



**EARN**  
**MARYLAND**  
**ANNUAL**  
**REPORT**  

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**2021**

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The Honorable Larry Hogan, Governor  
The Honorable Delores Kelley, Chair, Senate Finance Committee  
The Honorable C.T. Wilson, Chair, House Economic Matters Committee

Re: MSAR 9663

Dear Governor Hogan and Chairs Kelley and Wilson:

Under Governor Hogan's steadfast leadership, Maryland continues to recover from the economic impacts of COVID-19. However, though the state saw its lowest unemployment rate since the beginning of the pandemic in November 2021, employers continue to face unprecedented challenges, including a national labor shortage, and what is being coined "The Great Resignation."

I am pleased to present you with the 2021 annual report for the Employment Advancement Right Now (EARN) Maryland program. This nationally-recognized initiative continues to have a profound impact on Maryland's workforce. As of this report, more than 6,800 individuals have obtained employment, and close to 9,500 incumbent workers have benefitted from critical upskilling opportunities.

Additionally, EARN continues to be a sound investment of state resources. In a recent study on the economic impact of EARN, the Business Economic and Community Outreach Network (BEACON) at Salisbury University found that for every dollar the state invests into the program, an additional \$16.78 in economic activity is created. The national average for programs similar to EARN is \$3.41.

At a time when employers are facing a difficult labor market, it is more important than ever to ensure access to a qualified pipeline of workers, and to provide indispensable, yet often cost-prohibitive training opportunities for incumbent workers. In the coming months, and even years, as Maryland businesses continue to recover from the cascading effects of COVID-19, programs such as EARN Maryland will be critical to ensuring businesses thrive.

I am extremely proud of our partners who have resolutely provided services over these last twenty months, and look forward to sharing their continued progress and success in the years ahead.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tiffany P. Robinson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Tiffany Robinson  
Secretary

## WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Over the last seven years, countless stories have been shared highlighting individuals whose lives have been forever changed as a result of their participation in EARN Maryland training. Below are a few updates on individuals who have been highlighted in past reports.



- **Ryan\*** enrolled in the JARC Careers in Manufacturing program after struggling with addiction and bouts of homelessness for fifteen years. He recounts that time in his life by saying, “I was homeless, in and out of 10-15 different rehab centers, and did some jail time. I had hit rock bottom.” At JARC, aside from the technical training, he took advantage of financial coaching and expungement services. Nearly three years later, Rich is still employed with Danko Arlington, where he has received wage increases and promotions. He recently became engaged, and last year, purchased his first home. “I’m happier than I’ve ever been in my life. I have 100% turned my life around. I’ve gotten my license, and passport back, improved my credit score, bought a home, and traveled. All things that couldn’t be possible without that first step, JARC.”
- **Christopher** enrolled in the Vehicles for Change program in 2017 after spending nearly 20 years in prison. He excelled in the program, emerging as a natural leader and earning nine Automotive Service Excellence certifications. After successfully completing training, he interviewed with a dealership in Bel Air where he is still employed today earning nearly \$60,000 annually. In his free time, he volunteers at Vehicles for Change, mentoring interns and spends time with his wife of nineteen years, six children, and ten grandchildren.



- **Dominique** graduated from Civic Works in December of 2018. Prior to his enrollment, he was making a living as a street performer, but over time, it became increasingly difficult to support himself. Shortly after graduating in 2018, Dominique was hired by Solar Energy World, where he made \$18 per hour as a Solar Installer. In 2020, Dominique transferred to Trinity, where he earned a pay raise to \$20 per hour. Later, he enrolled in incumbent worker training offered by Civic Works where he earned several mid-level industry recognized certifications. Dominique’s efforts paid off when he returned to Solar Energy World in 2021 and was hired as a Co-Crew Lead. Along with the title came a significant pay raise of \$27 per hour. With the additional income he is making, Dominique plans to purchase a truck by the end of 2021. His career aspirations have continued to grow, and he is on his way to receiving another pay increase when he graduates to a full Crew Lead in 2022.
- **Marcus** participated in the inaugural EARN-funded pre-apprenticeship program led by the Finishing Trades Institute in 2015. He completed training and became a Registered Apprentice with the International Union of Painters and Allied Trades. Marcus progressed through the four-year program, earning progressive wage increases along the way. Today, he is employed as an industrial/bridge painter earning close to \$65,000 annually.

\*Throughout this report, names have been changed to protect the privacy of EARN participants



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## Commonly Used Abbreviations

ASE	Automotive Service Excellence
BDEC	Baltimore Digital Equity Coalition
BEACON	Business Economic and Community Outreach Network
CDL	Commercial Driver's License
CNA	Certified Nursing Assistant
CHW	Community Health Worker
DSP	Direct Support Professional
EARN	Employment Advancement Right Now
FY	Fiscal Year
GNA	Geriatric Nursing Assistant
IT	Information Technology
JARC	Jane Addams Resource Corporation
MEP	Manufacturing Extension Partnership
MFB	Maryland Food Bank
MEA	Maryland Energy Administration
NCCER	National Center for Construction, Education & Research
OZ	Opportunity Zone
OSHA	Occupational Safety and Health Administration
PCT	Patient Care Technician
RCIP	Remediation Construction Industry Partnership
ROI	Return on Investment
SOC	Secure Operations Center
SIP	Strategic Industry Partnership



Students from the Maryland Food Bank proudly pose with their dishes.

## MARYLAND'S NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED WORKFORCE SOLUTION

Established in 2014, Employment Advancement Right Now (EARN) Maryland is the State's nationally-recognized workforce solution. The program is industry-led, designed with the flexibility to ensure that Maryland's businesses have the talent they need by focusing on industry sector strategies that produce long-term solutions to sustained skills gaps and personnel shortages. Based upon employer-identified training needs, Strategic Industry Partnerships (SIPs) provide education and skills training to unemployed and underemployed Marylanders, including support for individuals with specific barriers to employment. The program also provides career advancement strategies for incumbent workers, leading to a more highly skilled workforce and improved business outcomes for employers.

The advent of EARN represented an important paradigm shift in workforce development, encouraging collaboration between a diverse group of partners to develop innovative strategies to meet industry demand and bridge skills gaps. These partners, including employer and industry representatives, non-profit and community based organizations, and workforce, economic development, and higher education partners, make up a SIP.

While traditional workforce programs often look to training entities or higher education to determine training needs and develop curriculum, EARN's innovative model tasks business and industry partners with designing the programs. Employers are challenged to identify the specific skill gaps

for their workforce as well as the broader range of skills needed within their industry sector. By anticipating the changing landscape of training needs, curriculum can be designed flexibly to perform over time as an effective workforce strategy.

Aside from employer partners, the other members of a SIP, usually a blend of non-profit or community-based organizations, higher education and workforce development partners, also play a critical role in the success of the consortium. These partners are generally responsible for the recruitment to placement framework, including pipeline development, recruitment and screening, case management, job placement, and general partnership management.

EARN's unique program design and implementation of sector strategies has been recognized as a best practice by numerous organizations since the program began in 2014, including the National Skills Coalition and the Urban Alliance. EARN was named one of the Top 25 programs in the 2018 Innovations in American Government Award competition by The Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation, a leading research center at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. The program highlights exemplary models of government innovation and advances efforts to address the nation's most pressing public concerns. Additionally, the Deloitte Center for Government Insights cited EARN as a best practice for



## As of October 2021

### Nearly 9,500

incumbent workers have received training, attaining new credentials, certifications and/or skills

### Over 6,800

individuals have obtained employment through EARN



public-private partnership. Furthermore, EARN staff have provided technical assistance to other states and localities looking to implement similar initiatives. The program will be highlighted in a book expected to be published in 2022 by the Harvard Business Review as a best practice for achieving effective government.

In response to employer demand, the program continues to focus primarily on two distinct subsets of the workforce: unemployed/underemployed and incumbent workers.

Historically, employers across the state, regardless of industry, identify challenges around recruitment, especially for entry-level positions. COVID-19

has exacerbated this: nearly every industry has identified a significant labor shortage. EARN SIPs seek to grow the pipeline of qualified workers with the appropriate skillsets who are ready and able to work. As of October 2021, more than 6,800 individuals have obtained employment through EARN. As a result of their participation in EARN, employers have a steady pipeline of candidates with relevant skills to consider for hire, thus decreasing screening, interviewing, and training costs while reducing worker turnover.

Employers identify incumbent worker training as a costly yet indispensable tool that is critical for expansion, retention, and increased competitiveness. As of October 2021, close to 9,500 incumbent workers have received training, attaining new credentials, certifications, and/or skills. As a direct result, employer partners report improved productivity, cost savings, wages, and job retention.

Of note, over the last eighteen months, partnerships report an emerging trend related to an increase in the number of individuals interested in changing careers due to the pandemic, though it remains to be seen if this trend will continue as the unemployment rate decreases.

## CONTINUED GROWTH

Over the last twelve months, Labor utilized Fiscal Years (FY) 21 and 22 EARN funds to expand the capacity of existing grantees. Added funding has led to the addition of new industry-identified training modules and an increase in the number of individuals trained. In December of 2021, the Department released the Winter 2021 Solicitation for Implementation Grant Proposals. This opportunity, which will award funding to new SIPs, is the first Solicitation targeting all industries in nearly three years. Applications are due to Labor in March of 2022, and awards will be announced in May.

Since taking office, Governor Hogan has demonstrated a steadfast commitment to EARN, more than doubling the annual budget for the program. The targeted investments described below have allowed the program to significantly increase the number of grantees funded through the program, grow capacity, and in some cases, expand a SIPs geographic reach.

### Cyber Security/Information Technology

Since FY18, Governor Hogan has strategically provided \$15 million specifically to grow the pipeline of qualified workers for Cybersecurity and Information Technology (IT) and industries. This added investment has allowed EARN to grow the number of Cyber and IT grantees from three to nearly 20. Additionally, partners such as Per Scholas and NPower have been able to expand their geographic reach. To date, the program has placed nearly 1,500 individuals into employment in the industry and provided training for over 1,400 incumbent workers.



## Green

Governor Hogan also committed three million dollars for green jobs training from FY18 to FY20. Labor administered this funding in close coordination with the Maryland Energy Administration (MEA). Five grantees received grant awards. To date, close to 300 unemployed and underemployed individuals have obtained employment, and more than 80 incumbent workers have received training. Due to COVID-19, the Memorandum of Understanding between MEA and Labor was extended, providing two grantees additional time to spend down funds. The Department expects to submit a Final Report to the MEA in late 2022.

## Clean

The Clean Energy Jobs Act, which passed during the 2019 Legislative Session, is providing eight million dollars to the Department beginning in FY21 to support clean energy job development through the utilization of Registered Apprenticeship, Pre-Apprenticeship, and Youth Apprenticeship. A Solicitation for Implementation Grants was released in July of 2020. In response to the Solicitation, Labor received two proposals. Due to the requirements of the law, Labor was unable to fund either proposal.

## Opportunity Zones

In January of 2019, Governor Hogan announced a series of initiatives and legislation to support growth in Maryland's Opportunity Zones (OZ). Part of this investment included the establishment of Opportunity Works, which provides funding to EARN SIPs that benefit jobseekers and employers in and around Maryland's 149 OZs. The Department has provided funding to organizations that are located in an OZ and/or are serving jobseekers or employers that are located in an OZ. To date, nearly 80 individuals have obtained employment as a result of this investment, and partnerships recently received funding which will allow for an additional 120 people to be trained.

## SERVING THOSE WITH BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT

Historically, many EARN partners have targeted individuals with barriers to employment, including lack of transportation, limited work history, homelessness, addiction, childcare needs, and involvement with the criminal justice system. The COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated some of these barriers for individuals. At the same time, employers are struggling to overcome a labor shortage, which has led many companies to reassess hiring practices and consider individuals they may not have previously, increasing the likelihood of helping individuals with barriers obtain and retain employment in key industries.

EARN was created in the spirit of collaboration, requiring a variety of organizations to work together to meet the needs of a given industry. Non-profit and community based organizations often play a large role in EARN partnerships that provide entry level training, as they are especially adept at removing any barriers that may hinder success in the workplace. To provide holistic services, partners work individually with trainees to ensure all barriers to employment are removed before entering the workforce, maximizing the odds for success. Examples of barrier removal services provided to EARN trainees include record expungement, transportation assistance (bus tokens or assistance in procuring a vehicle), providing bridge instruction in math and reading, GED® courses, childcare, stipends for training, and more.

Below is a small sampling of EARN participants who have successfully overcome barriers to employment and entered the workforce.

When Elijah enrolled in EARN training offered by **Maryland New Directions**, he was receiving Temporary Cash Assistance, had been unemployed for nearly six months, and was living in transitional housing. Though he was determined to succeed, he also had a criminal background, which added to the barriers he faced. In addition to receiving Occupational Safety Health Administration (OSHA) 10 and forklift certifications, Elijah received transportation assistance, which made it possible for him to get to and from training. Soon after graduation, Elijah was hired as a Material Handler at a starting wage of \$22.50 per hour. With a new job and competitive salary, Elijah is looking forward to moving to permanent housing and getting his life back on track.

At age 22, Dwayne's criminal history was extensive. After his release from incarceration earlier this year, he committed to make a change. Referred through a community partner, Dwayne enrolled in the Automotive Technicians for Change program, led by **Vehicles for Change**. In less than four months, Dwayne earned eight Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) certifications, obtained his driver's license, and received an offer of employment from a local dealership earning \$25 per hour.

Kenny had an open legal case when he came to **Civic Works**, which made it difficult to find work. Unemployment compounded deepening financial and housing instability. He enrolled in the Remediation Construction Industry Partnership (RCIP) program in February of 2021, earning several industry-recognized certifications and hands-on experience. Civic Works also provided him with financial literacy training, transportation assistance, and support exacerbated with his legal issues. After graduating, Kenny was quickly hired by Ferguson Trenching Company, where he earns \$17 per hour as a Laborer.

Steven had been unemployed for seven years when he enrolled in the **PharmaTech Connect Program** in October of 2020. He excelled in training and soon after, obtained employment with CVS Pharmacy, where he has been employed for nine months. Currently, Steven travels between different locations to assist with staffing shortages related to COVID-19.

## BENEFITS OF AN INDUSTRY-LED MODEL

The primary goal of EARN is to improve the business climate in the state through the cultivation of more highly skilled workforce. While the program is succeeding in providing a consistent pipeline of qualified workers and providing invaluable training opportunities for incumbent workers, employers identify a number of other benefits, including cost savings and increased productivity.

### Cost Savings and Increased Productivity

Because the program utilizes an industry-led model, training is tailored to meet the specific needs of employer and industry partners. This yields a strong pipeline of qualified applicants with the skills necessary to be successful in employers' open positions. As such, some employers indicate that the costs around screening and interviewing job applicants have decreased. Additionally, once hired, there is less cost associated with onboarding and initial training, because students completing EARN programs have the baseline skills necessary, as identified by employer and industry partners, to be successful in their positions.

Employers are also able to leverage EARN funding for incumbent worker training opportunities. This generates cost savings as company training dollars can be utilized on other efforts. Similarly, some employers indicate that they have utilized EARN training as a retention and recruitment tool, as they are able to provide these professional development opportunities free of charge to their employees. This is critical, especially as employers navigate "The Great Resignation."

Finally, employers note increased productivity in their companies, as a result of utilizing EARN training opportunities. As workers become more highly skilled, they are able to contribute more in the workplace.

### Employer Satisfaction

To understand the effectiveness of EARN from the perspective of employers and industry partners, the program often solicits feedback from these stakeholders. In a recent survey, when asked to rate the competitive advantage of EARN participants, 56% of survey respondents stated that they have a significant competitive advantage over their peers, with 42% responding that EARN participants have at least some competitive advantage. Nearly 97% of respondents affirmed that their participation in EARN is worth the investment and 92% believe EARN has had a positive impact on their business.

The survey also sought feedback on whether COVID-19 has impacted their ability to participate in the program. Nearly 22% of respondents indicated that COVID-19 increased the necessity for training and upskilling, while 19% stated it has impacted their ability to send incumbent workers to training. On the other hand, nearly 26% of employers indicate COVID-19 has decreased their hiring needs.

## EMPLOYER SATISFACTION

- 56% stated that EARN participants have a significant competitive advantage over their peers who do not participate in EARN training
- 42% stated that EARN participants have at least some competitive advantage over their peers who do not participate in EARN training
- 97% affirmed that their participation in EARN is worth the investment
- 92% believe EARN has had a positive impact on their business

Employer and industry partners had the opportunity to provide open-ended feedback. A sampling of this feedback is provided below.

- “This program enables us to get training that we could not otherwise obtain in such a short time frame. With the training offered through the EARN program, my associates are staying on top of cybersecurity technology, enabling our institution to continue to fight to stay ahead of the cyber criminals. Without these training opportunities, we would have to outsource some of the job duties to consultants. This training enables us to grow our associates while providing immediate value back to the business.”
- “Most of our long-term welders (4+ years of continuous employment) came from this program.”
- “Having knowledgeable and trained candidates ready to hit the ground running is such an advantage.”
- “The training provided through the EARN program is industry-leading with top notch instructors. Completing the training enables our associates to grow more quickly in their roles, and in some cases prepare them for bigger roles within the organization.”
- “This program has helped build depth in our organization year after year.”
- “The training provided by this partnership has been current, relevant and delivered with a high degree of excellence. Having these training opportunities offered locally has enabled us to train several associates in key, relevant technology areas, enabling them to immediately add more value to their jobs through their newly acquired skills.”

## MAKING A DIFFERENCE BEYOND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

### Bridging the Digital Divide

In 2020, Marylanders reimagined technology’s critical role in how we work, learn, and live. At the same time, it illuminated the digital divide and the gap in accessing the internet and information and communication technologies experienced by underserved and underrepresented populations. In response, several Baltimore City-based organizations created the *Baltimore Digital Equity Coalition (BDEC)*, which was formed to close the digital divide in the region through four goals: 1.) Ensure access to devices; 2.) Create greater internet connectivity; 3.) Increase digital skills training and technical support; and 4.) Advocacy. Several EARN grantees participate, including Humanim, NPower, and Per Scholas, and a representative from ByteBack serves on the Board. In 2020, BDEC launched the Adult Learner Hotline, which provides technical support for adult learners of Baltimore City-based workforce training and adult education programs.



Governor Larry Hogan and MFB Executive Director Carmen Del Guercio.

## Addressing Food Insecurity

The Maryland Food Bank (MFB), through its Food Works program, is providing valuable training opportunities that prepare students for careers in the culinary and hospitality industry. Its larger mission, though, is addressing food insecurity in Maryland, which intensified due to the economic impacts of COVID-19. Between March 2020 and July 2021, the MFB distributed 80 million pounds of food to food-insecure Marylanders, an increase of 88% from the previous year. As part of their training, Food Works students prepared nutritious boxed meals, further honing their skills, as well as serving as a reminder of the importance of giving back to the community. In November of 2021, Governor Hogan presented MFB Executive Director Carmen Del Guercio with the Governor's Champion of Service Award at the 38th Annual Governor's Service Awards for Outstanding Service and Volunteerism.

## Increasing Representation in a Key Industry

Studies show that women and minorities are significantly underrepresented in the IT and Cybersecurity industries. To bridge this gap, several EARN grantees have placed a strong emphasis on diversity, equity, and inclusion in their programs. Through their partnership with groups such as Women's Society of Cyberjutsu and Women in Cybersecurity, close to half of the participants enrolled in the SANS Cyber Workforce Academy identify as female. Additionally, close to three-quarters of their students identify as a person of color.

Since its inception in 2017, Baltimore Cyber has been hyper-focused on increasing diversity in the industry and is leveraging strong relationships with community partners. In fact, nearly 80% of the most recent cohort for the Intrusion Countermeasures Education and Training (ICET) partnership identified as African-American, and close to 65% identified as female. In October of 2021, Baltimore Cyber received the Cybersecurity Association of Maryland 2021 Diversity Trailblazer of the Year Award, which honored its work with the EARN program and recognized the organization's leadership in providing more training opportunities to underrepresented groups.



Bruce Spector and Gary Cohen from Baltimore Cyber accepting Diversity Trailblazer of the Year Award.

## Giving Back to the Community

In addition to traditional workforce development and upskilling efforts, the techfrederick Partnership has placed a large focus on making a difference in the Frederick community. Each year, the partnership holds the Tech Games, an event designed to bring together the tech community for a day of comradery, teamwork, and competition. A non-profit organization is selected by the partnership, and teams may give monetary donations or physical items needed by the non-profit to accrue points before the games begin. The selected non-profit organization for 2021 provides critical services and urgent services to local youth experiencing homelessness.

Additionally, the partnership holds the *techfrederick Hackathon*, which brings together the expertise of the local tech community to support selected non-profit organizations by providing software solutions. Organizations submit proposals that describe their challenges around modernization. Selected organizations are matched with teams comprised of local tech workers who develop solutions for these challenges. Typically, such software solutions would be cost-prohibitive for a non-profit organization to implement. Of the winning application, the non-profit's Executive Director said, "The team's app exceeded expectations in the biggest way! I had planned to replicate an app from a similar non-profit in LA. Now I imagine that LA non-profit will likely want the [our] app."



## IDENTIFICATION OF STATEWIDE TRAINING NEEDS AND TRENDS

The Labor and Employment Article §11-709(b)(4) of the Maryland Annotated Code requires EARN SIPs to identify skills gaps, workforce shortages, and areas of opportunities within their industry. Based upon these needs, SIPs are challenged to develop innovative Workforce Training Plans that will efficiently and effectively bridge these identified gaps.

Based upon feedback from employer and industry partners, EARN SIPs are providing training to four distinct subsets of the workforce:

- **Unemployed/Underemployed:** Employers continue to identify the need for a pipeline of qualified individuals to fill their open positions. Unemployed refers to an individual without a job and who is available for work. Underemployed refers to an individual who is either working part-time but desires full-time employment, who works full-time but earns wages at or minimally above minimum wage, or who is working in employment not commensurate with the individual's demonstrated level of education and/or skill achievement.
- **Incumbent:** An incumbent worker is an individual who is employed already in the target industry and who seeks to obtain additional training or credential. Employer partners identify incumbent worker training as a vital conduit for growth, expansion, and increased business outcomes. However, this training is costly, making it difficult for employers to invest with existing budgetary constraints. Therefore, many partnerships have been utilizing EARN funds to upskill incumbent workers, which has led to improved productivity, cost savings, wages, and job retention.
- **Career Changers:** The COVID-19 pandemic led many individuals to reconsider their career choice. In fact, according to a poll done by the Washington Post, nearly 1 in 3 workers under 40 years of age have considered a career change throughout the course of the pandemic. As such, EARN grantees report an increase in the number of individuals who are employed, but seeking to change careers for a myriad of reasons, including increased stability, improved work-life balance, or better wages.
- **Preparatory:** Preparatory training serves individuals who are not ready to enter the workforce but would benefit from training and education. Employer and industry partners identify preparatory training as an important tool for preparing the future workforce for employment opportunities in the coming years.

### Job Readiness, Essential Skills, and Wrap-around Supports

For the partnerships offering training opportunities to unemployed and underemployed individuals, a key component of curriculum includes job readiness training. Job readiness training may include professional skills, literacy advancement, and financial coaching. Employers resoundingly identify a need for essential skills training. In fact, employer partners identify essential skills training as equally, if not more important than, technical skills in evaluating a potential candidate. Essential skills, also known as soft skills, include professionalism, communication, timeliness, and customer service.

While job readiness and essential skills training remain a high priority for employers, COVID-19 has necessitated updates to the curriculum. For instance, as the number of individuals working remotely has drastically increased, partnerships developed training on how to work professionally in a virtual environment, including increased training on email etiquette and how to utilize virtual meeting platforms.

EARN grantees also report an increased need for wraparound supports in lieu of COVID-19, specifically around behavioral health support. To that end, grantees have intentionally partnered with organizations who are able to provide these services, ensuring trainees have the support they need to not only be successful in training and beyond, but to live a healthy life. Other supports, including the need for childcare, access to healthy food, and assistance with utilities have also increased in light of COVID-19.

### Career Pathway Development

One of the goals of EARN is to address the needs of workers by creating formal career paths to jobs with family-sustaining wages. Several EARN grantees have created programs that are responsive to industry-demand while ensuring the current workforce receives training that enables them to advance in their chosen industry. Similarly, some partners have further developed programs to include incumbent worker training opportunities for program alumni who completed entry-level training. These opportunities ensure individuals participating in EARN programs have the opportunity to earn increased wages and skills while continuing on their career pathway. Employer and industry partners identify career pathway development as a critical tool to combating The Great Resignation and stemming the labor shortage.

In a recent report, *“Results of the Direct Support Workforce and COVID-19 National Survey 2020,”* produced by the Institute on Community Integration at the University of Minnesota and the National Association of Direct Support Professionals (DSPs), it was noted that 50% of DSPs have left their positions. The Maryland DSP Consortium seeks to alleviate the high turnover rate through focused incumbent worker training opportunities. In close partnership with the Maryland Developmental Disabilities Administration, the partnership developed a DSP II credential, which provides opportunities for DSPs to become more highly skilled and allows for advancement opportunities and wage increases. The partnership recently developed a mentoring program, which is another tool to decrease attrition. On average, employers participating in this SIP have seen a 14% increase in retention, an extraordinary figure given the labor shortage in direct care over the last year.

The Partnership for Tech Talent, led by Per Scholas, intentionally focuses on supporting graduates beyond completion and initial job placement to advance their tech careers. Long-term engagement and investment in alumni includes offering comprehensive support services for two years post-graduation, along with professional development and advancement assistance. Alumni are offered a suite of upskilling opportunities, including UX Design, Project Management, CompTIA Security+, CompTIA Network+, and a Python certification offered through a partnership with Google. These offerings further diversify the skillsets of alumni and provide a clear path to advancement.

Similarly, the Solar Installation Training Partnership, led by Civic Works, provides advancement opportunities to individuals who complete their entry-level training program. The training modules cover key occupational skills and certifications required by employers for positions that require greater levels of leadership, project management, and customer service. Additionally, individuals have the opportunity to earn mid-level industry-recognized credentials. The certifications are a requirement for progressing to higher-level positions, so having them facilitates career advancement and addresses crucial skills gaps.

## TRACKING SUCCESS, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND PARTICIPANTS

To ensure that each of the sixty-three EARN partnerships are successful, the program utilizes industry-specific grant advisors who provide technical assistance support. These individuals work closely with each partnership to develop goals and measures of success, providing tailored guidance to ensure goals are met. Grant advisors conduct site visits, hold regular meetings with grantees, and facilitate connections with peers or outside organizations to help further foster program success.

EARN staff strive to develop strong working relationships with each grantee in an effort to better understand the challenges and successes of each partnership and industry. Working collaboratively with grantees creates an environment of trust and support, allowing for continuous improvement and innovation. As a result of these strong working relationships, staff are able to identify early on if technical assistance is necessary and work closely with grantees on improvements if outcomes are not being met.

In an effort to continually improve programming, grantees are given the opportunity to engage with peers implementing EARN SIPs in their target industry through peer-to-peer learning events. These opportunities allow grantees to share best practices, brainstorm solutions to challenges, and discuss industry trends. In December of 2021, in lieu of bringing partners together in-person for the EARN Annual Meeting, Labor hosted six virtual, industry-specific mini-conferences in partnership with BEACON.

Due to the flexible composition of EARN, each partnership is unique in its goals, and success is measured in several different ways. Many elements are considered when developing goals, including cost per participant, average industry training costs, level of services provided, length of training, and the number of participants to be served. Similarly, a variety of different means are utilized to evaluate SIP success. Quantitatively, EARN partnerships are evaluated based upon the number of individuals who enter new employment positions or the number of incumbent workers trained. Program staff review the Return on Investment (ROI), as calculated by BEACON, along with indicators such as new employers engaged and the amount of leveraged funding secured. Success can also be measured qualitatively. EARN staff take into consideration employer feedback, systems change brought forth as a result of the partnership, and participant success stories.

To further evaluate progress, and to ensure accountability, grantees are required to submit the following reports to the Department on a quarterly basis:

- Narrative Report – tracks all programmatic activity, including project activities, program highlights, challenges, and success stories
- Financial Report – tracks projected versus actual expenditures and leveraged resources
- Entry Report – captures all required demographic data
- Exit Report – captures all required outcome data

At the conclusion of a grant period, grantees are required to submit a Final Report. This report includes a narrative that describes the effectiveness of funded training, a summary of related partnership activities, areas of opportunity or technical assistance needs, and highlights best practices. A Final Expenditure Report lists all expenditures related to the grant, including leveraged resources, and compares projections to actual expenditures. A Final Exit Report includes the final outcomes for all individuals enrolled under the grant.

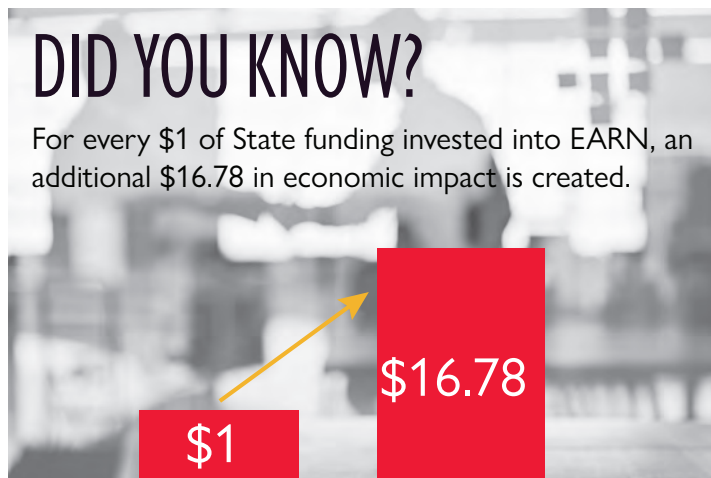
Programmatic oversight is provided to ensure that the partnership is on track to meet timelines, outcomes, and other deliverables outlined in the Grant Agreement and that data are complete and accurate. Fiscal oversight is provided by at least three staff at the Department to confirm expenditures are allowable and reasonable. Grantees are monitored regularly to ensure that programmatic data are accurate. EARN staff provide feedback, including recommendations for implementing stronger data collection practices.

Per the Labor and Employment Article § 11-709(b)(4) of the Maryland Annotated Code, EARN Partnerships are required to collect and track certain demographic data for all participants taking part in EARN funded training, including sex, race, national origin, income, county of residence, and education attainment. Following the completion of training, partnerships must track certain outcome data, including whether each participant obtained a new credential or certification, identifiable skill, a new employment position, or a title or wage promotion. The required metrics covering July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021 are included as Appendix A to this report.

### Third Party Evaluation

The EARN program continues to partner with BEACON at the Perdue School of Business at Salisbury University to evaluate the effectiveness of the program. The broad areas for evaluation include assessment of the value to trainees, the value to employers, the quality and effectiveness of the partnership, and systems change among and within the industry and partner institution.

The staff at BEACON work closely with representatives from each SIP to understand the challenges and successes of the individual programs. These interactions frame the report that BEACON submits to the Department on an annual basis. This report, which includes all interview, case study, reporting, evaluation, and accountability documents and tools, provides an independent evaluation of EARN's impact. In this report, BEACON highlights the economic impact study completed in 2021. As highlighted above, for every dollar the State invests, an additional \$16.78 in economic activity is created. The nationwide average ROI for workforce development programs is \$3.41. This further illustrates the value of the industry-led model and EARN's impact on economic and workforce development in Maryland.



## CURRENT EARN MARYLAND STRATEGIC INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIPS

The following section provides a list of the SIPS that were active in 2021, the region in which they are operating, and a brief programmatic update.

### Cyber/IT

#### IT Center of Excellence

*Region: Western Maryland*

The IT Center of Excellence, led by Allegany College, continues to provide in-demand training to meet the needs of employers in Western Maryland. The need to upskill incumbent workers remains a high priority for the partnership, which includes thirteen employer partners and an array of government, economic development, and higher education entities. Through the first three quarters of 2021, more than 100 incumbent workers received training in a variety of topics, including Security+, Certified Information Systems Security Professional, and Agile Certified Practitioner. In October, the partnership held its fifth annual *Tech at the Gap* conference, a professional development and networking opportunity meant to highlight Western Maryland as a thriving region for tech companies. More than 150 individuals attended the hybrid conference. In July 2021, the partnership received additional funds, which will support the training of more than 400 individuals over the next two years.

**Industry Feedback:** “The Department of Computer Science and Information Technologies has had several [faulty] take the training through EARN. This supports the professional development goals of the University and Department, thus enabling our professors to deliver current knowledge on specific skills that may be necessary for the success of our students. While the department

does have PD opportunities, EARN enables us to afford more opportunities for our professors. Again, passing that knowledge directly to students preparing for the enterprise.”

#### Tech Frederick

*Region: Western Maryland*

Based upon the results of a bi-annual needs assessment completed by their employer partners, Tech Frederick deploys relevant training opportunities that lead to certifications and increased compensation and/or responsibilities for incumbent workers. More than 150 individuals participated in training through the first three quarters of 2021. Training topics included Amazon Web Services Security Essentials, Python, and Google Analytics. In October of 2021, Tech Frederick held the sixth annual “Tech Games,” an event meant to bring together the Frederick tech community with the goal of team building and connecting. The partnership received additional funding in 2021, which will provide training opportunities for nearly 300 incumbent workers.

**Participant Feedback:** “I have attended both AWS DevOps and Splunk Fundamentals 2 training available through Tech Frederick. With the latter training, and a bit more studying, I successfully passed the Splunk & Power Core Power User certification exam. This hands-on training will be directly applicable in my work, the certification will be helpful in my annual review and enhancing my credentials. I am truly grateful to Tech Frederick for making these training opportunities available.



Lieutenant Governor Rutherford attends the ribbon cutting for Allegany College's newly renovated Technology building.



## Building an IT and Cybersecurity Talent Pipeline

*Region: Anne Arundel County*

Led by the Anne Arundel Workforce Development Corporation (AAWDC), this partnership seeks to meet the need of its diverse employer partners by providing customized training based upon industry-identified skills gaps. Candidates are assessed based on their knowledge, skills, and abilities, which are captured through technical hands-on cyber assessments. Training is then assigned based upon the areas identified as needing improvement. Individuals also receive industry mentorship, on-job-training, and have the ability to earn industry-recognized credentials. Examples of training topics include CompTIA Security +, A+, Network +, Certified Information Systems Security Professional, Information Technology Infrastructure Library foundations, information security fundamentals, and Amazon Web Services essentials. In its most recent grant, the partnership placed 79% of completers into employment earning an average of \$25 per hour.

**Participant Success Story:** Prior to enrolling in training, John had been unemployed for nearly two years. **After completing his individualized CyberWorks training, he obtained employment at Wells Fargo as a business analyst in their IT department earning \$24 per hour with full benefits.**

## Intrusion and Countermeasures Education and Training

*Region: Baltimore City*

The Intrusion and Countermeasures Education and Training (ICE-T) Partnership continues to provide a blend of technical and hands-on training to unemployed and underemployed individuals. Students have the opportunity to earn industry-recognized certifications, such as CompTIA A+, Network+ and Security+, and work through hyper-realistic scenarios of real-world cybersecurity threats on Baltimore Cyber's state-of-the-art range. On average, 91% of students who complete training are placed into employment, earning an average starting rate of nearly \$17 per hour. To ensure students have the opportunity to continue to grow in their careers after completing the entry-level training, ICE-T has received EARN funding which will provide opportunities for alumni of the program, or current employees of the consortium members, to earn mid-level certifications such as Certified Ethical Hacker and CompTIA CySA+. This will be implemented in early 2022.

**Participant Success Story:** John, who had no experience in cyber or IT, completed ICE-T training in June of 2021, earning industry-recognized certifications. **Soon after training, he obtained employment working in a Security Operation Center (SOC) with a starting salary of \$65,000 per year.**

## Partnership for Tech Talent

*Region: Montgomery County and Baltimore City*

The Partnership for Tech Talent, led by Per Scholas, continues to provide vital training opportunities to students at their Silver Spring and Baltimore City campuses. Students have the option to enroll in one of two tracks, IT Support or Cybersecurity, where they can earn CompTIA A+, Network+ and Security+ certifications. Over the past year, more than fifty different employers have hired Per Scholas graduates, and since partnering with EARN, nearly 350 individuals have obtained employment. Per Scholas remains focused on long-term engagement and investment in alumni, providing upskilling and advancement opportunities. Both campuses have received continued EARN funding which will allow training to continue in 2022 and beyond.

**Participant Success Story:** Sarah is a graduate of Per Scholas' IT Support training track. Focused on fostering new skills that would prove useful to begin a career in IT, Sarah earned both the CompTIA A+ and Google IT certifications. To further complement her skills and experience, Sarah sought the CompTIA Security+ certification with a laser-sharp focus. Upon graduating from Per Scholas in April 2021, Sarah received multiple offers of employment and accepted a position with designDATA. According to Sarah, "There is still so much for me to learn, and designDATA and Per Scholas were critical to my professional and personal growth." She continues to grow in her career and has recently accepted an offer to join Insight Global as a lead Technical Support Specialist on a federal government contract.

## Susquehanna IT/Cyber Partnership

*Region: Susquehanna*

Led by the Susquehanna Workforce Network, the Susquehanna IT/Cyber Partnership seeks to grow the talent pipeline in the region for a myriad of employer and industry partners, including Bowhead, University of Maryland Upper Chesapeake Health System and the Aberdeen Proving Ground Army Alliance. Through rigorous training offered by Cecil College and Harford Community College, students are prepared to earn industry-recognized credentials, such as CompTIA A+, Network+, and Security+. To date, more than 90% of students who have completed training obtained employment. The partnership will continue training in 2022.

**Participant Success Story:** Joseph was working part-time earning \$13 an hour when he enrolled in training. He earned A+, Security+ and Network+ certifications upon completion of training. Soon after, he obtained employment at Tenax Technologies as a Linux Agent earning \$26 per hour, double his prior wage.

## SANS Cyber Workforce Academy

*Region: Statewide, with a focus on the Capital and Central Regions*

The SANS Cyber Workforce Academy seeks to develop a diverse talent pipeline by providing training opportunities to underrepresented populations, including women and people of color. Students receive advanced technical training and hands-on cyber defense and incident handling skills and have the opportunity to earn industry-recognized certifications including the Global Information Assurance Certification and the Global Certified Incident Handler. More than 90 employer and industry partner have hired graduates of the program, including local, state, and federal government, defense contractors, healthcare organizations, and technology companies. To date, nearly 100 individuals have obtained employment, earning an average of nearly \$40 per hour. In June 2021, the partnership received additional funding which will support nearly 90 individuals over the next two years.

**Participant Success Story:** Henry is a United States Marine Corp Veteran Officer with project management experience and an intense desire to continue to work in a mission-oriented field where he has the opportunity to make a meaningful contribution for the better. He was exposed to the field of cyber due to speaking with individuals who worked in digital forensics and hearing personal stories of how the internet was being used for negative purposes. He enrolled in the SANS Cyber Workforce Academy, where he was able to earn the GSEC and GCIH certifications and **Henry is now employed full-time as a Cyber Threat Hunter making more than four times his previous salary.**

## NPower Tech Fundamentals Program

*Region: Baltimore*

The NPower Tech Fundamentals Program focuses on providing training opportunities to young adults, military veterans, and spouses that lead to promising careers in the IT and Cybersecurity industries. Students are able to choose between two unique training tracks that include rigorous classroom-based curriculum and professional skills development. Training culminates in a seven-week paid internship for students to gain basic competencies needed for quality employment with corporate, nonprofit, tech incubator, and other industry partners. To date, nearly 200 individuals have obtained employment averaging more than \$20 per hour with industry partners such as Northrup Grumman, TD Ameritrade, and Under Armor.

**Participant Success Story:** Ian was forced to drop out of college after experiencing financial hardship. He was working the grueling overnight shift at a warehouse when it was purchased by Amazon and he was laid off. He found NPower, and enrolled in training, making it his main focus for three months. After graduation, he secured a five-month internship with the Baltimore Digital Equity Coalition (BDEC) as part of their community help desk program, which was fast-paced and allowed him to support members of the community with tech advice and assistance. He recently secured a full-time tech position with Oracle as a Customer Support Analyst and so far “it’s been like a dream.” He credits NPower with getting him to where he is today.

## UMBC Training Centers' Technical Career Pathways

*Region: Central Maryland*

Led by UMBC Training Centers, this partnership is working to address the workforce training needs of the military, intelligence community, federal civilian agencies, and the commercial sector through a blend of classroom and hands-on technical training. Students are prepared to test for industry-recognized certifications, including CompTIA Network+ and CompTIA Security+. To date, 16 individuals have obtained employment, earning an average wage of nearly \$40 per hour. In 2021, the partnership focused on growing its Registered Apprenticeship programming and expanded its training offerings in an effort to appeal to career changers. New training topics include cybersecurity, software development, project management, and technology sales.

**Participant Feedback:** “The program has] already provided me a good foundation moving forward. I built relationships/networks in the IT world, and developed skills that have already helped me advance my career moving forward. The future looks really bright, and most of it has to do with the CCA/O program. Now I am Security + certified (working on several others), with a security clearance. Currently I have a good job, but it is only the start. The UMBC Training Center program has provided me and my classmates the opportunities to succeed in today’s cybersecurity and IT world. In addition, the staff and instructors have kept the door open for each student to come back and utilize their facilities, training sessions, mentorship and more to advance our careers.”

## Baltimore Cyber Academy

*Region: Baltimore City*

The Baltimore Cybersecurity Academy, led by I’m Still Standing Community Corporation, is providing training to unemployed and underemployed Baltimore City residents to prepare them for careers in cybersecurity. Students are able to earn industry-recognized credentials, such as CompTIA A+, Security+, and Network+, and receive hands-on experience through lab training. Though the partnership experienced challenges related to COVID-19, students are completing training, earning certifications, and being placed into employment at wages that average more than \$30 per hour. The partnership received additional funding in September of 2021, which will allow 70 students to be trained and expand training tracks to include cable installation.

**Participant Success Story:** Prior to completing the ISSC Cyber training, Morgan secured a full-time position as an IT assistant with a starting wage of \$40.00 per hour. She intends to test for the CompTIA A+ certification, which will increase her employability.

## Advancing Careers in IT

*Region: Baltimore*

Led by the Community College of Baltimore County (CCBC), the Advancing Careers in IT Partnership continues to offer critical training opportunities in Network+, A+, and Python Programming. Along with a variety of employer partners including Mindgrub, Peterson Technologies, and Tessco Technologies, the partnership works closely with the Central Maryland Cybersecurity Association’s Advisory Committee to remain abreast of industry trends. To date, nearly sixty individuals--a mix of unemployed, underemployed, and incumbent workers--have enrolled in training.

## Maryland Cyber Skills Alliance

*Region: Statewide*

The Maryland Cyber Skills Alliance, led by CompTIA, is seeking to address the growing shortage of skilled cybersecurity professionals by providing training that leads to industry-recognized certifications and maps directly to high demand jobs. Students attend a 13-week training that prepares them to earn CompTIA A+ and Security+ certifications. In 2021, the Alliance cultivated a partnership with Humanim, a Baltimore-based non-profit organization and EARN grantee. Humanim is now responsible for case management and will assist the partnership with job placement activities. To date, more than 50 individuals have obtained employment.

## Health IT SIP

*Region: Central Maryland*

Led by CCBC, the Health IT SIP continues to engage large healthcare employers, such as Johns Hopkins Hospital, LifeBridge Health, Anne Arundel Medical Center, and Frederick Memorial Hospital, to provide integral training opportunities for incumbent workers. Training topics in 2021 included project management and value-based care. Since the program began, nearly 200 incumbent workers have received training, many of whom report earning wage increases or title promotion as a result of participation in training. Based on industry feedback, in 2022 the partnership will offer courses in agile fundamentals, project management, and optimizing outcomes.

**Industry Feedback:** “Staff at Lifebridge Health have been very appreciative of the course offerings at CCBC. Our team members who have been able to attend various program offerings, such as project management and value-based care, have shared the value they feel these programs have provided. Members of our team shared the knowledge they gained in their new positions and helped them to fine tune skills they can now use to better support assigned project work. We also had feedback that the education they received helped them advance in their roles to better collaborate with their peers and with those for whom they support. Our team members were especially appreciative that even through a major pandemic, CCBC course offerings were available. These course offerings empowered our staff to excel and advance both professionally and personally during some very difficult times.”

## Advanced Cybersecurity Training Consortium

*Region: Statewide*

Led by Baltimore Cyber, the Advanced Cybersecurity Training Consortium is a collaboration with all 16 of Maryland's Community Colleges and more than 30 employer and industry partners. The training offered by the Consortium is meant to increase the employability of students by providing access to Baltimore Cyber's state-of-the-art range and giving students the opportunity work through hyper-realistic scenarios of real-world cybersecurity threats. To date, nearly 275 individuals have obtained employment, including close to 100 graduates in 2021. The partnership has also provided training to more than 100 incumbent workers. In 2022, the ACT program will offer advanced training to alumni, culminating in their ability to earn mid-level certifications such as Certified Ethical Hacker and CompTIA CySA+, which will increase earning potential.

**Participant Success Story:** Prior to enrolling in the ACT training, June was unemployed with no IT or cyber experience. When she graduated in January of 2021, she secured a position with a large defense contractor **earning \$65,000 per year with full benefits.**

## Cybersecurity Education and Certification Program

*Region: Baltimore*

The Cybersecurity Education and Certification Program, led by the CCBC, continues to provide relevant training to meet the needs of employer partners. To date, the partnership has provided training to more than 130 individuals, with many taking multiple course offerings. In 2021, the partnership received additional funding. Based upon feedback from employer and industry partners such as Excelon, First Financial, and Edwards Performance Solutions, the partnership will shift its focus to targeting incumbent workers. More than 50 individuals will receive training and will be prepared to earn mid-level certifications such as CompTIA Net+, Pentest+, and Linux+.

## Maryland Cyber Security Operations Center Training Partnership

*Region: Statewide*

Led by Transmosis, this partnership is preparing individuals for careers in cybersecurity as SOC analysts. Phase one of training is conducted in partnership with Cybrary and provides content training that prepares students to test for the CompTIA Sec+ certification. Phase two prepares students for the configuration, operation, and management of an industry leading SOC platform through a 12-week externship. The final phase of training provides hands-on experiential training



and allows students to further hone the skills learned in the previous phases. The most recent grant award for this partnership yielded an 85% placement rate with an average starting wage of nearly \$40 per hour. The partnership will launch another cohort in early 2022.

**Participant Success Story:** Sergei was unemployed when he enrolled in training offered by the Maryland Cyber SOC Training Partnership. He earned a CompTIA Security+ certification and gained valuable hands-on experience through the partnership's externship. Soon after completing training, he obtained full-time employment with Deloitte as a Cloud Engineer Consultant with a starting wage of \$53 per hour.

## Education Partnership for IT Careers

*Region: Baltimore City and Prince George's County*

In partnership with employers such as designDATA, Tek Systems, and Wisetek, the Education Partnership for IT Careers revitalized its EARN partnership in 2020 with an expansion to Baltimore City. Forty students will have the opportunity to enroll in one of two training tracks. The IT Track, which includes more than 250 hours of rigorous classroom training, prepares students for certification in CompTIA A+. The Administrative Track includes 182 hours of Microsoft Office Suite training. The partnership began training in July with 15 students enrolled.

## Transportation/Logistics

### Susquehanna Transportation and Logistics SIP

*Region: Susquehanna*

Led by Cecil College, the Susquehanna Transportation and Logistics SIP continues to provide in-demand training opportunities for individuals to become commercial truck drivers. In 2020, the Susquehanna Transportation and Logistics SIP began offering the *Professional Truck Driver*



A graduate from Cecil College poses in her work vehicle.

*Institute* certification. This certification, which is highly sought after by employers, sets the national standard for excellence in Commercial Driver's License (CDL). Individuals with this certification are more likely to have the minimum years of experience required for new hires waived by insurance companies, which is an added benefit and cost savings for employers. Though COVID-19 restrictions have limited the number of individuals able to enroll in a given cohort, the partnership continues to place individuals into employment at high rates, averaging wages of nearly \$25 per hour.

**Participant Success Story:** Soon after completing the CDL A program offered by the Susquehanna Transportation and Logistics SIP, Tina obtained employment earning nearly \$24 per hour. After a few years, she re-enrolled to pursue a CDL B license. She successfully completed the program and has been employed ever since earning nearly \$80,000 annually.

## Mid-Maryland MOVE

*Region: Montgomery County*

Mid-Maryland MOVE continues to work with employer partners, such as Montgomery County Public Schools and the Montgomery County Department of Transportation, to provide in-demand training to meet the growing demand for CDL drivers. In response to employer demand, the partnership has increased the number of training slots for CDL A and incorporated wellness components into the curriculum. Since inception, more than 100 individuals have secured employment, earning an average starting wage of nearly \$20 per hour. The partnership will continue training in 2022.

**Participant Success Story:** In early 2020, Sam enrolled in the Mid-Maryland MOVE program and soon after, earned her CDL Learner's Permit. Unfortunately, instruction was put on hold due to COVID-19. When classes resumed at Montgomery College in August 2020, she reluctantly returned to complete her training. In November 2020, she received her CDL B license with passenger and school bus endorsements. She currently works for Ecology Services as a driver making \$25 per hour and is actively pursuing CDL A training.

## Western Maryland MOVE

*Region: Western Maryland*

Led by Hagerstown Community College, this partnership continues to provide training to meet the needs of more than 20 transportation and logistics-focused employers in Western Maryland, offering CDL A, CDL B, Forklift Operator, and Diesel Mechanic training. In 2021, in response to the growing need for workers in this industry,

Western Maryland MOVE launched the “Be Essential, Be Employed” marketing campaign, meant to attract individuals to the training program. Additionally, more than fifty employer partners attended an in-person job fair. The partnership has placed close to 350 individuals into employment since 2014. Western Maryland MOVE received additional funding in 2021, which will support training for 130 individuals.

**Participant Success Story:** Rafael was the first student to complete the newly launched Diesel Technician Program. He was recruited by a local employer after touring the service bays as part of the training program and ultimately accepted employment earning \$14 per hour.

## Maritime Transportation and Logistics Partnership

*Region: Baltimore*

In response to extreme employer demand, the Maritime Transportation and Logistics Partnership continues to provide meaningful training opportunities to Baltimore City residents. Led by Maryland New Directions, the consortium works with a wide array of employers, including the Maryland Transit Administration, H&S Bakery, Annapolis Bus Company, Pompeian Olive Oil, and Baltimore County Public Schools. The partnership offers two training tracks: the Maritime Transportation Distribution and Logistics (MTDL) prepares individuals for work at the Port of Baltimore, whereas the Commercial Transportation Careers (CTC) program prepares students to become commercial truck drivers. The partnership reports that 73% of graduates have obtained employment, with placements averaging more than \$18.50 per hour.

**Participant Success Story:** Shane, 26, enrolled in the MTDL program looking to improve his career prospects. Though he had been employed as a material handler for five years, he found that he was unable to progress beyond entry-level work and wages. He excelled in the MTDL program. At the end of training, he had the opportunity to participate in a mock interview with McCormick and Co., where he had the opportunity to inquire about open positions. With a reference from his mock interviewer and support from his job coach, Shane obtained employment at McCormick and Co. just a few weeks later earning nearly \$20 per hour.

## A Road to Success

*Region: Anne Arundel County*

A Road to Success, led by AAWDC, continues to provide training for CDL A and B to meet the high demand expressed by their employer partners. To accommodate the varying availability of their clients, the partnership now offers full-time classes on weekdays and part-time classes on the weekend. The partnership is working closely with the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, Amazon, and FedEx to help fill their hiring needs. The partnership hopes to launch diesel technician training in 2022.

**Participant Success Story:** “I was a homeless father of two minor children, my son and daughter. I started by living in Sara’s House, a family shelter on Fort Meade. This went on for months as I tried to obtain work. Then I made contact with the AAWDC, who helped me to obtain funding for a course to achieve a CDL Class A Truck Driver License. After months of training and assistance from the program, I obtained a CDL-A. It was not long after that I was employed as a tractor trailer driver. **Thanks to the help I received from the program and my counselor, I am now providing for my family and am no longer homeless.**”



Tim Fawcett, Scientific Director for the BioTechnical Institute of Maryland teaches students basic laboratory protocols.

## Biotechnology

### Baltimore BioPrep

*Region: Baltimore*

Led by the BioTechnical Institute of Maryland, Baltimore BioPrep provides a combination of classroom and hands-on lab skills training to prepare individuals for entry-level careers in biotechnology. In 2021, Baltimore BioPrep placed 93% of its graduates into employment with an average starting wage of \$21 per hour. Notably, thirteen different industry partners hired graduates, some of whom were taking

advantage of this talent pipeline for the first time. The partnership continues to experience great success with its Career Mentor Program, which matches recent graduates with program alumni to provide mentoring and support over a twelve-month period. Baltimore BioPrep received continued funding in June of 2021, which will be used to support 50 additional students.

**Participant Success Story:** “BTI has changed my life considerably. Career choices aside, attending the program has presented me with knowledge I never expected to have or retain. I have gained patience, mental fortitude, and a host of other beneficial traits from attending the program. My thanks go to my teachers and all employees who take part in BTI.”

## BioTrain

*Region: Montgomery*

In collaboration with employer partners, such as AstraZeneca, the National Institutes of Health, and the United States Department of Agriculture, BioTrain continues to respond to the ever-changing needs of the industry. With an unusually high number of individuals looking to change careers due to COVID-19, BioTrain launched an EARN-funded bootcamp in June of 2021 targeting individuals displaced by the pandemic. The bootcamp focuses on basic laboratory skills, reinforced by hands-on exercises, and exposes students to basic regulatory practices. To date, six students have obtained employment, hired by employers such as Thermo Fisher and Texcell. Additionally, the partnership remains focused on incumbent worker training, providing several sessions in 2021. BioTrain hopes to hold two additional bootcamps in the coming months.

**Participant Success Story:** Sarah worked in hospitality for over twenty years before she found herself unemployed due to the pandemic. A relative told her about the bootcamp being offered at Montgomery College. She enrolled in training, and soon after completion, obtained employment as a Manufacturing Associate with a local company.



Students participating in the biotech bootcamp offered by BioTrain.



## Baltimore BioTechnology Strategic Industry Partnership

*Region: Baltimore*

Led by Baltimore BioWorks, this partnership provides customized training to meet the needs of its more than 40 employer and industry partners. Training ranges from basic techniques and instrumentation to bio-manufacturing. In response to employer demand, clean room training, which significantly enhances the employability of students, was launched in 2021. The partnership also works closely with Baltimore City Community College, utilizing funds to support degree and certificate training in Laboratory Animal Sciences and Biotechnology. Since inception, the partnership has helped nearly 400 individuals obtain employment, some of whom have also continued to further their education. The partnership received continued funding in July of 2021 to support an additional 43 students.

**Participant Success Story:** Travis lost his job due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Devastated and unsure about how he was going to pay his bills, he learned about the training offered through the Baltimore BioTechnology SIP. Travis enrolled and successfully completed training. Soon after, he obtained full-time employment at Land-O-Lakes, earning \$25.00 per hour plus benefits.

## Green

### Clean Energy Training Partnership

*Region: Howard and Baltimore County*

Led by Power52, in close collaboration with more than 30 industry partners, the Clean Energy Training Partnership is preparing unemployed and underemployed individuals for careers in the solar industry. The program, which is accredited by the National Center for Construction, Education & Research (NCCER), includes 225 hours of classroom instruction,



A graduate of the Power52 program proudly poses at graduation.

OSHA 10, 75 lab hours, and 20 hours of job readiness training. Power52 is committed to increasing the number of women in the industry, which is evidenced by an average of 30% female representation in the last two cohorts. Nearly 100 individuals have obtained employment after completing this training. The partnership received additional EARN funding to continue training into 2022, which will support 38 learners.

**Participant Success Story:** Frank, an Army Veteran, was working in a warehouse when he enrolled in training. Though apprehensive at first, he showed up every day with a positive attitude and excelled in training. Soon after graduation, Frank accepted a position with Lumina Solar, where he currently works as a lead maintenance technician.

## Solar Installation Training Partnership

*Region: Baltimore City*

The Solar Installation Training Partnership, led by Civic Works, is providing in-demand training to unemployed, under-employed, and incumbent workers. Participants in the entry-level training receive safety training, hands-on practicum, and 320 hours of on-the-job training. As of this report, 90% of those who completed training have obtained employment averaging nearly \$16 per hour. Employer partners also identified a need to upskill their current workforce in topics such as leadership, project management, energy analysis, and sales skills. To date, more than 80 incumbent workers have received training in skills necessary to advance to higher-skill positions within the workforce. The partnership will receive additional funding in January of 2022 to train an additional 36 individuals.

**Participant Success Story:** Coming into the program, Shyquan knew what he was looking for: “I wanted a career, not just a job,” he said. Shyquan excelled in the program, gaining industry-recognized certifications such as the OSHA 30-hr Construction Safety credential, and valuable hands-on experience in the solar sector. In addition to the technical skills, Shyquan also highlighted the soft skills and supportive services he was able to access through the program, such as work-readiness training and comprehensive case management. “Job readiness is one of the most important skills I gained during the training,” Shyquan said. “People might do stuff that makes you mad, and you have to learn how to react.” Shortly after graduating, Shyquan was hired by Allan Myers, where he makes at least \$17/hour. He is currently in the process of earning his commercial driving license and aims to continue learning as much as he can every day.

## Wor-Wic Welding SIP

*Region: Eastern Shore*

The demand for welders and metal fabricators on the Eastern Shore is expected to skyrocket emerging offshore wind industry. In preparation of this demand, the Wor-Wic Welding SIP demand training for entry-level positions. The partnership offers two training tracks. The first course that teaches stick, flux core, MIG, and TIG welding. The newly implemented metal fourteen weeks and prepares students to earn up to ten OSHA certifications. To date, more have obtained employment with employers such as Chesapeake Shipbuilding, Delaware and Cambridge International. The Wor-Wic Welding SIP was awarded additional funds, which beginning in January of 2022.



A student from the Wor-Wic Welding SIP hones their craft.

**Industry Feedback:** “With new industries and opportunities coming to the area, along with all the current industry, this program allows these students to not only succeed, but helps them to grow. This program fills a void in the pool of surrounding employers with individuals that are trained and ready to work on day one. I interact with hundreds of companies all over the Delmarva Peninsula and they all have one thing in common: **the hardest part of their business is finding skilled people ready to work. I see daily, firsthand, how this program is helping employers out with this problem.**”



## Solar Installation Training and Examination Partnership

*Region: Western Maryland*

The Solar Installation and Training Examination Partnership, led by Hagerstown Community College, is responding to the needs of its employer partners by providing training to unemployed, underemployed, and incumbent workers. To date, nearly 30 incumbent workers have received training. In 2021, the partnership offered Construction Equipment Operator training and a pre-apprenticeship program in close collaboration with the Independent Electrical Contractors and Associated Builders and Contractors. Job placement is ongoing. Though the COVID-19 pandemic hindered the partnership's ability to provide training behind the fence in 2021, activity is expected to resume in 2022.

**Participant Success Story:** Danny was unemployed when he enrolled in the Construction Equipment Operator training in March of 2021. Two weeks after completing training, he was hired by an excavation company earning \$21 per hour.



A student poses with training equipment at Hagerstown Community College.

## Energy Efficiency Strategic Industry Partnership

*Region: Baltimore City*

Led by Civic Works, the Energy Efficiency Strategic Industry Partnership is providing training to unemployed, underemployed, and incumbent workers. Unemployed and underemployed participants receive relevant technical training and earn certifications including the Department of Energy (DOE) 56-hour Weatherization Installer Fundamentals certification, OSHA 30-hour Construction Safety, EPA 8-hour Lead Renovation, Repair, and Painting, and OSHA 4-hour Mold and Asbestos Awareness certification. Incumbent workers receive training in leadership, project management, energy analysis, and sales skills. To date, more than 150 participants have been placed into employment and nearly 140 incumbent workers have received training. The partnership received funding which will support an additional 36 students in 2022.

**Participant Success Story:** Prior to enrolling in Civic Works, Nyeshia was facing several systemic barriers to finding family-sustaining employment. It was difficult to find employment with a justice-involved record, and her options were further limited by transportation barriers, including a suspended license and lack of a vehicle. Once enrolled, Nyeshia thrived in the Energy Efficiency Technician Training Program. She quickly gained the industry-recognized certificates, valuable hands-on training, and work experience necessary to excel in the energy efficiency sector. Regarding the supportive services Civic Works provided, Nyeshia also identified several that were extremely helpful. "Transportation and food assistance were huge," she said. "But the biggest help was expunging things off my record." After graduating from the training program in March 2020, Nyeshia was rapidly hired by Bomark, where she made \$13.50/hour before being promoted to an Apprentice making \$16.25 per hour. As part of her promotion, Nyeshia is enrolled in a four-year electrical professional development program. She just completed her first year at the top of the class, with an average score of 95%. Moving forward, Nyeshia wants to focus on finishing her program, improving her credit score, and buying property.

## Water and Wastewater Career Development Partnership

*Region: Statewide*

The Water and Wastewater Career Development Partnership, led by the College of Southern Maryland, includes employers such as the Departments of Public Works for Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Charles, and Calvert counties. A relatively new mandate requires all Water and Wastewater Operators to become fully certified in order to retain employment. However, an estimated 62% of test takers fail the exam on their first attempt. This partnership is providing the necessary training to help better prepare test takers for the exam, including a math review and specific exam preparation. Since its inception, nearly 450 individuals have participated in training.

## Healthcare

### Community Health Workers Partnership

*Region: Western Maryland*

Led by the Asian American Center of Frederick, this partnership is providing training to grow the number of Community Health Workers (CHW) in Western Maryland. Students are able to obtain employment in a variety of settings, ranging from hospitals to Local Health Departments, and make a meaningful impact in the community, providing services to marginalized populations. The program recently received accreditation as a CHW Certification Training Program, receiving approval from



Student from the Asian Center of Frederick.

the Maryland Department of Health. Since inception, nearly 50 individuals have obtained employment and almost 30 incumbent workers have benefitted from training.

**Participant Success Story:** A single mother of two young boys, Michelle knew she needed something more than a minimum

wage job to support her family. She enrolled in the CHW program in March of 2020. Though it was not easy balancing being a mom and her classwork, she studied hard and completed the program. She earned her professional certification and is currently employed by the Housing Authority of Frederick as a CHW.

### Baltimore Healthcare Partnership

*Region: Baltimore*

The Baltimore Healthcare Partnership, led by the Baltimore Alliance for Careers in Healthcare (BACH), continues to closely partner with all of the major healthcare employers in Baltimore City and a wide array of community-based organizations. To meet employer demand and provide a pathway to a sustainable healthcare career, the partnership is providing training to unemployed, underemployed, and incumbent workers. Based upon employer feedback in 2021, the partnership offered training to prepare students for the following positions: Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA), Geriatric Nursing Assistant (GNA), Patient Care Technician (PCT), Certified Medicine Aide, and Medical Assistant. Since BACH's inception, more than 600 individuals have obtained new employment positions. The partnership recently received additional funding, which will allow nearly 150 individuals to be trained through 2022.

**Participant Success Story:** "I was so excited to get into the CNA training program with BACH. I worked previously with Genesis for over a year in Dietary, but I wanted so much more for myself. I have always had a great relationship with the residents and employees at Franklin Woods. I wanted to be more hands-on with the residents and now since I have graduated from BACH as a CNA I can be. The COVID-19 environment is nerve wracking for sure, but I knew what I was getting into as my sister is a Registered Nurse. I really love what I am doing - the training has helped me understand what it really means to care for another person. I am quite tired at the end of the day, but have never been so happy in a job. I am looking forward to moving up in the future in healthcare."

### Healthcare Partnership of Prince George's and Charles Counties

*Region: Prince George's, Charles, and Anne Arundel counties*

Led by It Works Learning Center, this partnership provides training for direct care positions, such as CNA, GNA, and PCT. The partnership works closely with an array of large employer partners, including FutureCare, Brightview Senior Living, and the University of Maryland Medical System. In 2021, with the support of EARN funding, It Works was able to expand its geographic reach to serve Anne Arundel County residents and employers. The partnership has served as a key tool for helping its partners alleviate critical staffing shortages, placing nearly 80 individuals into employment since the pandemic began.

**Participant Success Story:** Sarah and her husband AJ were diligent students who completed training, but then became unresponsive to It Works staff. When they finally got in touch, It Works staff learned that Sarah had experienced a heart attack soon after graduation. Her husband was caring for her. With the ongoing support of It Works staff, once she was cleared for work, Sarah immediately obtained employment. AJ followed suit shortly thereafter.

### Healthcare Mentorship Maryland

*Region: Baltimore Region and Western Maryland*

In 2021, Healthcare Mentorship Maryland, led by Pressley Ridge, continued to provide valuable training opportunities to youth ages 18-24. Employer partners such as Johns Hopkins, Genesis Healthcare, Sinai Hospital, and Western Maryland Health System work closely with the partnership to identify training that is relevant to their current needs. Over the last year, Healthcare Mentorship Maryland has

delivered training to prepare individuals to become CNAs, GNAs, and PCTs. Since inception, the partnership has placed more than 150 individuals into employment, which equates to a 93% placement rate for those who complete training. In 2022, Healthcare Mentorship Maryland will train an additional 50 students and expand offerings based upon employer demand.

**Participant Success Story:** Emily is a long-term client of Pressley Ridge. She spent time in the foster care system and participated in Pressley Ridge's mother-baby program as a single mom. The first time she enrolled in the healthcare training, she was not successful and dropped out. However, with the support of the Pressley Ridge team, she re-enrolled a few months later. Then a mother of two, Emily was fully invested in training. She completed the training program, earned her certifications, and is now gainfully employed in healthcare.

## Ready to Care

*Region: Eastern Shore*

Led by the Eastern Shore Area Health Education Center, Ready to Care continues to collaborate closely with Cecil College, Chesapeake College, and Wor-Wic Community College to provide training that prepares unemployed and underemployed individuals to enter the healthcare field. Employer partners have indicated that retention rates have risen, which may be attributed to the availability of a pipeline of highly qualified workers. Since inception, nearly 140 individuals have obtained employment as a result of EARN funding.

**Participant Success Story:** "I am so grateful for this funding! It has literally changed my life. I will tell everyone I know about this amazing opportunity and how [EARN] funding can change their lives as well!"

## Baltimore Regional Healthcare/Higher Education SIP

*Region: Baltimore*

The Baltimore Regional Healthcare/Higher Education SIP, led by Humanim, offers a 9-week training to prepare participants for careers as administrative assistants in the healthcare and higher education fields. Students have the opportunity to earn industry-recognized certifications, including Microsoft Office and the Professional Certificate of Excellence from the Association of Administrative Professionals. In addition, the program provides coaching, essential skills training, and comprehensive wraparound services. In 2021, the program expanded to Harford County, with the first cohort launching in November. To date, 70 individuals have obtained employment with employers such as Johns Hopkins Health System, University of Maryland Medical System, and Towson University. The partnership received additional funds which will allow training to continue into 2022.



A graduate from the Humanim Administrative training program receives her certification.

**Participant Success Story:** Sarah, a new American, was interested in enrolling in the training offered by Humanim. However, due to her language skills, she struggled to receive the necessary score for entry on the TABE test. Humanim referred her to Strong City Baltimore, where she received coaching that allowed her to receive a high enough score to be accepted into training. She excelled, earned industry-recognized certifications, and began employment soon after graduation.

## Maryland Direct Support Professional (MDDSP) Training Consortium

*Region: Montgomery*

In 2021, the Maryland Direct Support Training Consortium continued to provide training for individuals currently employed as DSPs, individuals who support people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. This training is meant to stymie the high attrition rates in the profession by providing a career pathway and mentoring support. Employer and industry partners report improved business outcomes, including cost savings, increased productivity, and, most importantly,



an average 14% increase in retention rates. To date, the partnership has trained more than 200 DSPs. SEEC, the Lead Applicant for the partnership, was selected as a winner of the Administration for Community Living's (ACL) Blazing New Trails for Community Based Direct Support national competition.

**Industry Feedback:** “The MDDSP II program has been a huge asset to our company and staff. Our staff here at Spring Dell Center, Inc. have found the information to be very helpful and insightful. I have become a trainer within the last year and enjoy seeing how much stronger staff within our agencies have become with their knowledge base on the subjects that we teach.”

## Specialized Nursing Bridge Program

*Region: Montgomery County*



Nurse preceptor from Adventist receiving the DAISY Award which honors extraordinary health-care workers.

The Specialized Nursing Bridge Program, led by Adventist, continues to work to increase retention among first year nurses through their nurse preceptor training program. Individuals who serve as preceptors play a pivotal role in the successful onboarding of new nurses, while providing quality patient care to individuals in facilities. On average, the program has a significantly lower attrition rate as compared to nurses who do not enroll in the program. Employer and industry partners believe that investing time and resources into new nurses not only leads to improved quality of care and the safety of patients, but as a byproduct, leads to a significant increase in nurse retention. To date, nearly 400 individuals have received training.

**Participant Success Story:** “Marcia was a great preceptor for me, and having her be my preceptor for the first half of my orientation was amazing. I think Marcia being my first preceptor really set my standards high for what type of nurse I want to be. She took the time to show me how to do things correctly

and always explained things thoroughly until I understood completely. Even though now I am working night shift and Marcia works day shift, I look forward to getting or giving report to/from her, and I always can count on her for any questions I may have.”

## PharmaTech Connect

*Region: Baltimore City*

PharmaTech Connect, led by Goodwill Industries of the Chesapeake, continues to prepare students for careers as pharmacy technicians. The intensive pre-certification training program includes Pharmacy Calculation, CPR training, and Pharmacy Theory. Following the classroom training, students begin a five week Pharmacy Technician Clinical, provided by CVS Health, where they are able to hone their technical skills. PharmaTech Connect partners closely with Associated Black Charities on a mentoring program that supports students during and after training. Since inception, the partnership has placed more than 40 individuals into employment. The partnership received additional EARN funding in July of 2021, which will support training for 60 students.

**Participant Success Story:** In January 2021, Angela enrolled in the training supported by PharmaTech Connect with the goal of finding employment that offered career advancement opportunities. She had minimal work experience and primarily worked temporary positions that lacked growth potential. Demonstrating perfect attendance and a willingness to learn, Angela remained committed to the training. During her externship, she learned inventory, prescription drop-off and pick-up, and customer assistance. Soon after completing training, Angela began her employment as a pharmacy technician at a Target CVS location earning \$14 per hour. She has obtained her Maryland Board Pharmacy Technician license, reports increased self-confidence, and looks forward to pursuing her national pharmacy technician license.



## Manufacturing

### Susquehanna Manufacturing Coalition

*Region: Susquehanna*

Led by the Susquehanna Workforce Network, this partnership continues to meet the needs of its employer partners, including W.L. Gore, Nu-Tek Precision, and PlastiPak Packaging, by providing an array of training opportunities to unemployed, underemployed, and incumbent workers. Manufacturers in the region continue to struggle to attract individuals to entry-level positions. Thus, the Susquehanna Manufacturing Coalition is providing Production Technician training, which gives students the necessary foundational skills to obtain employment. At the same time, the need remains to upskill incumbent workers. To date, nearly 70 individuals have obtained employment and 60 incumbent workers have received training, increasing their skillsets and becoming more valuable to their employer. In 2022, the partnership will use funding to train nearly 30 individuals and establish a Manufacturing Navigator, whose role will be to increase awareness of the industry in the region.



A student from the Susquehanna Manufacturing Coalition poses with her certification.

**Participant Success Story:** Jose was unemployed when he began Production Technician training funded by the Susquehanna Manufacturing Coalition. He successfully completed training and earned a certificate. Before he had completed the training, he had already successfully landed a position as a Senior Lab Technician earning nearly \$60,000 annually.

### Careers in Manufacturing Program

*Region: Baltimore City*

Based upon feedback from members of their Industry Advisory Council, which includes representation of 16 employers, the Jane Addams Resource Corporation (JARC) continues to provide in-demand training to support the needs of manufacturers. In addition to technical training, the Careers in Manufacturing Program offers intensive essential skills training and comprehensive wraparound services. To date, the partnership has placed nearly 150 individuals into employment. Additionally, manufacturers identify a need to upskill their current workforce. As such, JARC works with industry partners to develop customized curriculum that will meet their unique needs. The partnership has trained more than 90 incumbent workers. In 2022, the Careers in Manufacturing Program will continue its work with new funding to train an additional 70 individuals.

**Participant Success Story:** Aja came to JARC Baltimore after struggling with homelessness and participating in a transitional housing program called Community Wellness. She was living in a two bedroom apartment with her wife and three children when she began welding training at JARC. She excelled in training, earning several certifications, including the American Welding Society certification, Lock Out/Tag Out certification, and OSHA 10. After graduating, Aja landed a job at Strum Contracting, where she makes \$23/hour. Aja said, **"I went from making \$10 in the beginning of the year and now I'm making over \$20. It's life changing."**

### Manufacturing Bootcamp and Incumbent Worker Training Program

*Region: Statewide*

Led by the Maryland Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP), the goal of this project is to help Maryland manufacturers grow their workforce, increase profits, and improve processes. To meet these critical goals, MEP has worked with over 100 manufacturers to identify areas of opportunity. To meet the increased demand for workers, MEP launched the Manufacturing Community-Jobs Connection Program in 2021, meant to bridge the gap between community-based organizations and the manufacturing industry. The program provides education, awareness, and opportunities for jobs in manufacturing. In 2021, one company in desperate need of employees was able to leverage the program to hire seven individuals starting at over \$15 per hour. The partnership also continued to provide relevant training opportunities to upskill

incumbent workers. Topics included leadership, organizational development, hazardous emergency training, and computer aided manufacturing. The partnership recently received funding that will allow an additional 200 individuals to participate in training over the next year.

**Industry Feedback:** “MEP’s valuable partnership has helped Miltec tremendously in 2021. With the labor market shortage, we had to reskill and cross-train employees to cover customer demand. The training reimbursement offered by MEP allows us to assist our staff with gaining new technical skills, which is also a huge boost to employee engagement. In addition, the internship program reimbursement allowed us to hire summer help in a very specific technical area to propel a new technology forward and meet our business goals. As a small manufacturer in Maryland, MEP is my “go to” resource to help us operate efficiently, train our employees, and grow our profits.”

### **PrintSIP**

*Region: Statewide*

PrintSIP leverages space provided by county school systems to deliver training. With ongoing COVID-19 restrictions for much of 2021, the partnership was unable to implement training. The partnership hopes to continue training in 2022 as restrictions are lifted.

### **Washington County Manufacturing Partnership**

*Region: Western Maryland*

The Maryland MEP continues to engage nearly 30 manufacturers in Western Maryland, including Jamison Door, Canam Steel, and Rust-oleum, to meet their workforce needs. Overwhelmingly, these employers identify a need to upskill their current employees in response to an aging workforce. As such, this partnership is focusing on training incumbent workers. In 2021, training topics included leadership, sales, and electrical safety. To date, nearly 600 incumbent workers have received training, leading to increased skillsets and improved business outcomes for employer and industry partners. Additionally, MEP partnered with Hagerstown Community College to purchase Certified Production Technician curriculum to be utilized at the Maryland Correctional Training Center. As part of a larger Integrated Education and Training (IET) pilot program with Labor’s Correctional Education team, students enrolled in the manufacturing course will simultaneously be working towards earning their GED®. Upon release, the Maryland MEP will partner with Labor’s Re-entry Navigators on job placement.

### **Advanced Manufacturing and Plastics Partnership**

*Region: Baltimore*

The Maryland Advanced Manufacturing and Plastics Partnership, led by Berry Plastics, was on hold in 2021 due to competing priorities. The partnership focuses on upskilling incumbent workers. Due to staffing shortages, employer partners were unable to commit to sending students to training. The partnership hopes to continue training in 2022.

## Rapid Advanced Manufacturing Partnership

*Region: Statewide*

As manufacturers continue to invest in new technologies and processes in advanced manufacturing, this partnership seeks to help develop and support training in topics such as lean, additive, automation, maintenance, machining and welding to help manufacturers to be successful. To that end, the partnership focuses on training incumbent workers in a variety of topics, including supply chain, inventory management, and lean. The partnership also tries to address the challenge of attracting young talent to the industry through their internship program. The goal of the program is to expose students to the manufacturing industry and the opportunities available. In 2021, the program had its largest cohort, with 28 interns placed with manufacturers across the state. The partnership received additional funding, set to begin in January of 2022, to train 180 individuals.

**Industry Feedback:** “The Rapid Advanced Manufacturing Partnership has allowed Better Engineering to invest in advanced lean training for our employees which resulted in significant impacts for our company including improving our processes, strategic planning, supply chain management, and employee motivation.”

## Automated Facilities and Logistics Technician Program

*Region: Baltimore*

The Automated Facilities and Logistics Technician Program, led by CCBC, had limited activity in 2021 due to COVID-19 restrictions and difficulty securing an instructor. The partnership hopes to resume training early 2022.

## Curtis Bay Industrial Training Partnership

*Region: Baltimore*

The Curtis Bay Industrial Training Partnership is implementing a customized training program for a consortium of chemical and process manufacturing employer partners in the Curtis Bay area of Baltimore. In 2021, the partnership offered training to more than 200 incumbent workers. Training topics including basic mechanics, chemical hazards, and pump installation.

## Construction

### Project JumpStart

*Region: Baltimore City*

In July of 2021, after a fifteen-year partnership, the Job Opportunities Task Force (JOTF) and the Associated Builders and Contractors announced that they would be ending their partnership related to Project JumpStart. JOTF is currently exploring new service delivery models and partnerships in order to continue their mission to eliminate barriers and increase access to skills training, job opportunities, and higher wages for low-income workers in Maryland. A new program is expected to launch in 2022.

**Participant Success Story:** “Before Project Jumpstart, I spent seven years in prison for a first-degree assault. Not long after I got out, I found myself wanting to go back. Being a free man was extremely hard. I felt like I had the weight of the world on my shoulders. For the first time, I just met my son who was ten years old, my parole officer was pressuring me to get a job, and my old friends were welcoming me back to the street life. I tried and tried to get a job; every application I filled out got denied because of my criminal record. Feeling defeated and rejected by society once again, naturally the easiest thing for me to do was to go back to the street life. It is the only thing I was familiar with. Just before I made the terrible mistake of going back to the streets, I was introduced to Project JumpStart. Because of JOTF, I am alive and well today. Just two years ago, I was headed down a black hole. I am currently employed with Apollo Diversified Mechanical Insulation Company. I have two weeks left of class A CDL truck driving school, in the process of buying a house, and I cannot wait to welcome my first daughter! Life has never been better for me.”



## Suburban Maryland Construction Initiative

*Region: Central Maryland*

Led by the Finishing Trades Institute, the partnership trained nearly 80 incumbent workers in 2021. Training included teaching the proper and safest way to inspect and utilize Mobile Elevated Work Platforms, and included the most up-to-date OSHA regulations and ANSI standards for these machines. This will ensure contractors and their workers are in compliance. The partnership also held a pre-apprenticeship training for eight individuals, all of whom were unemployed when training began. Students had the opportunity to earn an array of industry-recognized certifications, including OSHA 10, Fall Protection, and First Aid/CPR. All students were placed in the glazing industry earning nearly \$20 per hour and will become registered apprentices with the Maryland Apprenticeship and Training Council.

**Industry Feedback:** “EARN has transformed the way that the Finishing Trades Institute approaches workforce development. There is no doubt that our members are more highly skilled as a result of our participation in the program, helping our contractors to become stronger and more profitable.”

## Remediation and Construction Industry Partnership (RCIP)

*Region: Baltimore City*

Given the feedback from its employer partners, the RCIP led by Civic Works is providing in-demand training to grow the pipeline of qualified workers to be Brownfields Remediation and Stormwater Management Technicians. Participants earn a plethora of certifications including EPA Asbestos Supervisor, Lead Abatement Worker, OSHA 40 Hour Hazardous Site Worker Protection and Emergency Response, OSHA Confined Space Operations, OSHA Bloodborne Pathogens, and OSHA Fall Protection. To date, nearly 160 individuals have obtained employment, earning an average starting wage of more than \$16 per hour. Civic Works continues to partner with Baltimore Gas and Electric and celebrated the 100th graduate of the program in October of 2021. The partnership received additional funding which will support the training and education of 50 individuals in 2022.

**Participant Success Story:** Johnathan graduated from the RCIP Module 1 Remediation and Infrastructure Training in March 2021. He attributes much of his success to his own mental stability and the generosity of his support systems, particularly his mother and brother. His brother Shyquan, (also highlighted), recently graduated from Civic Works himself and was the one who recommended the program to him. Johnathan had just returned to society after serving nine years in prison and was searching for a job that would pay livable wages. “I was in prison for so long that it was like a new world when I came home,” he said. “I looked for work as soon as I [did], but it was mostly handy jobs, and COVID slowed things down so much, like getting an ID or license.” When Johnathan learned more about Civic Works and its opportunities, he decided to apply for the program. Upon enrollment, Johnathan excelled in the program, gaining several industry-recognized certifications and valuable hands-on experience in the utility infrastructure sector. He dedicated himself to



Students from the Remediation Construction Industry Partnership pose at graduation.

learning everything he could about the industry. Shortly after graduating, Johnathan was hired by Stella May Contracting, Inc., where he currently makes \$17/hour as a Meter Painter. Johnathan aims to keep learning everything he can about the industry and obtaining more licenses, with the hope of one day starting his own business.



## Creating a Pipeline for Green Jobs

*Region: Anne Arundel County*

Led by AAWDC, this partnership seeks to provide students with the basic construction skills, essential skills, and hands-on experience necessary to obtain employment. In 2021, the partnership further cultivated its partnership with the Independent Electrical Contractors' Chesapeake chapter, providing pre-apprenticeship training. In 2022, the partnership will continue to explore how to increase the number of apprenticeship opportunities to the clients they serve.

**Participant Success Story:** Marcus, 20, was unemployed when he began the pre-apprenticeship program in May of 2021. Upon completion of training, he was hired as an apprentice making \$18 per hour.

## Marine Trades Industry Partnership

*Region: Statewide*

Led by the Marine Trades Association of Maryland (MTAM), the Marine Trades Industry Partnership continues to work diligently to meet the needs of its more than 90 employer partners. Incumbent worker training remains a high priority in the industry. To date, close to 200 individuals have received training in a variety of topics, including Yamaha Outboard Repair, Travel Lift and Hydraulic Trailer Operation, and Marine Systems. Additionally, like many of the skilled trades, the marine trades is experiencing difficulty recruiting a pipeline of workers to fill the positions of retiring baby boomers. As such, the partnership continues to implement their successful internship program. Students learn technical skills and receive hands-on experience with industry employers. In the partnership's most recent grant, 90% of the individuals who completed internships accepted full-time employment in the industry. The partnership will continue its work in 2022.

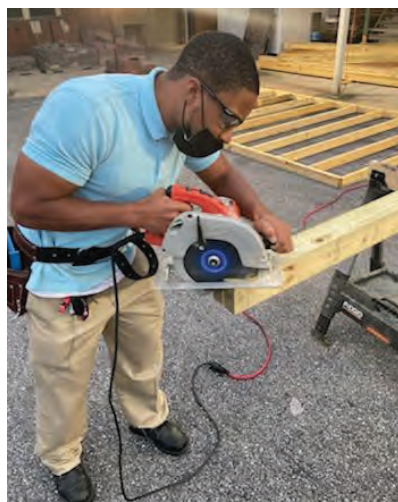


A student from Marine Trades Industry Partnership poses with his employer.

**Industry Feedback:** "We have gained a valuable asset to the harbor. Coty continuously exceeds our expectations in every project he takes on, and all the while doing it with a strong work ethic and positive, can-do mentality. I just hope that, through MTAM's workforce development efforts, we are able to find more prospects for the industry like Coty."

## Eastern Shore Construction Alliance

*Region: Eastern Shore*



A student from the Eastern Shore Construction Alliance perfects his technical skills through hands-on training.

The construction industry on the Lower Eastern Shore is poised for growth but hampered by the lack of a skilled workforce. In response to feedback from its eight employer partners, this program provides a comprehensive, holistic curriculum that addresses the multi-faceted challenges to retaining a highly qualified workforce, including specific skills training in construction and job readiness skills. Students hone technical skills by completing hands-on projects, including drywall and cabinet installation. The partnership recently updated the curriculum, adding introductory content around plumbing and electrical skills to ensure students have a well-rounded experience.

**Industry Feedback:** "The quality of individuals from Wor-Wic's construction program is high. The graduates are a real asset to my company."

## Herbert J. Hoelter Vocational Training Center SIP

*Region: Baltimore City*

This partnership addresses the need for vocational training programs for unemployed and underemployed Baltimore City residents. With a focus on serving returning citizens and veterans, the partnership provides three different training tracks: Automotive Repair and Refinish; Commercial Driving; and Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration (HVAC-R). The 13-week training program includes theory-oriented, hands-on curriculum that provides students with the skills and industry-recognized certifications necessary to thrive in these careers. Since inception, the partnership has placed more than 80 individuals into employment with a number of employer partners.

**Participant Success Story:** After spending thirteen years incarcerated, Marcus enrolled in the program soon after being released. He completed CDL training, earned his license, and is currently employed.

## Global Resource for Academic and Career Excellence

*Region: Baltimore City*

Led by the Virginia Grant Foundation, the Global Resource for Academic and Career Excellence partnership provides students with construction skills training, where they receive safety training, including First Aid/CPR and OSHA 10. Students also receive intensive supportive and wrap-around services. Upon completion, trainees are connected with Registered Apprenticeship opportunities. The second cohort launched in mid-2021, with two students obtaining employment as of this report.

**Participant Success Story:** After obtaining his high school diploma, Malik found himself working a job with a limited career trajectory. He heard about the GRACE program from his grandmother, and enrolled soon after. During the Plumbing Pre-Apprenticeship program, he earned industry-recognized certifications such as OSHA 10 and First Aid/CPR. After completion of the program, Malik was accepted into the Maryland Plumber-Heating-Cooler Contractors, Inc. Apprenticeship Program. Shortly thereafter, he received a full-time Year-1 Apprentice employment opportunity, which is full-time with benefits at the initial rate of \$15.00 per hour.

## Susquehanna HVAC-R Partnership

*Region: Susquehanna*

Employers in the Susquehanna region report a critical shortage of HVAC-R installation technicians. In response to the lack of skilled workers, this partnership is providing pre-apprenticeship training to unemployed and underemployed individuals. In addition to the fundamental concepts regarding HVAC-R installation, repair, and maintenance, individuals receive supplemental math, reading, comprehension, and essential skills training. This partnership remained on hold in 2021 due to COVID-19 but expects to continue training in 2022.

## Construction Workforce Partnership of Southern Maryland

*Region: Southern Maryland*

This partnership is providing invaluable training that targets unemployed, underemployed, and incumbent workers in the construction industries. The Pre-Apprenticeship program prepares students with basic construction skills and provides the opportunity to earn industry-recognized certifications such as OSHA 10, CPR/First-Aid, and NCCER. To date, 27 students have obtained employment. The partnership is also delivering safety training for incumbent workers, with more than 90 individuals participating as of this report. The partnership will continue to offer training in 2022.



A student enrolled in the Finishing Trades Institute receives guidance from his instructor.

## Architectural Metal and Glass Initiative

*Region: Central Maryland*

The goal of the Architectural Metal and Glass Initiative, led by the Finishing Trades Institute, is to ensure that industry partners have a highly-skilled workforce to grow and be successful. In 2021, the partnership focused on providing training to incumbent workers and individuals who were laid off due to COVID-19. Such topics as OSHA 30, fall protection, welding, and automatic door training were included. The training delivered allows contractors to be more competitive and increases the likelihood of bidding for and winning new projects. The training also helps workers maintain employment, increases their employability, and advances their careers within the industry.

**Industry Feedback:** “Meeting the industry needs during a pandemic enabled the Finishing Trades Institute to showcase our dedication to the industries that we represent. It also allowed us to utilize all the tools and equipment around us to not only meet the benchmarks set, but surpass them. EARN has provided a space for the FTI to make the necessary advancements of our SIP and we are grateful of the opportunities that EARN has provided us.”

## Pre-Apprenticeship Construction Training Program

*Region: Baltimore*

Led by the Living Classrooms Foundation, this program seeks to provide construction skills training to unemployed

and underemployed Baltimore City residents. The students receive instruction based upon the NCCER Construction Skills Curriculum and participate in essential skills training one day per week. The partnership works closely with Commercial Construction, who won a bid to serve a pivotal role in the Perkins-Somerset-Oldtown (PSO) Choice Neighborhoods redevelopment initiative. To date, 11 students have obtained employment. The partnership will continue training in 2022.

**Participant Success Story:** Tarik was a diligent learner, maintaining near perfect attendance throughout training. He eagerly engaged with the instructors, guest speakers, and other trainees during classes and workshops. His efforts were rewarded with a job offer upon graduation with Commercial Construction, where he earns \$15 per hour.

## Automotive

### Automotive Technicians for Change

*Region: Baltimore*

Led by Vehicles for Change, this program is training returning citizens to be automotive technicians. Automotive Technicians for Change, which lasts for up to six months, operates as a simulated work environment and provides hands-on experience and training, preparing interns to earn ASE certifications. The program offers comprehensive barrier removal and essential skills training, which is vital to participant success upon completion of the program. In 2021, the program implemented several changes to



programming, including updating curriculum to include experience in the retail/service center, and an incentive plan based on attendance and the number of industry recognized certifications earned. Since program inception, nearly 170 individuals have obtained employment. In October, the partnership expanded its geographic reach, launching a training program in Prince George's County.

**Participant Success Story:** Prior to enrolling at Vehicles for Change, Tim maintained minimum wage jobs. As a single dad, he knew he needed more stability for his children. He enrolled in the Automotive Technicians for Change program. He excelled in the program, and soon after completion became employed as a Maryland State Inspector who is responsible for determining if vehicles meet all standards for road safety.

## Childcare

### Montgomery Alliance for Early Childhood Education

*Region: Montgomery*

Employers in the childcare industry report a critical shortage of qualified workers to fill open positions, a situation made worse by the pandemic. To address this need, this partnership, led by Montgomery College, is offering courses that lead to the industry-recognized Child Development Associate certification. Job training, English language skills development, basic education, and workforce readiness are part of this structured curriculum. Though COVID-19 restrictions have hampered students' ability to be observed in a childcare center, and thus earn their credential, the partnership continues to support these students. To date, 27 individuals have obtained employment. The partnership received additional funding in July of 2021, which will support 20 new learners.

## Hospitality



FoodWorks students receiving feedback on their dishes.

### FoodWorks Culinary Training Program

*Region: Baltimore*

Led by the MFB, this partnership provides 12 weeks of training to prepare individuals for culinary careers. Students have the opportunity to learn about food safety, kitchen equipment, and knife skills, and hone their knowledge through hands-on experience. In a given cohort, the students prepare on average 20,000 meals for food-insecure communities, maximizing the impact of this program. In April of 2021, FoodWorks launched its first satellite class at the Under Armour House at Fayette in partnership with the American Heart Association. Since becoming an EARN partner in 2018, FoodWorks has helped nearly 70 individuals obtain employment.

**Participant Success Story:** As his high school career was coming to an end, Manny wondered about his next step. A chef from FoodWorks did a demonstration at his school, and from then on, he had his answer. "As he was cooking, and talking about the versatility of FoodWorks, I was hooked on the idea that I could be just like him," Manny said. Soon after completing FoodWorks training, Manny began his career at Guinness. He is currently on track to be the youngest sous chef in the company's history, and recently returned to FoodWorks to share his experience with current students.

### Building Employer-led Alliances for Careers in Hospitality

*Region: Eastern Shore*

Led by Wor-Wic Community College, this partnership continued to support the hospitality industry on the Eastern Shore, which has been particularly hard hit by the COVID-19 pandemic. Over the last 18 months, the partnership has provided customer service training, which is tailored to include topics pertinent to the pandemic. The partnership also utilized



funds to support the Ocean Downs Casino, providing training for furloughed staff that allowed them to return to work in different roles. Though the partnership is not pursuing additional EARN funding at this time, the relationships formed as a result of this effort will allow training to continue, as necessary, into the future.

**Industry Feedback:** “The more locals we can hire, the better the benefit for the Eastern Shore. It helps to keep money local and jobs local, which, in a smaller area like the Eastern Shore, is priceless.”

## UTILIZING DATA

EARN Maryland’s workforce training plans are intended to be data-driven to ensure that industry’s most pressing workforce needs are met and that its trainees are well-positioned for meaningful employment. The requirements contained within the Solicitation for Implementation Grant Proposals mirror the enabling statute’s contingent funding requirements of evidence of workforce shortages and a demonstrated need for worker training. The Winter 2021 Solicitation for Implementation Grant Proposals requires that the Workforce Training Plan developed with Implementation Grant funds be both data-driven and experience-driven:

- Data-based evidence of shortages in skilled employment within the target industry over a sustained period of time or as projected, based upon planned large-scale programs or large-scale industry changes, and identification of specific high-demand occupations or sets of occupations at different skill and salary levels within the identified target industry.
- Real experiences from target industry employers regarding actual and projected gaps in skills training and job readiness. In development of the plan, prospective grantees should focus on ways to obtain input from a broad base of employers in their target industry and region in order to define common workforce needs. Some industries may have more internal data whereas other industries may rely more heavily on the experience of industry partners.
- Both qualitative and quantitative measures are important. Strategic Industry Partnerships should take into account both qualitative data provided by the target industry through varied collection methods (interviews, surveys, focus groups, roundtable discussions, etc.) and quantitative labor market and industry-specific data. Consideration may be given to such issues as understanding high demand occupations in industry, projected job growth by occupation, analysis of gaps between supply and demand of employees, understanding the root causes of these gaps, and characterizing the needed skills to close any gaps.

Applicants must prepare a Data Source List that includes all existing data sources that were used to support the development of their proposal. This information will be included in the EARN 2022 Annual Report.



Graduates of the Eastern Shore Construction Alliance pose with their certificates.

## CONCLUSION

As is evident throughout the pages of this report, EARN continued to transform the lives of many Marylanders, despite the COVID-19 pandemic. In the coming year and beyond, as the State continues to recuperate from this unprecedented crisis, industry-led programs such as EARN will be key in helping businesses to recover while putting Marylanders back to work.

## APPENDIX A

In order to ensure accountability, the Department requires EARN Maryland Partnerships to comply with specific reporting requirements. These measures are meant to track the metrics set forth in the Labor and Employment Article §11-709(b)(4) of the Maryland Annotated Code. Statutorily required data is presented below. The data below covers the time period July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021.

### By Sex

SEX	# OF PARTICIPANTS	PERCENTAGE OF WHOLE
Male	2,740	58%
Female	1,989	42%
Not specified	32	1%

### By Race

RACE	# OF PARTICIPANTS	PERCENTAGE OF WHOLE
White	1,526	32%
Black/African American	2,417	51%
Asian	233	5%
Native American/American Indian	16	<1%
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	5	<1%
Hispanic/Latino	295	6%
Two or More Races	121	3%
Other	76	2%
Not Specified	72	2%

### By Income

INCOME LEVEL	# OF PARTICIPANTS	PERCENTAGE OF WHOLE
Less than \$10,000	1,812	38%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	148	3%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	354	7%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	510	11%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	491	10%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	702	15%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	271	6%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	158	3%

INCOME LEVEL	# OF PARTICIPANTS	PERCENTAGE OF WHOLE
\$150,000 to \$199,999	59	1%
\$200,000 or more	25	1%
Unreported or Incalculable	231	5%

## By National Origin

NATIONAL ORIGIN	# OF PARTICIPANTS	PERCENTAGE OF WHOLE
American	3,664	77%
North American (excluding USA)	85	2%
Central and Latin America	121	3%
European	101	2%
African	418	9%
Middle Eastern	43	1%
Asian	149	3%
Oceania	3	<1%
Two or More Identified	14	<1%
Other	38	1%
Not reported	125	3%

## By County of Residence

COUNTY OF RESIDENCE	# OF PARTICIPANTS	PERCENTAGE OF WHOLE
Allegany County	78	1.6%
Anne Arundel County	295	6.2%
Baltimore City	1,263	26.5%
Baltimore County	670	14.1%
Calvert County	13	0.3%
Caroline County	11	0.2%
Carroll County	55	1.2%
Cecil County	72	1.5%
Charles County	95	2.0%
Dorchester County	1	0.1%
Frederick County	356	7.5%
Garrett County	4	0.1%
Harford County	190	4.0%
Howard County	119	2.5%
Kent County	15	0.3%
Montgomery County	532	11.2%
Prince George's County	446	9.4%
Queen Anne's County	18	0.4%
Somerset County	15	0.3%
St. Mary's County	17	0.4%

COUNTY OF RESIDENCE	# OF PARTICIPANTS	PERCENTAGE OF WHOLE
Talbot County	9	0.2%
Washington County	131	2.8%
Wicomico County	35	0.7%
Worcester County	47	1.0%
Outside of Maryland	154	3.2%
Not reported	95	2.0%

### By Educational Attainment

EDUCATION LEVEL	# OF PARTICIPANTS	PERCENTAGE OF WHOLE
Some High School or Less	113	2%
High School Diploma/GED/Equivalent	1,845	39%
Some College	969	20%
Associate's Degree	320	7%
Bachelor's Degree	922	19%
Advanced Degree (Master's, PhD, other)	396	8%
Trade School	156	3%
Other/Undisclosed	40	1%

**Credential or Certification – 1,979**

**Identifiable Skill – 2,843**

**A new Employment Position – 1,384**

**A Title Promotion – 253**

**A Wage Promotion – 1,213**





