

EARN MARYLAND
IMPLEMENTATION GRANT

Grantee Guide



Updated October 9, 2019

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Note: This Guide is intended to provide more detailed assistance in complying with Grant requirements and does not supersede any provisions of Grantee’s Grant Agreement.

SECTION 1: BACKGROUND

EARN Maryland, a program of the Maryland Department of Labor (Labor), was created in 2013 to form industry-led partnerships to advance the skills of the State's workforce, grow the State's economy, and increase sustainable employment for working families. It is a competitive workforce and economic development grant program that is both industry-led and regional in focus. It is flexible and innovative, designed to ensure that Maryland employers have the talent they need to compete and grow while providing targeted education and skills training to Maryland workers. This includes both career advancement strategies for incumbent workers and support for individuals with specific barriers to employment.

The EARN Maryland Program is designed to fulfill the following goals:

- Address the demands of businesses by focusing intensively on the workforce needs of a specific industry sector over a sustained period,
- Address the needs of workers by creating career paths to good jobs, and sustaining or growing middle class jobs,
- Encourage mobility for Maryland's most hard-to-serve jobseekers through targeted job readiness training, and
- Foster better coordination among the public and private sectors and workforce, economic development, and education partners around the State.

Under Governor Hogan's leadership, EARN Maryland has been recognized as a national leader in sector strategies by organizations such as the National Skills Coalition, Urban Institute and the Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation. Given the success of the program, Governor Hogan has doubled the amount of funding in Fiscal Year 2018 and 2019 to \$8 million, with targeted investments in the Information Technology, Cybersecurity and Green industries.

SECTION 2: EARN MARYLAND CONTACT INFORMATION

Role	Name	Email	Phone
Special Grants Administrator	Mary Keller	mary.keller@maryland.gov	(o): 410-767-2017 (c): 443-690-9159
Fiscal Administrator	Deborah Wesley	deborah.wesley1@maryland.gov	410-767-2454
Program Administrator	Brittney Crisafulli	brittney.crisafulli@maryland.gov	(o): 410-767-2822 (c): 443.509.2306

SECTION 3: PROJECT SCHEDULE

The **EARN Maryland Project Schedule** is a programmatic and fiscal blueprint of the Grantee's overall Project. Each Grantee is required to complete the Project Schedule with guidance from EARN Maryland staff.

The Project Schedule is a consolidated outline of all projected activities and expenditures. This Project Schedule will allow both Labor and the Grantee to track the progress of implementation and anticipate quarterly expenditures. Over the course of the grant period, actual expenditures may differ from that which is projected on the Project Schedule. Changes of 20 percent or more to the type or total amount of budget line items should be discussed with the Grantee's EARN Maryland program staff person.

SECTION 4: DISBURSEMENT GUIDELINES

Timing:

EARN Maryland Grant disbursements will be made quarterly, during the quarters beginning October 1, January 1, April 1, and July 1 of each State fiscal year.

Process:

The process for quarterly disbursement of EARN Maryland funds is as follows:

- **By the 15th day of the month beginning each Quarter** (see chart in Section 5), Grantees will submit:
 - **Request for Payment Form**
 - Four Quarterly Reports:
 - **Expenditure Report** (Section 6),
 - **Narrative Report** (Section 7), and
 - **Outcome Report – Entry and Exit, if applicable** (Section 8)
- The Request for Payment Form and Quarterly Reports must be submitted to the Grantee's assigned program staff person via email.
- All reports should be signed and legible.
- The Entry and Exit Report should be submitted in PDF format, signed, and in Excel format.
- The Request for Payment Form should reflect the Project Schedule's Current Quarter Expenditure Projection (Column P) and the Quarterly Expenditure Report. If the Project Schedule's Expenditure Projection does not match the Request for Payment (Row E), the Grantee should explain the discrepancy in the Remarks section of the Request for Payment Form.
- Grantees must submit Quarterly Reports by the scheduled date for each quarter even if a Request for Payment is not made for that particular quarter. If the Grantee is not

requesting funds for the current quarter, the Request for Payment Form should be completed accordingly.

- Labor will review and compare all Requests for Payment against the Project Schedule and the Quarterly Reports.
- Approval for the Grantee’s current quarter’s disbursement will be determined based upon the extent to which the Grantee’s Project Activities are meeting its Project Schedule, Budget, Deliverables and Outcomes.
- Assuming timely submission of all Quarterly Reports, Grantees may expect Quarterly EARN Disbursements within 6 to 8 weeks of approval. If payment has not been received within this timeframe, Grantees should contact the EARN Maryland Fiscal Administrator.
- Grantees are strongly encouraged to review their budget to identify any anticipated balance of funds at least 60 days before the grant end date. Should unexpected circumstances arise, the Grantee should work with their assigned EARN Maryland staff person to submit a request for an extension.

SECTION 5: DATES FOR QUARTERLY REQUESTS FOR PAYMENTS AND PRIOR QUARTER REPORTING

Reporting Period	Requests for Payment and Quarterly Reports Due
July 1 – September 30	October 15
October 1 – December 31	January 15
January 1 – March 31	April 15
April 1 – June 30	July 15

SECTION 6: QUARTERLY EXPENDITURE REPORT

Each quarter, Grantees are required to submit a Quarterly Expenditure Report by the scheduled date (Section 5). Data reported should represent the cumulative timeframe.

All actual expenses reported on the Quarterly Expenditure Report must be supported with documentation. This documentation must be maintained by Grantees and available for review by Labor or its designees. In addition, Labor may periodically request copies of specific documentation. All expenses and leveraged resource contributions must be incurred during the Grantee’s “Grant Period” as detailed in Grantee’s Grant Agreement.

An attached Chart of Required Documentation for Expenses lists the types of documentation acceptable for each category of expense. In some instances, substitute documentation may be negotiated with the EARN Maryland Fiscal Administrator prior to submitting the first Quarterly Expenditure Report.

SECTION 7: QUARTERLY NARRATIVE REPORT

Grantees are required to submit Quarterly Narrative Reports by the scheduled date for each quarter (Section 5). This report will assist Labor in tracking the progress of all project activities and aid EARN staff in identifying instances where technical assistance may be needed. The Narrative Report will highlight success stories (Section 15), and Grantees are encouraged to share partnership meeting agendas, minutes, or other tools in this report. The Quarterly Narrative report should provide ample detail and offer a comprehensive picture of partnership activity over the quarter.

SECTION 8: QUARTERLY OUTCOME REPORTS

Grantees are required to report participant demographic information and outcomes, including enrollments, training activity, job placements, and wages as requested in the Quarterly Outcome Reports. Grantees should ensure that data through the end of each quarter are complete and accurate at the time that Quarterly Outcome Reports are submitted. The data is statutorily required and must be collected for every EARN-funded participant. Failure to submit this data will result in delay of payment until the requirement is satisfied.

The use of the outcome reports enables Labor to track the outcomes pertinent to each participant without receiving any personally identifiable information, thus protecting the data security of the Grantee, partners, and participants. However, Grantees must maintain an internal record of each participant's identifying information, which may be examined in an audit, or to confirm the veracity of the information reported in Quarterly Reports. While Labor does not require Grantees to collect the Social Security Number of participants, it is strongly encouraged.

Entry Report

Upon enrollment in an EARN Maryland funded training activity, Grantees must obtain and record the following data from each participant:

1. Date of birth
2. County of Residence
3. Race
4. Sex
5. National Origin
6. Level of education
7. Veteran Status
8. Employment status (upon enrollment)
9. Previous wage at current or most recent job
10. Average number of hours worked (at current or most recent job)
11. Health benefits status at current or most recent job

The Entry Report should be completed and submitted for any participant who began training in the current quarter. For instance, any participant who began training in the quarter spanning January 1 to March 31 should be included on the Entry Report due April 15. This report should

be submitted as a signed PDF and also in Excel format. For the Grantee's convenience, the Department provides a sample intake template which captures all required reporting data. This form can be provided by request.

Exit Report

The Exit Report provides data on all EARN-funded training participants and should be submitted the second reporting cycle following the completion of training. For instance, a participant who completes training in the quarter spanning January 1 to March 31 would appear on the Exit Report due July 15. This report should be submitted as a signed PDF and also in Excel format. If there are circumstances which require additional time for Exit reporting, Grantees should consult with their assigned EARN Maryland staff person.

The Exit Report includes all outcome data on a participant, including any new credentials, certifications or skills earned during EARN training. For participants who are unemployed or underemployed, Grantees will track employment status, including whether or not the participant obtained employment and if applicable, hourly wage, average number of hours worked per week and whether or not the participant is offered health benefits. For incumbent workers, Grantees will track whether or not the participant earned a title or wage promotion as a result of participation in EARN-funded training.

SECTION 9: INFORMATION SECURITY

It is the policy of the State of Maryland to safeguard the security, confidentiality, and integrity of personal information and personal data. This includes information and data that is handled, collected, used, stored, processed, disposed, or disseminated in the process of providing services.

As an EARN Maryland Grant recipient, Grantees will necessarily be collecting personal information from individuals enrolled in training as well as other potentially confidential information from partners. It is expected that Grantees will regard electronic data and other manually maintained records on individual persons, employers, and others as confidential in nature, to be held in trust, and will protect such data against unauthorized disclosure and/or use. These data may include, but are not limited to, name, address, social security number, telephone number, age, sex, ethnic background, wage, employment, tax information, user name, logon identification numbers, password, or any other information gathered either from individuals or from other Partners that is personal or confidential in nature.

EARN Maryland Grantees are expected to:

- Collect quantity of personal information and data reasonably needed to accomplish legitimate purpose;
- Securely store and protect personal information and data against unauthorized access, destruction, use, modification, disclosure and loss;
- Disclose personal information and data only on a need to know basis;

- Protect the security of social security numbers and dispose of any documents or copies of documents containing them in an appropriate and secure manner;
- Destroy personal information and data as soon as it is no longer needed or required to be maintained under state or federal law or regulation; and
- Address administrative and technical safeguards.

If Grantees become aware of any event that involves unauthorized disclosure or destruction of personal or confidential information, they are required to notify the Program Administrator and take further steps to avoid an additional breach of security.

SECTION 10: PROGRAM EVALUATION

Labor is partnering with Salisbury University’s Business, Economic, and Community Outreach Network (BEACON) on program evaluation, including outcome tracking, key performance measures, return on investment and overall evaluation of the EARN Maryland Program.

BEACON will be working with each Grantee to assist with benchmarking implementation progress based on the Project Schedule. Additional tools and technical assistance may be provided as part of this process. Electronic site visits by BEACON staff during the grant period are anticipated.

SECTION 11: GRANT CLOSEOUT

As stipulated in the Grant Agreement, within forty-five (45) days after the Grantee completes the Project, or the end of the Grant Period, Grantee shall submit to the Department:

- A Final Narrative Report
- A Final Expenditure Report

The Final Narrative Report will include:

- a narrative summary of the effectiveness of funded training;
- a summary of related partnership activities;
- any problems encountered in completing the Project;
- quantitative outcomes;
- a comparison of projected outcomes to actual program impact and, where applicable, a rationale for the failure to meet any projected goals;
- any completed studies, surveys, Reports, or other work products, if applicable; and
- any final exit data.

The Final Expenditure Report is certified by the highest fiscal officer of Grantee and lists all expenditures relating to the Grant, including expenditure of Leveraged Resources.

The Final Report will cover the entire grant period. Additional information may be required as part of the Final Report or requested subsequent to the Final Report for clarity. Should the Grantee require additional time to submit the Final Report due to outcome time requirements, they should consult with their assigned EARN Maryland staff person.

Record Retention:

Unless otherwise defined in statute or regulation, Grantees will retain and maintain all records and documents relating to the Grant for a minimum period of three (3) years after payment by the Department of the final invoice or provision of a final Report, whichever is later, and will make records available for inspection and audit with prior written notification and during regular working hours. If any litigation, claim, or audit is started before the expiration of the three-year period, the records must be retained until all litigation, claims, or audit findings involving the records have been resolved and final action taken.

SECTION 12: GRANT ADVISING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

EARN Maryland staff are available to support each partnership through the duration of the grant, answering questions about operational issues as well as providing technical assistance to ensure project deliverables and performance outcomes are met. Each Grantee must assign a Lead Contact Person who is responsible for direct communication with the assigned staff person and is an agent of the Lead Applicant. Along with the fiscal agent (if different), this individual is responsible for the overall implementation of the grant and will closely work with EARN Maryland staff.

EARN Maryland staff will review all Quarterly Reports, including reports prepared by the BEACON evaluation team, to determine if the project is on track. Site visits will be scheduled to observe training or partnership meetings and to provide assistance in resolving any challenges that may be impacting the project. Follow-up with industry and other partners will also be part of the advising process.

Labor strives to be timely, accurate and customer friendly, while fulfilling its responsibility to ensure that the public funds that have been allocated to the EARN Maryland program result in measureable outcomes. The following expectations are provided to set the foundation for a productive, collaborative relationship between EARN Maryland staff and the Grantee's Lead Contact Person.

What Grantees Can Expect From EARN Maryland staff:

- Availability and responsiveness to questions and concerns,
- Sharing of resources and best practices,
- Communicating information clearly,
- Supporting partners and Project staff in problem solving, and

- Creating an environment of trust and support for continuous improvement and innovation.

What the EARN Maryland Grant Advisor Expects from the Grantee:

- Timely and open communication about the project’s successes and challenges,
- Sharing of resources and best practices,
- Dedication to achieving and reporting outcomes and progress benchmarks,
- Willingness to identify program design elements that are not effective and making adjustments when needed, and
- Participation in technical assistance meetings and peer-to-peer networking activities.

Technical Assistance:

Labor anticipates hosting periodic technical assistance sessions, either in person or via webinar, to facilitate networking, peer-to-peer learning, to share relevant workforce development content and provide overall guidance and support to Grantees, other staff, and partners.

In addition, EARN Maryland staff will communicate regularly with the Grantee Lead Contact Person, and other program staff and partners, as appropriate, to assess any specific needs in order to foster the success of each partnership.

SECTION 13: PROJECT MODIFICATIONS

During the implementation process, situations may arise that necessitate a change to the project. Grantees should discuss potential changes with their assigned EARN Maryland staff person who will determine if a formal modification request should be made. Some changes to the Project Schedule, such as a change totaling more than \$2,500 on a given line item will require formal modification and resubmission of the Project Schedule. Grantees making unauthorized changes to their project activities or budget risk having disallowable costs that will not be reimbursed. The Grantee’s assigned EARN Maryland staff person can also advise on the appropriate documentation to submit with a modification request.

A formal project modification request must be emailed to, and approved by EARN Maryland staff prior to the effective date of the change. Once approved, the Grantee will receive notification in writing.

SECTION 14: ADVISING

Labor attempts to ensure that organizations receiving Grant funds:

- a. Have the fiscal and program systems needed to meet all relevant grant reporting requirements;
- b. Meet the terms of the Grant Award outlined in the Grant Agreement with Labor;

- c. Provide quality services to program participants;
- d. Expend Grant funds only for allowable activities; and
- e. Have all required approvals, licenses, and/or certifications, comply, and are in good standing with all legal and regulatory requirements.

Labor's EARN Maryland staff fulfills these responsibilities in several ways, including, but not limited to:

- Reviews of Project Schedules and all Quarterly Reports;
- Site visits to meet with program staff, partners, participants; and
- On-site fiscal, system and advising.

Reviews of Project Schedules, Quarterly Reports, and Requests for Payment:

As noted above, EARN Maryland staff will review each Grantee's Project Schedule, Quarterly Reports and Requests for Payment to determine that:

- a. Grantee's organization is on track with respect to the Program timelines, outcomes, and other deliverables outlined in the Grant Agreement;
- b. Data entry is up to date and free of errors;
- c. Spending and leveraged resources are on track and are related to the Project Schedule, deliverables and outcomes;
- d. Recruitment, assessment and selection processes are designed to support Program goals; and
- e. Strategic Industry Partners, particularly employers, are fulfilling their commitments.

Program Site Visits:

On occasion, your assigned EARN Maryland staff person may request an opportunity to meet with your staff, partners, or participants. The purpose of these visits is to help the Department to gain a better understanding of the implementation of the project and address any concerns or questions that may have arisen during the review of the Reports and related evaluation by the BEACON team. A formal report will not be issued, but EARN Maryland staff will provide the Grantee with feedback and any identified next steps at the end of or immediately following the visit. Timely and effective cooperation with program staff is required for continued participation in the EARN Maryland Program.

Invoice Documentation Review:

As noted in Section 6, Labor will periodically request that Grantees submit detailed documentation of expenditures for review by EARN Maryland program staff. The EARN Maryland Fiscal Administrator will schedule a Fiscal Monitoring at a time convenient for the Grantee to take place annually, in the form of an in-person meeting or a desk monitoring.

Failure to maintain and provide the required documentation when requested may result in any or all of the following corrective action:

1. Requiring Grantee to submit documentation with all subsequent invoices,
2. Full audit of Grantee's EARN Program,
3. Suspension of Grantee's participation in the EARN Maryland Program and all future disbursements for a period of time determined by Labor, and
4. Termination of the EARN Maryland Grant Agreement and mandatory return of disbursed EARN funds.

Comprehensive Audit and Review:

Labor may also conduct an on-site comprehensive Audit of Grantees' fiscal and operational systems, as well as a comprehensive review of Program delivery, including case management, instruction, support services and job placement.

Labor will notify Grantees if their Grant is identified for a review and work with the Grantee to schedule a date(s) for this review. This review includes several components.

Fiscal

1. EARN Maryland staff will review all documents and records related to a sample of invoices and Sub-Grants.
2. If an independent audit or report from a previous visit identified any material findings, EARN Maryland staff will review relevant documents and records and interview staff to determine whether the organization has addressed the finding satisfactorily.
3. EARN Maryland staff will review any or all of the following policies and procedures for compliance with State standards and will interview staff and review a sample of records to test the organization's compliance with them:
 - a. Procurement
 - b. Audit and audit resolution
 - c. Budget controls
 - d. Cash management
 - e. Cost allocation
 - f. Other internal controls

Program

1. EARN Maryland staff will conduct any or all of the following activities:
 - a. Observe a class or other instructional activities
 - b. Interview an instructor

- c. Interview a case manager, where applicable
 - d. Interview a participant
2. At the time of the scheduled visit, the team may review:
 - a. Case files for a sample of participants pulled from the database
 - b. Sub-Grantee documents
 - c. OJT agreements
 - d. Participant selection policy
 - e. Support services policy
 - f. Stipend policy
 - g. Any other relevant MOU's, policies or agreements

At the end of this process, a report will be communicated to the Grantee on the status of the comprehensive Audit and review.

Annual Report and Financial Audit:

Each Grantee will have the right to use their certified public accountant(s) to verify their financial statements annually, provided, however, that each Grantee will be responsible for the costs for such audit or review services.

Labor will review the most recent independent audit, review, or compilation Report for each Grantee annually. The Grantee will receive a reminder to submit the audit or review report along with the Quarterly Reports due April 15. A review or compilation cannot be submitted if an audit exists, nor can a compilation be submitted if a review exists.

In addition to this Labor review, the Labor Internal Audit Unit may conduct an annual fiscal compliance audit on the EARN Maryland Program to determine whether EARN Maryland used and released Grant funds in accordance with the Grant law or applicable program guidance. The audit will also evaluate whether Grantees selected by EARN Maryland complied with their Grant Agreements, state regulations, and policies. Therefore, it is imperative that each Grantee maintain documentation of all applicable records for review and audit.

SECTION 15: ADDITIONAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Periodically, Labor will provide Grantees with the opportunity to request additional funds to grow or expand their work. This will be done through a Letter of Intent. Notification of a Letter of Intent opportunity will be given via e-mail. In order to be eligible to apply for additional funds through this process, a Grantee must have spent at least 75% of the funding allocated under their most recent grant award. Additional guidance will be provided at the time of the Letter of Intent opportunity announcement.

SECTION 16: MEDIA & SUCCESS STORIES

Media:

For any press releases, newsletters, promotional flyers, or other media to announce or provide information about EARN Maryland or the activities that Grantees are undertaking in relation to this Grant, the announcement must include information about the source of the funding as follows:

This Project is funded by the State of Maryland's EARN Maryland Grant Program, administered by the Maryland Department of Labor.

Success Stories:

Labor encourages Grantees to share with their assigned EARN Maryland staff person any opportunities for press events or releases so that we can partner to share these opportunities with a broader audience. Labor also encourages Grantees to submit local publicity regarding their EARN Maryland partnership – newspaper stories, newsletter articles, etc. – to their staff person.

In addition, Labor receives requests for success stories about participants that have earned employment, employers that have met a business need, and other new programing capacity. In order to be proactive in sharing these stories, Labor has provided a space in the Quarterly Narrative Report Form for Grantees to provide at least one idea about potential success stories for further development. Labor will select a few stories to highlight periodically and will follow-up with the applicable Grantees to outline a media strategy.