116 apprentices registered as of August 31, 2022, there were 5,137 total minority apprentices, up 75.5 % from the end of CY 2014; 805 total women apprentices, up 164.8% from the end of CY 2014; and 805 total veteran apprentices, up 29.4% % from the end of CY 2014. Overall for the year, there were over 3,800 participating employers, up 12.55 % from CY 2014.

To strengthen career pathways, the higher education community in Maryland has also been a focus for registered apprenticeship. Recognizing the strong ties between related instruction for apprenticeship and the college system, seven of Maryland’s community colleges and the UMBC Training Centers have become registered apprenticeship sponsors for

the first time in Maryland's history. These post-secondary institutions are now able to work directly with businesses on related instruction. They are also able to provide a pathway for their students, or the incumbent workers of their employer partners, to earn and learn, rather than only participate in the educational process with which the colleges are normally associated. Participating post-secondary institutions are enhancing their relationship with employers by maintaining the paperwork and registration components for the businesses.

In October 2022, MD Labor and the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) jointly issued guidance to Maryland's higher education institutions, encouraging them to explore and implement articulation agreements and credit for prior learning through Registered Apprenticeship. This initiative is intended to further promote system-wide integration of Registered Apprenticeship Related Instruction and credit and degree-bearing coursework – creating more pathways to debt-free higher education and employment-based training. MD Labor and MHEC will continue to work to provide guidance on how Registered Apprenticeship sponsors can take advantage of state financial aid programs to help employers and apprentices defray the cost of credit bearing training and Related Instruction.

Maryland has made great strides in expanding youth apprenticeship opportunities. MD Labor has been proud to partner with the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) and the Department of Commerce (Commerce) in developing a youth apprenticeship programs that have been approved and have active participants in all 24 of the state's public school systems.

House Bill 942 originally established an apprenticeship pilot program in 2015, Apprenticeship Maryland, to prepare students to enter the workforce by providing on-site employment training and related classroom instruction needed to obtain a license or certification for a skilled occupation. The program began in the summer of 2016 and lasted for two years. In June 2018, MSDE and MD Labor were pleased to announce the implementation of the Apprenticeship Maryland Program (AMP) as a new Career and Technology Education Program of Study.

Members of MD Labor's MATP and MSDE's Career and College Readiness team continue to meet with officials at Maryland K-12 public school systems who express interest in the youth apprenticeship model. For the 2020-2021 school year, a total of 89 students were registered as youth apprentices, representing a growth of 120% since the end of the prior school year. By the end of the 2022-2023 school year, a total of 608 students were registered as youth apprentices, representing growth of 822% from the 2019-2020 school year and growth of 327% from the 2020-2021 school year. This constitutes a growth of 2,251% since the 2017-2018 school year. 636 students have completed an AMP youth apprenticeship since the program's inception.

The State of Maryland has set ambitious goals around Career and Technical Education, including striving to have 45% of Maryland high school students completing the high school level of a Registered Apprenticeship program or another industry recognized credential by the 2030-2031 school year. This goal is driving further collaboration between MD Labor, MSDE, Maryland's 24 Local Education Agencies, and Local Workforce Development Boards. Through this partnership, Maryland expects to see continued expansion and growth of youth programs over the coming years.



Career Pathways

Maryland has invested \$1.5 million of its WIOA Governor's set-aside funding in local workforce entities since 2018 to support career pathway initiatives developed in partnership with Title II Adult Education providers. This program formally concluded in 2022. A total of 190 individuals were served, with 123 completing training, and 118 entering employment, which was 100% of the goal set.

In keeping within the focus of WIOA regulations on career pathway models, MD Labor developed this initiative with the following goals in mind:

- Increase WIOA Title II adult learners' access to WIOA Title I training and career opportunities;
- Focus on meeting lower-level adult learners where they are regarding education levels, and support them in meeting career goals;
- Increase adult learners' co-enrollment in WIOA Titles I and II;
- Address the needs of businesses;
- Expand career pathways through piloting one or more proven interventions;
- Support the creation of a Maryland WIOA Co-Enrollment and Career Pathways Guide to facilitate the distribution of information related to best practices, successes, challenges, and more; and
- Achieve sustainability once grant funds are exhausted or the project has ended through connecting to the Maryland Eligible Training Provider List or by other means.

Local workforce entities had the opportunity to apply for up to \$250,000 in funding to develop innovative demonstration projects with a consortium of local partners, including adult education providers and business partners. Eligible applicants were provided a menu of interventions that were selected by the department after careful consideration and review of national best practices. These interventions include:

- English language acquisition,
- Distance learning,
- Registered apprenticeship or pre-apprenticeship,
- Integrated education and training,
- Integrated English literacy and civics education, and
- Transition support specialists between local workforce and adult education entities.

Most of Maryland's local boards applied for this funding, and ultimately the state selected seven career pathway projects over three rounds of funding to offer adult learners innovative career pathways. Through strategic investments such as these, the department is changing the way the state approaches workforce development. The projects created with this funding began on April 1, 2018. All but one have been completed. Areas of emphasis include:

- A focus on English Language Learners (ELLs) interested in allied healthcare careers and training for two certifications: Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) and Patient Care Technician (PCT);
- Specialized workforce services to English Language Learners (ELLs) and low basic skills individuals to create and align career pathways into the construction trades by using the Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I-BEST) service delivery model; this will integrate English as a Second Language (ESL) course instruction with pre-apprenticeship and occupational skills training;
- Career pathways as a method through which Adult Education students funded under Title II can gain skills, credentials, and upward mobility in the healthcare sector as Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs);

- Innovative programming and services to qualified candidates interested in a career pathway in the healthcare or transportation and skilled trades industries; instruction in both career areas will be contextualized utilizing the I-BEST model with distance learning components; and
- A focus on trades, manufacturing, construction, transportation, healthcare, and leisure and hospitality industries allowing for support of entry level credentialing and providing candidates opportunities to move through stackable credentials or apprenticeship opportunities

Youth Work Experience

MD Labor continues its efforts to ensure that local workforce development boards, youth managers, and vendors meet the fiscal requirements outlined to provide 20% of their budget to provide work experience for Title I Youth participants. MD Labor is working diligently to address all technical assistance and training requests to improve adherence to the required elements of WIOA youth services and funds. MD Labor's statewide disability and youth services coordinator works closely with MD Labor's fiscal staff to monitor local boards' fiscal adherence to the WIOA requirements on appropriate allowable work experiences, the usage of the reporting tool developed to track work experiences, as well as appropriate documentation on the quarterly financial status reports.

Local Areas have found innovative ways to ensure that services remain accessible and available to all eligible and enrolled WIOA youth services program participants. Programs utilized strategies incorporating virtual reality to provide career exploration and job readiness training. Local Areas continue to provide feedback to the state on their efforts to meet the 20% work experience mandate through the submission of their monthly WEX expenditures if they are below the 20% threshold. As programs continue to make progress in utilizing their work experience dollars, Local Areas, partners, and contracted service providers have continued to address the 14 service elements, eligibility requirements, partnerships, and support major industries based upon labor market information. The use of virtual case management, mentoring, and job readiness training have allowed programs to remain connected with their enrolled participants.

Within this past year, Maryland has consistently met or exceeded the required 20% work experience funding allocation for PY 2022. Labor will continue working with Local Areas that have had challenges in meeting their spending requirements to provide training and technical assistance and to address any deficiencies in fiscal or programmatic performance.

MD Labor continues to use Governor's set-aside funds to support Summer Youth Employment programs (SYEP). This past year, the State provided \$4,059,064 and the 13 local areas supported 2,766 youth, including 143 youth with disabilities. These opportunities for young people continue to provide early exposure to work for young people as young as 14. These programs also allow for continued collaboration with partners such as the Department of Juvenile Services, Department of Human Services, Department of Health, and MSDE's Division of Rehabilitation Services. This allows the programs to connect with the business community and as a result over 500 businesses served as host sites to the SYEP participants across the state.

4.g *If the state has received a small state minimum allotment exception to decrease the minimum out-of-school youth expenditure requirement, describe how the exception has impacted services provided to both in-school youth and out-of-school youth, including specific strategies for serving each population, as well as how the state and/or local area is ensuring serving out-of-school youth remains a priority.*

MD Labor does not have an exception.

4.h *The state's performance accountability system, including*

- (1) Any specific state performance measures or goals and progress towards meeting them.*
- (2) Any performance deficiencies on the primary indicators of performance, which may include descriptions of any factors impacting performance.*
- (3) The state's common exit policy, including which ETA-funded partner programs are included in the state's common exit policy.¹*

1-Common exit occurs when a participant, enrolled in multiple partner programs, has not received services from any DOL-administered program in which the participant is enrolled, to which the common exit policy applies, for at least 90 days, and no future services are planned



(4) Negotiated performance levels for local areas for titles I and III core programs for program years 2016-2017.

(5) The state’s approach to data validation and ensuring data integrity, including a description of the methodology of any validation activities that occurred.

Maryland’s Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Performance PY 2022

WIOA is landmark legislation designed to strengthen and improve our nation’s public workforce system and help put Americans, especially youth and those with significant barriers to employment, back to work. WIOA supports innovative strategies to keep pace with changing economic conditions and seeks to improve coordination between the core WIOA and other federal programs that support employment services, workforce development, adult education and literacy, and vocational rehabilitation activities. Moreover, WIOA promotes program coordination and alignment of key employment, education, and training programs at the federal, state, local, and regional levels. Furthermore, this legislation ensures that federal investments in employment and training programs are evidence-based and data-driven, and accountable to participants and tax-payers. WIOA provides employment, job training, and education services to eligible adults, dislocated workers, and youth.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

In accordance with §677.155(a)(1)(i-vi), and TEGL 10-16, Change 2, the primary indicators for performance are:

WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Wagner-Peyser Performance Measures

- Employment Rate QTR2 – Percentage of participants in unsubsidized employment in the second quarter after exit (Q2 post-exit).
- Employment Rate QTR4 – Percentage of participants in unsubsidized employment in the fourth quarter after exit (Q4 post-exit).
- Median Earnings – Median earnings of participants in the second quarter after exit (Median earnings Q2 after exit).
- Credential Rate – Percentage of participants with post-secondary credential attainment or high school diploma or GED® during participation in the program or within one year after exit. (Wagner Peyser is excluded from this measure)
- Measurable Skills Gain – Percentage of participants who, during the PY, are in education or training programs that lead to recognized post-secondary credential or employment, and who achieve measurable skills gain (documented academic, technical, occupational or other forms of progress, toward the credential or employment). (Wagner Peyser is excluded from this measure)

In accordance with §677.155(d)(1-6), the primary indicators for the youth program under title I of WIOA are:

Youth Program Indicators

- Placement in Employment or Education QTR2 – Percentage of participants who are in education and training, or in unsubsidized employment, during the second quarter after exit (Q2 post-exit). .
- Placement in Employment or Education QTR4 – Percentage of participants who are in education and training, or in unsubsidized employment, during the fourth quarter after exit (Q4 post-exit).

- Median Earnings – Median earnings of participants in the second quarter after exit (Median earnings Q2 after exit).
- Credential Rate – Percentage of participants with post-secondary credential attainment or high school diploma or GED® during participation in the program or within one year after exit. .
- Measurable Skills Gain – Percentage of participants who, during the PY, are in education or training programs that lead to recognized postsecondary credential or employment, and who achieve measurable skill gain (documented academic, technical, occupational or other forms of progress, toward the credential or employment).

In accordance with §677.155(a)(1)(vi), there is a primary indicator for the effectiveness in serving employers under WIOA, which is:

Effectiveness in Serving Employers Indicators

- Employer Penetration Rate – addresses the programs’ efforts to provide quality engagement and services to all employers and sectors within a State and local economy. Percentage of employers using WIOA core program services out of all employers in the State.
- Repeat Business Customers – addresses the programs’ efforts to provide quality engagement and services to employers and sectors and establish productive relationships with employers and sectors over extended periods of time; the percentage of employers who have used WIOA core program services more than once during the last three reporting periods.
- Retention with Same Employer in the 2nd and 4th Quarters after Exit – Addresses the programs’ efforts to provide employers with skilled workers; Percentage of participants with wage records who exit and were employed by the same employer in the second and fourth quarters after exit.

WIOA Negotiated Performance Targets and Results

The implementation of WIOA common performance accountability requirements has varied across Titles of the core WIOA programs, including Trade, and Jobs for Veterans State Grant due to variations in federal agency oversight, policy guidance, and related requirements.

When negotiating performance goals with the State, the U.S. Department of Labor used:

1. Take into account how the levels involved compare with the negotiated levels of performance established for other states. The Departments will provide the most recent performance data for all states, including previous actual, negotiated, and adjusted levels of performance, and will use this information throughout the negotiations process.
2. The statistical adjustment model;
3. Continuous improvement; and
4. Government Performance and Results Act goals.

WIOA Assurance Statement

The State of Maryland assures the U.S. Department of Labor that all required elements of the PY 2021 WIOA Annual Report have been reported accurately and uniformly to permit state-by-state comparisons across WIOA programs. The State assures DOL that the WIOA Annual Report complies with the Act and federal regulations.

MD Common Exit Policy

Per Maryland Policy Issuance No. 2022-03: any participant who receives services funded in whole or in part from the WIOA, Wagner-Peyser, Veteran’s Employment and Training Service (VETS), and Trade Act Adjustment /Trade and Globalization Adjustment Assistance (TAA/TGAA) programs, sequentially or simultaneously, will be counted as a participant in each program, and will share a common “date of participation” and a common “date of exit” for federal reporting.

Maryland Performance

Title I and Title III Performance - Maryland PY 2021

		Standard	MD Performance	% Standard Achieved
Employment Rate QTR2	Adults	76%	74.3%	97.8%
	Dislocated Workers	80%	77.9%	97.3%
	Labor Exchange	59%	58.8%	99.7%
Employment Rate QTR2	Adults	72%	74.0%	102.7%
	Dislocated Workers	76%	79.8%	105.0%
	Labor Exchange	58%	63.5%	109.5%
Median Earnings	Adults	\$6,200	\$7,855	124.7%
	Dislocated Workers	\$8,000	\$10,053	122.6%
	Labor Exchange	\$5,550	\$6,839	122.1%
	Youth	\$3,410	\$4,104	120.4%
Youth Education and Employment Rate QTR2		69%	75.5%	109.4%
Youth Education and Employment Rate QTR4		63%	71.7%	112.1%
Credential Attainment	Adults	60%	62.9%	103.1%
	Dislocated Workers	56%	62.9%	112.3%
	Youth	62%	70.6%	113.8%
Measurable Skills Gains	Adults	52%	65.6%	123.8%
	Dislocated Workers	52%	72.4%	136.5%
	Youth	48%	58.7%	122.4%
Employer Effectiveness Measures				
Retention With Same Employer			63.2%	Baseline
Penetration Rate			8.4%	Baseline
Repeat Business			22.8%	Baseline

Maryland exceeded 18 measures based on the negotiated goals for PY 2022.

Local Workforce Development Area Performance and Their Negotiated Goals for PY 2022

WIOA and Labor Exchange Title I Performance - Maryland and Local Workforce Development Areas - PY 2022
ROLLING 4 QUARTERS

		Standard	State Perform.	AA	BA	BM	CC	FR	HC	LS	MG	PG	SM	SQ	US	WM	State Standard
Performance Measure				Perf.	Perf.	Perf.	Perf.	Perf.	Perf.	Perf.	Perf.	Perf.	Perf.	Perf.	Perf.	Perf.	
Employment Rate QTR2	<i>Local Adjusted Employment Rate QTR2 Adult</i>			75.0%	76.0%	76.0%	76.0%	75.0%	75.0%	76.0%	75.0%	75.0%	75.0%	75.0%	76.0%	76.0%	
	Adults	75.0%	82.0%	84.2%	81.8%	77.7%	90.7%	75.3%	88.1%	81.8%	79.4%	75.7%	77.1%	81.3%	94.4%	84.7%	75.0%
	<i>Local Adjusted Employment Rate QTR2 DW</i>			80.0%	79.0%	80.0%	80.0%	78.0%	80.0%	78.0%	78.0%	75.0%	78.0%	78.0%	80.0%	80.0%	
	Dislocated Workers	78.0%	80.4%	84.6%	86.7%	84.5%	94.6%	74.1%	83.3%	100.0%	68.8%	75.0%	75.8%	85.7%	81.1%	81.7%	78.0%
	<i>Local Adjusted Employment Rate QTR2 LX</i>			59.5%	59.5%	59.5%	59.5%	59.5%	59.5%	59.5%	59.5%	59.5%	59.5%	59.5%	59.5%	59.5%	
Labor Exchange	59.5%	63.6%	63.6%	59.8%	68.9%	62.0%	63.3%	62.1%	69.4%	58.6%	60.7%	64.2%	62.7%	67.1%	66.7%	59.5%	
Employment Rate QTR4	<i>Local Adjusted Employment Rate QTR4 Adult</i>			72.5%	73.0%	73.0%	73.0%	73.0%	73.0%	73.0%	73.0%	73.0%	73.0%	73.0%	73.0%	73.0%	
	Adults	73.0%	80.5%	78.1%	78.3%	82.6%	80.0%	76.7%	79.3%	84.0%	77.9%	79.2%	78.1%	81.2%	89.0%	83.1%	73.0%
	<i>Local Adjusted Employment Rate QTR4 DW</i>			76.5%	77.0%	77.0%	77.0%	77.0%	78.0%	77.0%	77.0%	77.0%	77.0%	76.5%	77.0%	78.0%	
	Dislocated Workers	77.0%	80.7%	76.2%	64.1%	86.4%	86.3%	73.1%	88.9%	100.0%	77.7%	87.5%	80.0%	80.0%	86.5%	80.0%	77.0%
	<i>Local Adjusted Employment Rate QTR4 LX</i>			59.5%	59.5%	59.5%	59.5%	59.5%	59.5%	59.5%	59.5%	59.5%	59.5%	59.5%	59.5%	59.5%	
Labor Exchange	59.5%	66.4%	63.8%	64.3%	73.6%	63.6%	65.3%	62.6%	63.9%	62.2%	65.0%	66.9%	64.2%	65.7%	66.9%	59.5%	
Median Earnings	<i>Local Adjusted Earnings Standard Adult</i>			\$7,000	\$7,100	\$6,100	\$6,300	\$7,200	\$6,500	\$5,900	\$6,900	\$7,500	\$5,500	\$8,000	\$6,200	\$6,700	
	Adults	\$6,400	\$8,562	\$8,560	\$8,816	\$8,171	\$7,468	\$8,687	\$9,270	\$9,071	\$10,632	\$8,485	\$6,072	\$9,096	\$9,180	\$7,738	\$6,400
	<i>Local Adjusted Earnings Standard DW</i>			\$9,500	\$9,500	\$7,200	\$10,000	\$9,100	\$10,200	\$7,000	\$10,000	\$12,000	\$9,500	\$8,500	\$8,000	\$7,600	
	Dislocated Workers	\$8,250	\$9,326	\$9,840	\$9,214	\$9,087	\$9,970	\$7,086	\$8,770	\$11,278	\$13,208	\$10,252	\$8,890	\$9,162	\$8,621	\$8,690	\$8,250
	<i>Local Adjusted Earnings Standard LX</i>			\$7,000	\$6,500	\$5,900	\$6,700	\$7,000	\$7,300	\$5,400	\$8,000	\$6,600	\$6,000	\$5,800	\$5,500		
	Labor Exchange	\$6,000	\$7,954	\$8,507	\$7,942	\$7,706	\$8,111	\$8,874	\$9,014	\$6,806	\$9,254	\$7,775	\$8,032	\$8,367	\$7,508	\$7,556	\$6,000
	<i>Local Adjusted Earnings Standard Youth</i>			\$3,600	\$3,700	\$3,400	\$3,800	\$3,700	\$3,500	\$3,500	\$3,600	\$3,500	\$3,000	\$3,800	\$3,800	\$3,400	
Youth	\$3,500	\$4,590	\$6,765	\$5,755	\$3,947	\$4,071	\$6,683	\$4,332	\$5,200	\$5,442	\$4,301	\$4,082	\$6,398	\$3,870	\$5,466	\$3,500	
<i>Local Adjusted Employment Rate QTR2 Youth</i>			71.5%	73.0%	72.0%	70.0%	72.0%	71.5%	72.0%	70.0%	71.5%	73.0%	71.5%	73.0%	71.5%		
Youth Education and Employment Rate QTR2	71.5%	81.5%	90.4%	88.1%	78.3%	73.7%	52.6%	79.2%	81.0%	85.7%	73.6%	100.0%	90.0%	90.0%	87.2%	71.5%	
<i>Local Adjusted Employment Rate QTR4 Youth</i>			66.0%	67.0%	66.0%	65.0%	65.0%	65.0%	65.0%	65.0%	65.0%	65.0%	65.0%	65.0%	66.0%	67.0%	
Youth Education and Employment Rate QTR4	65.0%	78.7%	78.0%	87.8%	75.3%	90.0%	55.6%	87.5%	78.6%	77.3%	75.8%	77.8%	69.2%	81.0%	81.4%	65.0%	
Credential Attainment	<i>Local Adjusted Credential Attainment Adult</i>			61.5%	61.0%	62.0%	62.5%	62.0%	62.0%	63.0%	61.0%	62.0%	62.0%	60.0%	62.0%	63.0%	
	Adults	62.0%	62.3%	58.6%	52.2%	59.1%	57.9%	53.3%	65.1%	83.3%	75.4%	61.8%	29.2%	53.7%	77.2%	74.2%	62.0%
	<i>Local Adjusted Credential Attainment DW</i>			55.0%	54.0%	57.0%	56.5%	56.5%	56.5%	56.5%	57.0%	56.5%	59.0%	56.5%	60.0%	60.0%	
	Dislocated Workers	56.5%	65.5%	50.0%	44.4%	58.1%	69.2%	57.1%	63.0%	100.0%	73.2%	61.1%	20.0%	56.5%	86.5%	82.4%	56.5%
	<i>Local Adjusted Credential Attainment Youth</i>			65.0%	65.0%	66.0%	63.0%	63.0%	63.0%	63.0%	64.0%	63.0%	60.0%	60.0%	65.0%	62.5%	
Youth	63.0%	66.6%	75.0%	68.5%	69.0%	100.0%	44.4%	76.5%	50.0%	60.0%	70.7%	0.0%	25.0%	71.4%	64.5%	63.0%	
Measurable Skills Gains	<i>Local Adjusted MSG Adult</i>			59.0%	62.0%	58.0%	62.0%	62.0%	58.0%	62.0%	59.0%	62.0%	59.0%	61.0%	59.0%	58.5%	
	Adults	58.0%	71.0%	76.4%	59.4%	57.3%	66.7%	78.8%	56.9%	78.2%	70.3%	82.8%	90.9%	77.1%	79.5%	78.4%	58.0%
	<i>Local Adjusted MSG DW</i>			63.0%	63.0%	59.0%	63.0%	62.0%	60.0%	60.0%	63.0%	65.0%	59.0%	62.0%	63.0%	60.0%	
	Dislocated Workers	59.0%	71.9%	75.0%	59.3%	65.8%	87.5%	90.0%	58.8%	66.7%	70.6%	71.4%	75.0%	100.0%	78.6%	76.9%	59.0%
	<i>Local Adjusted MSG Youth</i>			55.0%	56.0%	54.0%	56.0%	54.0%	52.0%	52.0%	63.0%	58.0%	54.0%	54.0%	60.0%	54.0%	
Youth	54.0%	65.1%	64.3%	57.1%	65.7%	58.3%	50.0%	55.6%	58.8%	85.7%	49.1%	0.0%	63.2%	71.4%	71.2%	54.0%	
<i>Local Adjusted Employers</i>																	
Retention With Same Employer		65.8%															
<i>Local Adjusted Employers</i>																	
Penetration Rate		7.5%															
<i>Local Adjusted Employers</i>																	
Repeat Business		26.0%															

Performance
 = Exceeded Standard
 = Meeting Standard (at least 90% of standard)
 = Failing Standard (Performed below 90% of standard)
 = No Participants in Measure

Local Workforce Development Areas:

Codes for LWDA

Anne Arundel	AA	Montgomery	MG
Baltimore County	BA	Prince George's	PG
Baltimore City	BM	Southern Maryland	SM
Carroll County	CC	Susquehanna	SQ
Frederick	FR	Upper Shore	US
Howard County	HC	Western Maryland	WM
Lower Shore	LS		



Data Validation Process

The State established processes for data validation that meet all federal guidelines issued by USDOL. Data validation is a series of internal controls or quality assurance techniques established to verify the accuracy, validity, and reliability of data. Maryland requires that the Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDA) use the Virtual Operating System (VOS) to upload documents upon receipt from the participants for data validation purposes. This digital medium streamlines the process by eliminating the need to maintain paper documents while allowing the validation process to be conducted remotely, accurately, and more frequently than in prior program years. Maryland has a process in place to ensure that all documentation related to eligibility and performance outcomes are in VOS by the end of the applicable program year. Maryland has moved to virtual /remotely 100%.

The Office of Workforce Information and Performance within MD Labor pulls a random sample of files quarterly and annually. The samples contain files from all LWDA's for all Title I and Title III programs, as well as TAA, JVSG, and National Dislocated Worker Grants.

Quarterly – The information from the extract file is checked against our state MIS system to ensure the information contained in all federal extract files are accurate. Data is reviewed for errors, inconsistencies, missing data out of range values and any anomalies. Local Areas are contacted to make corrections. This is done prior to the submission in the federal reporting system Workforce Integrated Performance System (WIPS). This proactive approach of reviewing records in our case management system compared to the data extract are conducted on a quarterly basis to ensure the local areas are aware of any issues and can receive technical assistance during the year. The Monitoring and Compliance Unit then verifies the participant's eligibility against the source documentation to make sure all requirements have been met by reviewing a sample of the participant's records. Local Areas are required to address all findings and/or concerns identified in a timely manner. Monitoring staff verifies the corrections made to a finding or concern within the Maryland Workforce Exchange before the finding or concern is closed. In addition, on a quarterly basis, MD Labor will be providing grant recipients with feedback regarding their performance reports to aid in data integrity efforts and support data accuracy. Their analysis will include, but is not limited to, a review of the data submitted, anomalies and outliers, and other potential data quality issues, which may indicate reporting inaccuracies. On a quarterly basis this data will be used by Performance for identifying and correcting errors to improve performance reporting and ensuring the data properly reflects the program participants, services, and outcomes.

Also, Performance uses the WIPS logical value and data specification checks to identify issues and concerns. Local areas are contacted to make necessary data changes. In accordance with USDOL, Maryland conducts a regular data integrity review of program data quarterly for errors, missing data, out-of-range variances in values reported, and other anomalies. The WIPS system along with the MD Labor Quarterly Report Analysis assist in this process. In order to process a clean data file, the MWE changes must be in place for any missing and erroneous data identified during the review process and ensure these were corrected in the system before the extract is submitted.

Annual – The annual data validation is used primarily for ensuring data used in performance calculations was accurate, reliable and comparable. A sample of participants contained in the WIOA measures will be pulled. The 24 elements listed in TEGL 7-18 will be monitored and assessed based on required source documentation and state procedures. All elements indicated in TEGL 23-19 change 2 are validated. This time of year is also for training local area staff and showing best practices amongst the areas. Staff will be trained on what, why, and how data validation works. Once a year, LWDA's are asked to perform data file reviews on other local area files. This shows staff what they are required to have within their own records and allows the sharing of best practices which they may use within their own LWDA. MD Labor Central Office program management staff is available for any questions or issues that arise during this training.

Each year, Maryland plans to assess the data validation process to ensure the process is working as intended and make revisions as needed.

4.i.1 *Activities provided with the funds reserved by the governor, which can be up to 15 percent of the state's allotment. In this section of the narrative, states may describe activities undertaken in whole or in part with their Governor's Reserve and how those activities have directly or indirectly impacted performance.*

Reentry Navigators

Maryland used \$500,000 of WIOA Governor set-aside funding to hire five Reentry Navigators. The Reentry Navigators serve the following Local Areas: Anne Arundel County, Baltimore City, the Lower Shore, Prince George's County, and Western Maryland. They interface with inmates in correctional education programs (both academic and occupational) and serve as the critical point of contact to the local AJCs. In addition, Reentry Navigators interact with businesses who hire ex-offenders.

Due to the success of the initial pilot, in 2022, six additional navigators were hired to serve all the local workforce areas in Maryland. In addition, in 2023, the staff were hired as state merit and will continue to report directly to the Reemployment Program Directors in each Local Area. The goal of this intervention is to create a connection between the correctional education program and the workforce system as well as to inform the State regarding best practices for engaging this population.

During the report period, Reentry Navigators provided intensive services previously not provided prior to release to 1,231 returning citizens behind the fence. A total of 916 of the returning citizens who worked with Reentry Navigators were placed in employment opportunities.

WIOA Performance 4th Quarter

Employment Rate QTR2	59.0%
Employment Rate QTR4	60.2%
Median	\$6,778

Ex Offender Assistance Contact	945
# Behind Fence Contacts	1,231
Federal Bonding	78
Referred to Training	140
Offender Job Readiness Workshops	182
Outside Referrals	246
# Home Detention Contacted	23
# Served	2,845
# Visits to DPSCS, Detention and Fed Site	166
# of Placements	68
Veterans	64
# Employer Outreach Contacts	382

Maryland Business Works (MBW)

MBW is an incumbent worker training program administered by DWDAL. The program was established to support employer strategies for retention, growth expansion, and layoff aversion through upgrading the skills of currently employed workers of Maryland's businesses. The program's training funds are available to businesses serious about increasing employee productivity, upgrading the skills of current employees, and creating opportunities for expanding the existing workforce. Projects funded through MBW are focused on in-demand occupations and skillsets, as defined by businesses, and are intended to lead to potential career growth and increased wages for participating workers. Participating companies are required to match the funds provided by the MBW program for the actual training costs on a dollar-to-dollar basis. Companies pay for 100% of total training costs and then receive a 50% reimbursement by MD Labor upon successful completion of the trainee. To date, Maryland has invested a total of \$2.5 M of Governor set-aside funds in MBW.

During PY 2023, 212 incumbent workers received training and industry recognized credentials with the support of the MBW program. \$237,523.88 was spent for training—for an average cost per participant of \$1,120.39. Businesses increased wages for 209, and 209 new positions were planned. In addition, registered apprenticeships utilized funding to train 192 registered apprentices in Maryland. Industries utilizing the grant included construction trades, manufacturing, IT/Cyber, and professional services.

School-to-Apprenticeship Pathway - International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW)

MD Labor funded the Baltimore Electrician Joint Apprenticeship Training Committee (JATC) to continue expansion of its apprenticeship program by working with participating local public school systems to offer a School-to-Apprenticeship pathway. IBEW received \$57,000 to accomplish the following:

- Work with local public-school systems to recruit student candidates who: will be entering their senior year, are on pace to graduate, are able to pass a drug test, have taken and passed a minimum of Algebra I, and will have a valid driver's license and vehicle by the end of the School to Apprenticeship year.
- Have the opportunity to take the first year of the JATC's related instruction in an online format (up to 50 students).
- Be provided classroom time and space to work with instructors as needed on both the curriculum and hands on labs.

COVID-19 hampered activity in 2021 and early 2022 but the project has had more success in late 2022 and 2023. The DWDAL MATP Director and the Sponsor and Baltimore County Public Schools met multiple times to facilitate entry for high school students. The number of individuals participating has more than doubled from 13 to 28, with two entering apprenticeships.

Baltimore Alliance for Careers in Healthcare (BACH)

BACH is a nonprofit dedicated to eliminating the critical shortage of qualified healthcare workers in the Baltimore area by working with local agencies, healthcare institutions, and other entities to create opportunities for residents to pursue careers in health professions. Through its work with seven major healthcare employers in the Baltimore region, BACH has a frontline understanding of workforce needs and experience convening employers to ensure efforts are industry-led. Due to the organization's history of delivering outstanding outcomes, along with their work as an intermediary, BACH leads this effort.

Since November 2016, BACH has been creating its own registered apprenticeship program by utilizing ApprenticeshipUSA Expansion Grant funding. To date, BACH has created the occupations of Environmental Care Supervisor, Surgical Technologist, Licensed Practical Nurse, Central Sterile Processing Technician, and Medical Assistant. Since inception, 135 apprentices have been registered in this program, (13 Central Sterile Processing Technicians, 58 Environmental Care Supervisors, 31 Medical Assistants, 16 Licensed Practical Nurses, and 17 Surgical Technologists). To date, 41 apprentices have completed their program, 25 did not complete their program, and 69 are still active in their program which is a 62% completion rate.

BACH was awarded additional funding in the amount of \$481,609 over a period of two years beginning on March 21, 2022 and ending on January 31, 2024 to support the continuation and expansion of its Healthcare Apprenticeship Program. Under this grant funding, all five occupational apprenticeship programs became active, and 23 apprentices have been enrolled (9 Environmental Care Supervisors, 2 Central Sterile Processing Technicians, 3 Licensed Practical Nurses, and 9 Medical Assistants). BACH has been actively promoting apprenticeships throughout the Baltimore area. In August 2023 alone, BACH received 31 new inquiries into apprenticeship programs. The organization is also actively engaged in the upcoming National Apprenticeship Week activities and expects even further interest to be spurred through this outreach. Their goal for this funding is to enroll 58 apprentices and they are well on their way and confident in their ability to reach this goal.

Independent Electrical Contractors (IEC) – Charles County Public Schools (CCPS), Apprenticeship \$73,748.95

The IEC-CCPS pre-apprenticeship grant was designed to serve a total of 13 CCPS seniors during the 2020-2021 school year. All 13 participants received OSHA-10 and Red Cross CPR Certifications along with their high school diplomas. Eight of the participants completed the entire pre-apprenticeship Electrical Pathway Program. Two immediately entered employment and were registered as apprentices with the remaining eight receiving their driver's licenses first and then registered as apprentices. This grant has now ended.

IEC – Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS), Apprenticeship \$74,392.93

The IEC-MCPS pre-apprenticeship grant is designed to serve a total of 10 MCPS seniors during the 2020-2021 school year. All 10 participants received OSHA-10 and Red Cross CPR Certifications along with their high school diplomas. Eight of the participants completed the entire pre-apprenticeship Electrical Pathway Program with a class average grade of 84.25%. Five of the eight immediately entered employment and were registered as apprentices with the IEC.

The remaining three are all receiving their driver's licenses first and then being registered as apprentices. This grant has now ended.

Association of International Professional Accountants (AICPA) \$119,875

The AICPA received a grant to support the cost of related instruction for a minimum of 25 new registered apprentices for the AICPA's Registered Apprenticeship Program. The apprentices study the Finance Leadership Program, which leads to the occupation of Finance Business Partner and the Chartered Global Management Accountant designation. The maximum allowable costs per new apprentice are \$4,795. As an intermediary and related instruction provider, the activities being performed specific to the grant are developing, updating, and providing related instruction, ensuring learner progression and success, and maintaining a world-class global designation.

The AICPA employer outreach team has provided webinars to 30 potential employers. The grant is a major incentive to finance and accounting field leaders. To date, four employers have completed their employer agreement and 30 apprentices have been registered. Additional employers are reviewing final documentation for signature with several additional employers engaged in follow-up discussions. AICPA apprenticeship program occupation is gaining interest at an unexpected pace. AICPA is considering adding a Maryland-based salesperson to have a consistent person available in Maryland. This grant will be active through April 2025.

American Rescue Plan Act and the Mayor's Office of Employment (MOED) \$250,000

The purpose of this of this grant is to incentivize employers to support 150 new Registered Apprentices by paying related instruction and on the job learning costs not to exceed \$2,500 per apprentice. An employer must ensure the registration of new apprentices and submission of an accurate and completed apprenticeship agreement to MD Labor for formal entry into the State's Registered Apprenticeship database. Employers must ensure apprentices are hired for full time work.

To date, the Memorandum of Understanding Agreement is being reviewed and finalized by MOED's legal. This grant is active until January 2025.

Workforce Solutions to Address Homelessness (WSAH) Demonstration Project \$997,976

The WSAH pilot program was conceived by the Interagency Council on Homelessness's (ICH) Workforce Subcommittee. The goal of the pilot is to bridge the gap between workforce and homeless services on both a system and provider level.

Using best practices put forth by the ICH and identified via a landscape analysis conducted by the Workforce Subcommittee, grantees were required to form comprehensive partnerships to coordinate the delivery of employment and related services to best meet the needs of individuals experiencing or at-risk of homelessness. Applicants could apply for up to \$200,000 to be spent across a three-year period. The pilot launched in October 2022 and will conclude in September 2025.

Below is a list of grantees and an overview of the project:

Grantee	Geographic Area Served	Award Amount	Project Summary
Allegany College of Maryland	Allegany County Garrett County	\$200,000	Allegany College will offer concurrent work readiness programming, housing, and supportive services for youth and families with children experiencing homelessness.
Baltimore County Department of Workforce and Economic Development (DEWD)	Baltimore County	\$200,000	DEWD will hire a Homeless Services Career Consultant to co-locate employment services at shelters throughout the county.
LifeStyles of Maryland, Inc. (LifeStyles)	Calvert County Charles County St. Mary's County	\$198,976	LifeStyles will enhance their wraparound support for individuals experiencing homelessness by bolstering workforce services through the co-location of a Workforce Development Coordinator.
Maryland Center for Veterans Education and Training (MCVET)	Baltimore City	\$200,000	Veterans experiencing homelessness who are enrolled into MCVET's workforce development program will receive wraparound employment support and case management to augment vocational training.
Horizon Goodwill Industries (HGI)	Washington County Allegany County	\$199,000	HGI will develop a construction career pathway for youth ages 16-24 who are experiencing homelessness.

Supporting Recovery Through Employment (SRTE) \$996,364

Since 2019, MD Labor has benefitted from a fruitful partnership with the Maryland Department of Health's Behavioral Health Administration (BHA), in which there has been a shared recognition of the value of employment to a person's recovery from a substance use disorder (SUD). Following the conclusion of the successful Opioid Workforce Innovation Fund grant made possible through a partnership with BHA, MD Labor continued to advance the efforts of organizations currently serving unemployed, underemployed, and incumbent workers in recovery from a SUD, by directing resource to the development of a pipeline from training to employment through the release of SRTE. The grant was launched in November 2022 and concluded in October of 2023.



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MOED \$100,000

MOED received a grant in January 2023 to expand one-on-one service provision to individuals who engage with the career center and identify as someone in recovery from a SUD. As a result of their participation in the USDOL Support to Communities grant, MOED identified a need for rapid employment among individuals impacted by SUDs. MOED used this funding from Labor to hire a Certified Peer Recovery Specialist to serve as a liaison between behavioral health treatment providers, patients in treatment, and the career center. The results have been astounding. The following deliverables, as of August 2023, demonstrate the value of having staff with lived experience in frontline positions:

Participant/Activity Category	Cumulative Activity
Total # served	104
Total # referred to Train Up	37
Total # to receive career coaching	40
Total # to enter employment	9

4.i.2. Rapid response activities and layoff aversion, including:

- Data on number of companies served and number of individuals served.
- Discussion of strategies for linking Rapid Response recipients to American Job Centers and processes for intake or co-enrollment in the Trade Adjustment Assistance and the Dislocated Worker programs.
- Discussion of layoff aversion strategies, including any metrics/outcomes developed and/or tracked by the state with respect to layoff aversion, such as return on investment or measures showing the economic benefits of Rapid Response and layoff aversion.
- Discussion of how Rapid Response and layoff aversion activities are aligned with business engagement, sector strategy, and career pathway efforts, which may include a discussion of any systems, tools, networks or approaches designed to identify companies in distress and strategies to deliver necessary solutions as early as possible, as well as outcomes of the use of such systems or tools.
- Discussion of specific types of services or workshops provided to both companies and affected workers.

Rapid Response is an early intervention strategy designed to provide and inform individuals of services to support them during the transition to new employment. The goal of Rapid Response services is to shorten or eliminate the time between employment opportunities, reducing or eliminating the time an individual would receive UI. Services are provided to businesses faced with reducing their workforce regardless of the reason(s) for the reductions.

Rapid Response teams (consisting of a state representative and a local WIOA representative as well as other partners) confidentially meet with companies to assess potential layoffs and closings and work collaboratively to plan a response that meets workers' needs. Depending upon the needs of the impacted workers, coordination with other partners may be necessary, such as DUI, DWDAL's Veteran Services Unit, DORS, and approved State of Maryland Contract Interpretation Services.

During Rapid Response events, participants receive information concerning the employment services and resources available through AJCs. Impacted workers are encouraged to visit their nearest AJC as soon as possible.

Case managers are required to refer and co-enroll Trade Adjustment Assistance (Trade) Program participants in WIOA Dislocated Worker or other appropriate program to ensure optimal service delivery leveraging resources from Trade, discretionary grants, and WIOA Title I programs concurrently. Partner programs may be able to assist with participant assessments, childcare, travel costs, case management, on-the-job training, or follow-up services not covered under Trade.

Maryland's Layoff Aversion services include strategies and activities to prevent or minimize the duration of unemployment resulting from layoffs. As a result of the COVID-19 shutdown, all related activities have been re-structured to deliver required information virtually or via conference call, including Town Hall meetings in addition to our in-person delivery.

Services include:

- Immediate and on-site contact to determine assessment of layoff plans, reemployment prospects for workers, available resources, and possibility of Trade impact;
- Short-time compensation;
- Work Sharing/Layoff Aversion and Reopening Unemployment Insurance program;
- Employee skill upgrading and customized training;
- Provision of information and access to unemployment compensation benefits and programs;
- Information sessions on the Trade Program;
- Information on Pell Grants and the GI Bill;
- Interviewing skills workshops;
- Résumé workshops;
- Job fairs and targeted hiring events,
- Providing on the job training assistance;
- Connecting businesses with workers;
- Working with Economic Development to learn of potential businesses coming to the area with hiring needs; and
- Working with employers on proactive measures such as succession planning or opportunities of potential economic and work transition or expanding of business.

During PY 2022, Rapid Response activities in Maryland included:

- 189 Rapid Response events;
- Workforce recruitment/layoff aversion services, including 5,190 events servicing 2,706 employers;
- 953 recruitment postings/flyers;
- 182 job fairs (virtual/in-person/hybrid);
- 78 layoff aversion/direct connect one employer to another;
- 751 job blasts to partners/staff;
- 897 assisting employers with MWE for postings; and,
- 110 dislocations events were filed with the state impacting 8,161 workers -
 - 90 Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notifications [WARNs];
 - 20 Notices of Dislocation Event.

The Dislocation Services Unit (DSU) works jointly with the Business Solutions Team to stay abreast of employment needs throughout the state and learn of any new industries potentially moving to Maryland.

When Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notifications (WARNs) or Notices of Dislocation events are received, the DSU looks to match the industry sectors of the impacted workers to the potential placement of existing vacancies. Regular business engagement meetings are also held that provide an opportunity for business staff around the State to come together and make connections for our customers. The DSU as well as the Business Solutions team also check each dislocation event for the possibility of Trade Program impact. If found, the DSU will assist the company or group of workers with filing an application for possible Trade program certification or file the petition on behalf of the company.

Layoff Aversion

Layoff aversion consists of strategies and activities to prevent or minimize the duration of unemployment resulting from layoffs and includes both strategic and operational activities that are generally coordinated by our Regional or Local Business Solutions/Rapid Response teams. Layoff Aversion activities may include business and community engagement, feasibility studies, incumbent worker training programs or other worker upskilling approaches, work-based learning, connecting companies to short-time compensation programs, partnering with or contacting businesses in need of skilled workers, etc.

Over the course of the last program year, the Regional Business Solutions Team has elevated their layoff aversion activities due to some of the larger dislocation events that have occurred throughout the State. As a result, MD Labor has incorporated layoff aversion activities directly into rapid response sessions whenever possible, to connect impacted workers with employment and training opportunities. These events were coordinated in response to a WARN or Notice of Dislocation filing, in addition to events staff became aware of while conducting outreach with employers. MD Labor works to coordinate seamless transitions to viable companies with recruitment needs with similar talent requisitions. Layoff aversion events have taken place both virtually as well as in-person, depending on the needs and request of the employer and the impacted workers. Through continued collaboration with program providers and partners, the Rapid Response team has been able to connect impacted workers to an array of reemployment services and programs, such as résumé building workshops, short-term retraining programs, virtual and in-person employer job fairs, and individual employer recruitment activities.

4.i.3. Activities provided under the Wagner Peyser (WP) Act Employment Service section 7(b) (e.g., services to groups with special needs or extra costs of exemplary models for delivering services).

Under Title III of WIOA, the WP Act, a greater emphasis is placed on providing services to UI claimants with referrals to additional AJC services, to ensure claimants remain eligible for UI benefits and to provide them with meaningful assistance to support their efforts to regain employment. WP staff provide reemployment services to UI claimants to facilitate a faster return to work to reduce the average week's duration of UI benefits. During this period, the average week duration decreased from 20 weeks to 14.8 weeks. MD Labor exchange services, which are the primary WP services, fall under the basic career services identified in WIOA. WP staff must use funds authorized by WIOA to provide basic career services.

Maryland has increased staffing in the Tax Credit unit to certify applications more efficiently. Work Opportunity Tax Credit benefits are designed to incentivize businesses to hire individuals with barriers to employment or special needs. The addition of staff has allowed the unit to process applications faster and reduced the unit backlog to under six months.



Funds have also been utilized to provide outreach to Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers (MSFWs) in order to distribute information regarding services available to eligible customers in the AJCs. MSFW outreach is conducted by Regional Business Services staff during the peak season for farm work.

Maryland has allocated WP funds to support the Senior Community Service Employment Program under the Older Worker program. WP funds have been leveraged to support costs for increased staff support for AJCs to staff Employment Specialists. Employment Specialists recruit host agencies and eligible older workers to be placed in training slots for host agencies. They assist older workers in securing unsubsidized employment in conjunction with activities in Maryland's AJCs. Maryland exceeded the entered employment goal for the first time since transitioning to workforce due to leveraging these funds in this manner.

Registered Apprenticeship Navigators are supported utilizing WP funds. These funds are leveraged to allow greater flexibility to work with other regional outreach staff to further the registered apprenticeship messaging beyond traditional apprenticeship employers. Use of WP funds also allows apprenticeship federal grant funds assist new program sponsors with funding initial projects.

4.j. Any National Dislocated Worker Grants (DWGs) awarded to or within the state and how those funds are coordinated with state rapid response activities and dislocated worker programs, as well as how the DWGs fit in with state co-enrollment policies and disaster/emergency management activities, as applicable.

Maryland is pleased to have been awarded funding under the Support to Communities: Fostering Opioid Recovery Through Workforce Development. DWDAL applied for these funds to support the operations of Workforce Development's response to the opioid epidemic in Maryland, given the prevalence of opioid-related deaths.

In September of 2020, MD Labor was awarded \$4,589,064 from USDOL to provide training and other services through the Support to Communities: Fostering Opioid Recovery through Workforce Development grant. MD Labor awarded funding to seven Local Areas representing 14 jurisdictions across the state that have experienced negative social and economic impacts due to the opioid crisis. More than 700 Marylanders are anticipated to participate in the new pilot program, which will provide participants with job training and recovery services, leading to employment in 14 high demand industries and occupations. As of July 2023, nearly 400 individuals have completed training and over 350 have entered employment. In addition, close to 380 individuals enrolled in the grant have received supportive services or recovery treatment services.

4.k. Any technical assistance needs of the state workforce system.

Amid the pandemic, high unemployment, and unskilled workers seeking new opportunities in the last three years, Maryland has triumphed. Maryland was able to keep the wheels moving that enabled our constituents to continue to receive the training and coaching needed to acquire skills necessary for future employment. However, when you consider Maryland's industries of focus, jobs come with a set of criteria that must be addresses before the hiring occurs and can meet the long-term goal of helping individuals acquire livable wages that can support a family. Our society is moving into a technological phase, and artificial intelligence (AI) seems to be the hottest topic. How do we address the current job markets with potential constituents? According to the MD Labor and our local areas, their respective industries are based on bureau of labor statistics information that indicates here is who's hiring and what industry. But there is another industry in the equation that offers no clear entry path for a non-computer technician. In the future, robots may take over many occupations. In short, whatever the case, we must ensure that we have people behind those robots ensuring they are functioning according to specification and that we are fully connected to the needs of the changing economy for more futuristic ideas. In MD Labor, we must begin strategizing with our federal partners and envisioning how we will continue to expand what we have and meet the needs of the next wave of innovation.

In order to move the new working class at the same pace with technology, training must also be moved at the same speed. Eligible Training Providers will need to be on the cutting edge of this new technology by offering the certifications that match the technological changes for AI. So the questions remain, what can AJCs do to keep up with the changing technology wave? How do we determine what skills the candidate must possess to meet that demand?

To make this happen, Maryland must meet with its partners on the same stage and design a masterpiece that not only works for one part of the tech population, but for all newly interested candidates in the tech field. Federal partners can help with this by conducting platforms where experts in the field of AI and technological machines can come together to devise a plan as to how we can take other global economies by storm by having ready, trained, and expert workers ready to accomplish the next big bang in technology.

4.1 Promising practices, lessons learned, and success stories that focus on serving employers, communities, and individuals with barriers to employment, including information based on the state's evaluation and related research projects. This discussion should cover a broad range of at-risk and priority populations served, including out-of-school youth, low-income adults, dislocated workers, individuals who are basic skills deficient, individuals with limited language proficiency, individuals with disabilities, veterans, the long-term unemployed, and any other individuals with barriers to employment, or other populations the state may wish to discuss.

ADULT SERVICES | Meet Jessica

Jessica has a new lease on life and a new career, thanks to integrated WIOA services.



Jessica was a 49 year old woman facing multiple employment barriers when she was referred to her local AJC for employment and training services. Jessica had not held a job in a long time and was essentially homeless, residing in a long-term residential treatment facility. In addition to suffering from opioid addiction, she was receiving benefits through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and had limited education and marketable occupational skills. Jessica needed the coordinated resources of multiple workforce system partners to rise above such an overwhelming set of circumstances. And that's exactly where the Western Maryland Consortium stepped in.

The workforce professionals at the Hagerstown AJC teamed with the other organizations who were helping Jessica on a variety of fronts to address her employment barriers. They helped her connect with a transitional job that would allow her to gain some recent work history, build her resume, and acquire some usable skills that would also support her efforts in recovery while in treatment. Not only did Jessica successfully complete her transitional employment period, but she also graduated from her treatment program.

The treatment center assisted her in moving into a transitional living situation. During this period, Jessica began CDL training at Hagerstown Community College and worked part-time to sustain her living expenses. She passed her CDL exam and obtained her CDL A license in November of 2022. With assistance from the Hagerstown AJC staff, she prepared a resume and conducted a job search, and found full-time employment with benefits utilizing her new CDL license within a matter of weeks. Today she is on her own with the skills and support she needs to make a sustainable living wage and thrive in recovery. Considering the journey, Jessica remarks, "I am incredibly grateful for all the support I have received along the way!"

YOUTH SERVICES | Meet Frank

Frank sets his sights on a career in information technology.

Frank was a high school graduate with multiple disabilities who loved working with computers, but he lacked any credentials beyond a high school diploma when he began working with staff from the Lower Shore Workforce Alliance. He had a steady job he liked, working in a local restaurant, but he wanted more. He knew he would need to acquire specialized skills to be considered by local information technology companies, so Frank acted to achieve his dreams. While maintaining employment at a KFC/Taco Bell restaurant, he purchased a simulator with his own money, so that he could practice repairing and re-building computers. He completed 27 free online courses available through Metrix Learning, a program he accessed free of charge through the local workforce area's website. He participated in tutoring sessions twice a week to improve his math and reading skills, and completed WIOA-funded basic, intermediate and advanced CompTIA, and A+ Prep courses, obtaining multiple certifications through Wor-Wic Community College. A workforce specialist assisted

Frank in crafting a competitive resume and helped him connect with a work experience opportunity repairing computers at the Telamon organization. His own perseverance and support from the local workforce area's WIOA Youth program have prepared Frank to reach his career goals!

NEW AMERICANS PROGRAM HELPS IMMIGRANTS TRANSFER VALUABLE SKILLS TO NEW EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN A NEW LAND | Meet Mary

Mary and her colleagues are forging a road to career success for New Americans in Maryland.

Mary Barton is the English Language Center Enrollment, Transitions, and Outreach Coordinator at Howard Community College, and she knows a thing or two about the challenges New Americans - immigrants, refugees, asylees, temporary and long-term visitors from other countries – often face when trying to enter the U.S. workforce. Housing, dependent care, education, and employment are a few of the most common obstacles. The good news is that Mary and the team of dedicated staff with whom she works at the Skilled Immigrant Program at Howard Community College work hard every day to help these individuals build a brighter economic future, by connecting them with the supportive services and employment and training resources they need to overcome their challenges and achieve their career goals.



The focus of the Skilled Immigrant Program is to help participants navigate to the highest level job aligned with their knowledge, skills, and abilities. The program includes two courses. The first is a four week, 16-hour intensive course that covers essential topics, including an introduction to the United States job culture, career exploration and résumé writing. The second is a six week, 30-hour course that features professional career counseling, tutoring in pronunciation, interview preparation, and mentorship from industry leaders.

Recalling the genesis of the Skilled Immigrant Program, Mary notes, “It began as a training program funded by the banking sector to prepare multilingual applicants. The program was so successful in meeting employer needs, other sectors in the business community jumped onboard. Over time, we’ve expanded beyond banking to serve internationally trained and experienced professionals in the business, science and technology, human services and education sectors.”

“Skilled Immigrant Program staff come from the standpoint of valuing the importance of a multilingual individual’s education, training, and experience,” Mary says, in explaining the program’s success. “For example, a participant may have been an engineer in their country of origin, but their lack of a U.S.-recognized credential may be a barrier to working under the formal job title of an engineer in this country. Instead of zeroing in on the barrier, we look at the opportunities for working with an engineer. We focus on identifying participants’ transferable skills, and working with them to map out unique training and employment paths that coordinate all of our resources and get them as close as possible to their full professional potential.”

Mary and her team are making Maryland’s workforce stronger and more diverse!

RECOVERY TO WORK PROGRAM | Meet Shelby

Her recovery journey led Shelby to a career helping others overcome similar challenges to employment.

Shelby was first connected to Frederick County Workforce Services (FCWS) through a referral from her case manager at the local Department of Social Services (DSS). Her DSS case manager encouraged her to meet with FCWS staff, who could help her upgrade her skills and search for a better job.



Shelby was glad she followed the case manager's advice: she was pleased and surprised to learn that, in addition to a wide range of other career services FCWS offered, they had a program explicitly organized to assist those in recovery called Resilient Frederick County (RFC). Being nearly two and half years sober, Shelby worked at Weis Markets for minimum wage as a single mother. She was taking the bus to and from work and her daughter's daycare daily. Just getting by was a struggle. Shelby knew she needed to focus on building a career to support her family, but thinking about reconnecting to school made her feel paralyzed. She thought she had wasted her opportunity to earn a college degree when she dropped out during active addiction. The RFC program helped her get a new lease on her dreams.

Through the RFC program, Shelby participated in the Recovery to Work Academy. She completed six months of modules that taught her skills for gaining and retaining employment in a professional work setting while balancing her recovery. She also attended a 3-week business communications class at the local community college. Shelby then engaged in a transitional work experience as an Administration and Communication Assistant, where she put her newfound confidence and skills into action. While participating in the RFC program, Shelby also secured a car from Second Chances Garage and was assisted in researching options to complete her bachelor's degree.

As Shelby finishes her year in the RFC program, she will also complete her last class to earn her college degree in Communications from Salisbury University! But her success story doesn't end there. She has also accepted a position as a Job Specialist II with Maryland's Department of Labor, and will be working to help other Marylanders get back to work! Looking back on her experience, Shelby says, "There are so many people willing to help, so many programs established to help those of us who want to live our lives differently in recovery. But it doesn't happen all at once. It's an ongoing journey that takes time and effort every day. The best opportunities I found have been entirely unexpected, and the RFC program is most definitely at the top of the list! Working with someone understanding and non-judgmental makes all the difference."

WIOA YOUTH | Meet Ebony

Ebony launches a successful career in digital marketing.

Ebony is a 24-year-old mother who enrolled in Employ Prince George's (EPG's) Youth Services program. EPG's Youth Services staff worked with Ebony to help her match her passion for digital marketing and social media management with a work experience opportunity at Sincerely Wilma, a Maryland-based small business that handcrafts an assortment of sweet and savory pancake and waffle batters. Ebony's work ethic and performance during an internship with the organization landed her a contractual position with the company as their Social Media Manager. Although she thrived in her new role, the owner was unfortunately not able to retain her services beyond a few months. This didn't stop Ebony from pursuing her dreams though. She continued to meet regularly with EPG's Youth Services staff for weeks to coordinate the appropriate next steps.

While waiting to begin a small business certification at Prince Georges Community College, Ebony worked with one of EPG's Youth Business Consultants, who helped her learn how to effectively engage with employers. Ebony applied her newly acquired skills during one of EPG's quarterly job fairs, scheduling three employment interviews. She made it through three rounds of interviews with the Maier & Warner Public Relations Firm for a role as the organization's Digital Marketing Manager. She must have made a good impression, because the company hired her, and she is now making over \$50,000 annually!

DISLOCATED WORKER | Meet Michael

At 75, Michael was not ready to retire yet.

The word "retirement" is not a word in Michael's vocabulary. So when he found himself at 75 years young laid off from a truck driving job he had held for 11 years, he turned to his local AJC to remedy the situation. The AJC staff who worked with Michael learned that he had never before filed for unemployment, nor had he used the internet to search for work. He needed help to make the leap from his experiences with paper applications and face-to-face interviews to the unfamiliar world of video conferencing and the online application process.

Staff set to work assisting Michael with filing his initial Unemployment Insurance (UI) claim through the state's website, and in dealing with a fraud investigation related to identity theft during the pandemic. They educated him on the UI filing process and helped him complete his job search log in the Maryland Workforce Exchange website. They also worked with him to develop his digital literacy skills so that he could search for and apply to jobs online.

Michael is proud of the progress he has made. "As a truck driver, I really hadn't needed to use computers. The people at the AJC who worked with me did a fantastic job of taking all the time I needed. They brought things down to my level so I could actually learn to do it myself."

Michael's initial plan was to work part-time at a local golf course during the warmer months, but he was concerned about what he could do for work once the colder weather came. With support from AJC staff, Michael could set that worry aside. He applied to and was hired by a local automotive parts dealer who was happy to have someone with his experience. Reflecting on the services he received from AJC staff, Michael said, "Their help really made all the difference. Without them, I might not have been able to return to work."

We hope Michael stays engaged in the workforce for as long as he wants to be!

WIOA SERVICES REACH YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES | Meet Kaly

Autistic youth gains work readiness skills and confidence through internship experience.

Kaly originally accessed the local workforce system's services through a summer youth employment program, but continued to work in an internship placement as an administrative assistant within one of the system's American Job Centers. In her own words, Kaly remembers, "I got to learn so much when I did the internship. I didn't have a lot of work experience and not a lot of social interaction with other people, which was the biggest challenge I had to face. The internship helped me learn so many skills in the career path I'm interested in, and I got the chance to interact with other people despite being Autistic. The experience really taught me that I have wonderful people who are super supportive of me and to be grateful for the wonderful experience. I want to say thank you for everything. All of you have truly pushed me to my own comfort zone that I never knew was possible."

WIOA YOUTH PROGRAM | Meet Jamarian

Anne Arundel County Youth Program helps alternative high school student transition to full-time employment after graduation.

Jamarian was a senior enrolled in the "Career X" program offered at the Annapolis Night School. The program, which integrated academics, occupational training, and work readiness skills, was jointly supported by Anne Arundel County's WIOA Title I ISY program and WIOA Title II Adult and Family Literacy Services program. From the beginning of his time in the program, the team who worked with Jamarian described him as an ideal student. "He was always punctual, attentive, eager to learn, and keen to complete assignments as soon as possible," said one of the teachers on the team that led the program. As Jamarian worked through career exploration activities and completed interest and skills assessments, he discovered he had an interest in the electrical industry. To learn more, he met virtually and in-person with electrical foremen and construction industry managers. He researched electrical training requirements, identified available jobs, and even job shadowed a variety of electrical career positions. Along the way he made the most of his program by learning workplace excellence skills and working closely with a career specialist to set short-term and long-term career goals, implement targeted job search strategies, create customized cover letters and resumes, and participate in mock interviews to prepare for the real thing. Jamarian's hard work paid off when he landed an internship with Weisman Electric Company. Throughout the internship, Jamarian maintained an excellent GPA despite a demanding schedule. His internship sponsor was impressed by his work ethic and talent and offered him a full time position with the company. Today Jamarian has a high school degree and full-time employment. He has a solid start on a career and a future to look forward to.



4.m. Any challenges the state workforce system faces, which may include policy, implementation, or other relevant challenges.

On June 15, 2022, former Maryland Governor, Larry Hogan, announced the end of the COVID-19 state of emergency in Maryland. The state's unemployment rate has dropped significantly from 6.5% in 2020 to 1.7% as of August 2023, demonstrating the resilience of Maryland's economy, but it is apparent that the effects of the pandemic have left lasting impacts on the State's workforce system and society as a whole.

Unlike the unemployment rate, the labor force participation rate (LFPR) has yet to recover to its pre-pandemic rate. The LFPR is determined by dividing the number of employed and unemployed workers by the civilian population number to get an estimate of the amount of population actively participating in the workforce. Maryland's LFPR in January of 2020 - the month immediately preceding the onset of the pandemic - was 69.2%. The LFPR in August 2023 was 65.3%, a four percent drop. Though the labor force has grown over the last few years climbing from a low of 64.6% in 2022 to its current 69.2%, the participation rate has failed to increase along with the population size. This data shows that there is either a high retirement rate among older workers or fewer people of working age who are seeking employment.

The pandemic's impact on the workforce is even more apparent among women. Since the start of the health crisis in March of 2020, Maryland's female labor force has shrunk considerably, declining 5.3% percentage points from 2019 to 2021. The current female labor force participation rate of 59.2% is a clear indicator that women are not finding and maintaining employment at the same rate as the rest of Maryland's working-age population. During the pandemic, women were unemployed at significantly higher rates and they returned to work at much slower rates than the rest of the state's workforce as the pandemic waned. This pattern suggests that there are some barriers to employment that are specific to the female working-age population. Access to affordable childcare has emerged as one of the primary issues. The shortage of child care workers and the continuing escalation in the cost for quality childcare have created a chronic challenge to women trying to enter the workforce.

To address barriers hindering LFPR, MD Labor has implemented a number of programs. On October 14, 2022, MD Labor announced the Jobs that Build (JTB) Employer Fund, an initiative designed to award funds to Maryland employers to offset the costs of hiring or retention incentives for their employees. The department offered a total of \$15 million and ultimately funded 63 employers to help with hiring and retention. Employers were encouraged to apply for funds to cover the cost of innovative ideas that remove barriers to employment such as childcare, transportation, training, housing and equipment costs. MD Labor will continue to work to connect jobseekers to employment opportunities and support businesses in recruiting and retaining the talent they require to remain competitive in the marketplace.

4.n. Any strategies/policies relating to Pay-for-Performance contracting, which may include examples from local areas.
N/A





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