

2023

**WORKFORCE INNOVATION
AND OPPORTUNITY ACT**
Annual Report



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MARYLAND ANNUAL REPORT
Workforce Innovation and
Opportunity Act Titles I and III
Program Year 2023



Wes Moore
Governor



Aruna Miller
Lt. Governor

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Secretary

MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

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MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

DIVISION OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND ADULT LEARNING

MISSION STATEMENT

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

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



January 31, 2025

On behalf of Governor Wes Moore, I am pleased to share Maryland's Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Program Year (PY) 2023 Annual Report Narrative – Titles I and III. This publication describes Maryland's successful job placement and training activities for the period of PY2023, the time period from July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2024, as required by United States Department of Labor's (USDOL) Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 5-18.

In this report, we present information on the successful implementation of programs that served a range of populations who faced barriers to employment, such as:

Youth: The State applied \$4,058,884 from WIOA Governor Set Aside funds in PY23 to support Summer Youth Employment programs in all 13 of Maryland's local areas, serving 7,503 youth across the State, including 241 youth with disabilities. The Maryland Department of Labor (MD Labor) entered into an interagency agreement with the Maryland Department of Justice to provide \$355,388 to increase the number of juvenile justice involved participants in Summer and Year Round work based learning experiences.

Returning Citizens: Maryland employed dedicated Reentry Navigator staff who serve all thirteen local areas, interfacing with inmates in correctional education programs, local detention centers. These Navigators are a critical point of contact to American Job Centers (AJCs) as well as the business community.

Individuals struggling with Substance Use Disorder (SUD): The state awarded Support to Communities grant funding enabled Baltimore City's workforce board to hire a Certified Peer Recovery Specialist, who serves as a liaison between behavioral health treatment providers, patients in treatment, and the career center located in East Baltimore.

The report also chronicles Governor Moore's swift response to the historic collapse of the Franklin Scott Key bridge. Under Governor Moore's leadership, MD Labor utilized three and a half million dollars in USDOL funding awarded under a Dislocated Worker grant to provide temporary relief to Port workers who lost work and income due to the reduction in Port operations, and also provided urgently needed funding to employers that enabled them to keep workers on the payroll through the work interruption.

I am proud to include information on the ongoing and unprecedented growth of Maryland's Apprenticeship and Training Program, which reached a total of nearly 12,500 registered apprentices during the report period. We strategically integrated the apprenticeship model into numerous workforce initiatives to expand the pool of highly skilled workers available to employers in an increasingly diverse array of industries and occupations.

As you will see, the common thread that runs throughout the report is our commitment to creatively directing resources to develop a workforce prepared to reach its full potential, and a talent pool that allows businesses to compete in the global marketplace. In every effort, our activities served to expand access to work, wages, and wealth, to build an economy that works for everyone.

Best regards,



Portia Wu
Secretary
Maryland Department of Labor

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

Maryland did not have any waivers in place related to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) for PY23.

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

States must select two of the three measures below to report on for PY 2023. Maryland has chosen to track and report on all three measures.

WIOA Effectiveness in Servicing Employers Measures

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

4.c Include brief descriptions of: (a) current or planned evaluation and related research projects, including methodologies used; (b) efforts to coordinate the development of such projects with WIOA core programs, other state agencies and local boards; (c) a list of completed evaluation and related reports and links to where they were made accessible to the public electronically; (d) State efforts to provide data, survey responses, and timely site visits for Federal evaluations; and (e) any continuous improvement strategies utilizing results from studies and evidence-based practices evaluated.

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

In partnership with the Governor's Workforce Development Board, the Maryland Department of Labor (MD Labor) will soon conduct a study to evaluate certain components of workforce development activities within the WIOA system. The State is in early stages of organizing itself on the evaluation goals, methodologies used, whether a procurement will be used to manage the evaluator selection, etc.

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

Maryland will build on its existing evaluative work this coming PY and intends to engage the forthcoming GWDB System Governance workgroup in this effort to coordinate the development of future projects in partnership with WIOA core programs, other agencies, and local boards.

To date, evaluation efforts have primarily centered on the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA)

program, which is offered in partnership by Labor's Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning and Division of Unemployment Insurance. The evaluation seeks to help Maryland to understand the customer experience and related outcomes, including a look at key data systems, such as the Maryland Workforce Exchange and the Division of Unemployment Insurance's BEACON UI system.

In addition, the MD Labor has strategically partnered with its Maryland Longitudinal Data System (MLDS) Center to better understand outcomes for program participants over time. Through working to securely share data on WIOA participants, community college students, incarcerated individuals, and registered apprentices, the State can better understand long-term outcomes of participants beyond the required timeframe of WIOA reporting.

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

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

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

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

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

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

In the context of RESEA, the Process Analysis Report notes the disparities between RESEA data in the Employment and Training Administration 9128, the Participant Individual Record Layout (PIRL), and program administrative data. These sources should be harmonized, or the differences should be explained. Perhaps the federally required formatting and timing of reports explains the differences, but each of these three sources gives a dramatically different picture of RESEA program activity in Maryland. MD Labor's Workforce Performance team chose to use the RESEA administrative data because it provides the most complete picture.

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

Staff from the Office of Program Evaluation and Government Accountability (OPEGA)/Department of Legislative Services met with MD Labor staff to learn more about Maryland's reemployment programs, with a focus on gaining a deeper understanding of claimant participation, how success is measured within the program, and what data collection methods are used.

Maryland participated in a USDOL panel hosted by ABT Associates - *Always Learning Something New: How Building a Culture of Learning and Evaluation Leads to Program Improvement*. The other States on the panel were Texas and Washington State. Maryland was recognized for sharing RESEA evaluation results with staff, improving processes based on results of the process improvement analysis conducted by the RESEA evaluation team, and for being one of the only States in the nation to reach all claimants through the Worker Profiling and Reemployment Services and RESEA programs.

MD Labor continued to administer the Workforce Data Quality Initiative (WDQI) grant during PY23. This grant supports activities to bring historical WIOA Title I and Title III data into the Maryland Longitudinal Data System (MLDS) and the development of a process for regular ongoing data submissions. Bringing data into MLDS allows Labor and outside researchers to better understand the impact of WIOA programming on wage and employment outcomes, as well as to explore other related outcome variables (e.g., higher education enrollment). The WDQI grant similarly supports bringing noncredit completion data from the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) into MLDS for similar analysis around wage and employment outcomes.

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

USDOL requires that States conduct customer satisfaction surveys for both job seekers and business customers. A survey was administered via an email solicitation with a link to an online survey delivered through Survey Monkey.

Jobseeker Customers Survey

For jobseeker customer satisfaction, 1,964 surveys were sent, and 71 responses were received - a 3.6% response rate. The customer satisfaction survey consisted of the following eight questions/statements:

1. What is your overall satisfaction with the services provided to you?
2. Considering your expectations of the services you received, to what extent have the services met your expectations?
3. How well do you think the services you received compare with the ideal set of services for people in your circumstances?
4. Staff was accessible when you had questions or needed assistance; i.e., your questions/ phone calls and/or emails were answered.
5. Staff had a genuine interest in serving you.
6. Would you recommend our services to a friend?
7. How helpful is the Maryland Workforce Exchange website?
8. Would you recommend the Maryland Workforce Exchange website to a friend?

The chart that follows provides information on the results of the survey:



Business Customers Survey

For business customers, a total of 958 employers that received staff-assisted services were contacted, with 42 employers responding, a 4.4% response rate. The employer survey consisted of the following seven questions/Statements:

1. What is your overall satisfaction with the services provided to you?
2. Considering your expectations of the services you received, to what extent have the services met your expectations?
3. How well do you think the services you received compare with the ideal set of services for employers?
4. Staff was accessible when you had questions or needed assistance; i.e., your questions/phone calls and/or emails were answered.
5. Staff had a genuine interest in serving you.
6. Would you recommend our services to your colleagues?
7. How helpful is the Maryland Workforce Exchange website?

The chart that follows provides information on the results of the survey:



While the results of the jobseeker and employer surveys were consistently positive, they do offer insight into areas that may require some growth and improvement. What stands out in these survey results is that our staff, our system, and the services provided were beneficial and valuable assets to our customers and employers alike.

As part of MD Labor's efforts to enhance and optimize the functionality of the Maryland Workforce Exchange (MWE), DWDAL's performance team facilitated focus groups to gather user feedback on MWE modules and explore potential future enhancements. Focus groups were offered as in person and/or hybrid sessions to seek diverse perspectives. The groups were divided into distinct user groups including, staff, jobseekers, employers and other stakeholders. Focus group sessions should be complete by spring of 2025.

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

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

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

1. Access to employment;
 2. Skills and credentialing;
 3. Life management skills;
- And by:*
4. Eliminating barriers to employment; and
 5. Strengthening and enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of Maryland's workforce system.

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

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

The CLO led a Professional Development and Technical Assistance Committee populated with representatives from a variety of workforce system partners to develop and distribute virtual professional development training across the State's workforce system. Nine professional development training modules are currently available to over 1,400 users representing more than 40 organizations in Maryland (including State agencies). The training modules teach, refresh and test the knowledge of workforce system staff on a range of programs and subjects within the State's workforce system. Each of the nine modules focus on a different aspect of the WIOA system, including topics such as the *Benchmarks of Success*, the *Governor's Workforce Development Board* (GWDB), and the WIOA Title programs (Titles I-IV). Additional topics and modules are developed on an ongoing basis based on staff needs. The modules have improved understanding and collaboration across all organizations engaged in the workforce system, allowing staff to better serve both job seekers and employers.

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

- A communications plan for sharing the *Benchmarks of Success* vision and updates, including monthly newsletters, videos, collateral materials, and presentations to Local Workforce Development Boards and other stakeholders;
- Collection and analysis of *Benchmarks of Success* data from the partner agencies, programs, and systems, including a baseline across the multi-agency system (in progress);
- Regional and Local Planning Guidance for WIOA Regions and Local Areas to correspond to the State Workforce Plan in 2018, 2020, and for 2022;

- A series of policy recommendations concerning: (1) jobseeker advisory groups: including customer voice in decision-making, (2) workforce solutions to the opioid epidemic, (3) youth apprenticeship, (4) transportation, (5) abating the benefits cliff, (6) measurable skill gain, and (7) engaging employers around priority populations;
- Creation of a CLO position to oversee professional development for the workforce system as a whole, as well as a professional development framework for the system; and,
- Research and recommendations regarding the continuation of virtual services for Maryland's workforce system, including Community Services Block Grant (CSBG), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment & Training (SNAP E&T) as partners in Maryland's Combined WIOA State Plan.

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

Maryland Apprenticeship and Training Program (MATP)

MATP made significant progress in implementing sector strategies and career pathways during PY23. The Registered Apprenticeship program was transferred from MD Labor's Division of Labor and Industry to DWDAL in October 2016. Since that time, Maryland has focused on making the MATP a key component of its workforce strategy.

Initially, MATP came to DWDAL with a total of three staff, 400 registered apprenticeship sponsors, and 8,500 apprentices listed. After a thorough evaluation, MATP was overhauled to bring the program into compliance and to help facilitate growth. This process has included reinitiating compliance and quality reviews of existing registered apprenticeship sponsors and provisional reviews of newly approved registered apprenticeship sponsors. As a result of these reviews, numerous overdue apprentices, cancelled apprentices, and apprentices who should have completed were found to still be on the apprenticeship roster. MATP staff worked with USDOL to adjust the new baseline number of registered apprentices to 7,340.

The process of conducting these reviews has continued, and as a result, 476 reviews have been conducted from January 2017 through September 2024. This process does more than just ensure that the apprenticeship program data is accurate or that apprenticeship continues to be the highest quality workforce training system. This process also provides sponsors and signatory/participating employers with the highest level of customer service. During the review process, sponsors/employers learn about grant opportunities, tax credits, local workforce areas, and Maryland business services. Direct interaction with the sponsors/employers has assisted them in expanding their existing apprenticeship programs, enhancing recruitment, and increasing diversity.

During PY23, MATP followed the program's standardized customer service approach, which included regular engagement with each Registered Apprenticeship Sponsor (business) and ongoing outreach to prospective new businesses. These engagements included site visits, round tables, industry conferences, and other events that brought together MATP staff and businesses to exchange information.

Maryland's high touch, sector-based approach continued to drive the growth of new registered apprenticeship sponsors in the program's history. There have been 212 new Registered Apprenticeship Sponsors added since November of 2016, with an additional 40 reactivated. Forty-one new programs were registered during PY23 alone. Additionally, Maryland has increased the number of apprentices working for businesses to over 11,500 as of June 30, 2024.

The diversity of Maryland's program has also improved. Of the 4,775 apprentices registered in PY23, 2,452 (51%) identified as racial or ethnic minorities, and 559 (12%) identified as female. Racial and ethnic diversity among apprentices continues to rise with incoming apprentices, with most programs meeting or exceeding the representation of minority groups in their local workforce. While there is still significant progress to be made to improve registration of female apprentices, the PY23 registrations exceeded previous years, marking steady progress towards inclusion goals.

The Maryland Works for Wind (MWW) program, led by Labor, is a prime example of a successful sector strategy approach aimed at supporting the emerging offshore wind industry while expanding apprenticeship opportunities.

To strengthen career pathways, the higher education community in Maryland has also been a focus for registered apprenticeship. Recognizing the strong ties between related instruction for apprenticeship and the college system, nine of Maryland's community colleges and the UMBC Training Centers have become registered apprenticeship sponsors for the first time in Maryland's history. These post-secondary institutions are now able to work directly with businesses on related instruction. They are also able to provide a pathway for their students, or the incumbent workers of their employer partners, to earn and learn, rather than only participate in the educational process with which the colleges are normally associated. Participating post-secondary institutions are enhancing their relationship with employers by maintaining the paperwork and registration components for the businesses.

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

Maryland has made great strides in making the case for youth apprenticeship opportunities. MD Labor has been proud to partner with the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) and the Department of Commerce in developing a youth apprenticeship program available for participating local Maryland school systems, with all 24 school systems being approved and participating.

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

During the 2023-2024 school year (SY), 979 students were registered as AMP Youth Apprentices, combined with continuing students who began in 2022-2023 (SY22-23), AMP exceeded 1,000 active apprentices by the end of SY23-24. Since inception, the AMP program has served 1,795 youth apprentices, with 1,441 reported completions and only 111 cancellations. More than 800 employers Statewide are approved to participate in AMP, with 286 employers hiring an apprentice in SY23-24. Importantly, the AMP program has made significant strides in diversifying Maryland's apprenticeship opportunities, both in terms of apprentice demographics and industry representation. Forty-two percent (42%) of AMP apprentices in SY23-24 worked for local, county, State or federal government agencies, while another 37% worked in education. Forty-six percent (46%) of AMP apprentices were female, compared to just 8% for traditional registered apprenticeship.

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



The Maryland Works for Wind (MWW) program, led by MD Labor, is a prime example of a successful sector strategy approach aimed at supporting the emerging offshore wind industry while expanding apprenticeship opportunities. MWW was built on the foundation of Labor’s nationally-recognized EARN Maryland program, which invests in Strategic Industry Partnerships (SIPs) that facilitate key relationships between employers, training providers, and local workforce boards. By incorporating organizations with a proven track record with EARN Maryland, MWW forms a strong ecosystem inclusive of employers, unions, workforce boards, business alliances, training providers, and sister agencies. The program places a strong emphasis on equity, selecting “Tier I” training providers based on their ability to deliver high-quality, industry-driven training and supportive services for individuals facing barriers to employment. In addition, the program incorporates five unions in “Tier II” to help upskill apprentices and journeymen for offshore wind jobs. This design fosters seamless collaboration between Tier I and Tier II grantees, ensuring that participants from Tier I programs are connected to Registered Apprenticeship pathways. In PY23, over 1,000 individuals were placed or upskilled into good-paying careers, with a majority of these individuals in Registered Apprenticeship programs. The MWW program reflects MD Labor’s commitment to scaling up successful workforce models like EARN Maryland and Registered Apprenticeships.

Youth Work Experience

MD Labor’s Statewide Disability and Youth Services Coordinator, the Division’s fiscal team, and monitoring and compliance team worked closely with youth program managers and vendor service providers to ensure local areas received the training and technical assistance they needed throughout the year to meet or exceed all programmatic, fiscal, and reporting requirements for PY 2023.

The State applied \$4,058,884 from WIOA Governor Set Aside funds in PY23 to support Summer Youth Employment programs in all 13 of Maryland’s local areas. This investment allowed us to serve 7,503 youth across the State, including 241 youth with disabilities. These opportunities provided Maryland youth as young as 14 with early exposure to the world of work.

MD Labor entered into an interagency agreement with the Maryland Department of Justice to provide \$355,388 to increase the number of juvenile justice involved participants in Summer and Year Round work based learning experiences. During PY23, the two agencies worked together to establish program parameters and the amounts distributed to each local area. Implementation began in the summer of 2024. Partnerships formed to support the connections with the business community and the general success of the initiative also include Maryland’s DHS, Department of Health and MDE DORS

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

MD Labor does not have an exception.

4.h The State's performance accountability system, including:

- (1) Any specific state performance measures or goals and progress towards meeting them.
- (2) Any performance deficiencies on the primary indicators of performance, which may include descriptions of any factors impacting performance.
- (3) The State's common exit policy, including which ETA-funded partner programs are included in the State's common exit policy.¹
- (4) Negotiated performance levels for local areas for titles I and III core programs for program years 2016-2017.
- (5) The State's approach to data validation and ensuring data integrity, including a description of the methodology of any validation activities that occurred.

Maryland's WIOA Performance PY 2023

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

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

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

WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Wagner Peyser Performance Measures

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

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

WIOA Youth Performance Measures

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

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

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

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

WIOA Effectiveness in Servicing Employers Measures

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

WIOA Negotiated Performance Targets and Results

The implementation of WIOA common performance accountability requirements has varied across titles of the core WIOA programs, including the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program and the Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG), due to variations in federal agency oversight, policy guidance, and related requirements.

When negotiating performance goals with the State, USDOL used:

- The levels involved compare with the negotiated levels of performance established for other States²
- The statistical adjustment model
- Continuous improvement
- Government Performance and Results Act goals

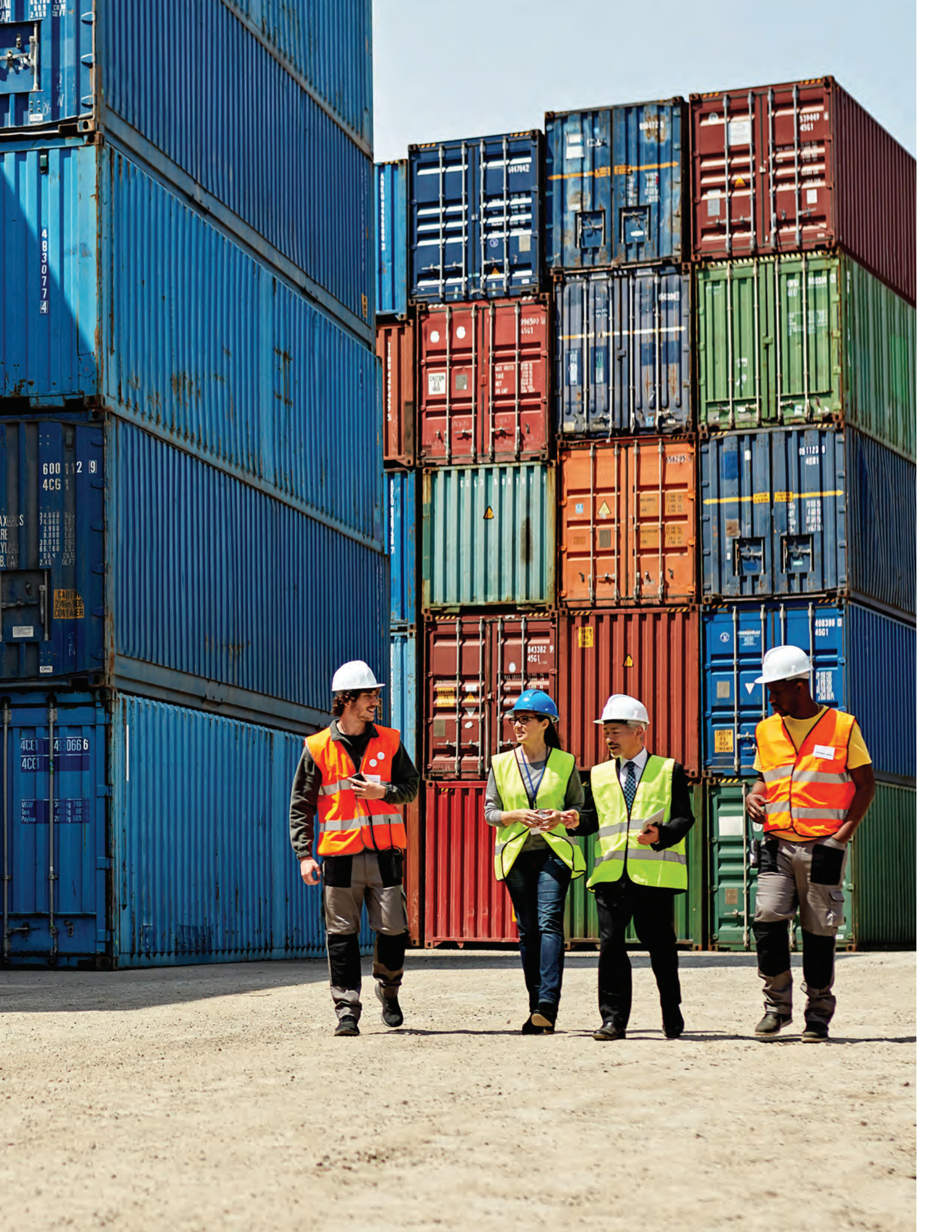
WIOA Assurance Statement

Maryland assures USDOL that all required elements of the PY2023 WIOA Annual Report have been reported accurately and uniformly to permit State-by-State comparisons across WIOA programs. The State assures USDOL that this report complies with the Act and federal regulations.

MD Common Exit Policy

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

2-The Departments will provide the most recent performance data for all States, including previous actual, negotiated, and adjusted levels of performance, and will use this information throughout the negotiations process.



Maryland Performance

Title I and Title III Performance - Maryland PY 2023

		Standard	MD Performance	% Standard Achieved
Employment Rate QTR2	Adults	76%	80.4%	105.8%
	Dislocated Workers	80%	81.5%	101.9%
	Labor Exchange	60%	66.6%	111.1%
Employment Rate QTR2	Adults	73.5%	79.1%	107.6%
	Dislocated Workers	77.5%	78.0%	100.7%
	Labor Exchange	60%	67.1%	111.8%
Median Earnings	Adults	\$6,500	\$9,360	144.0%
	Dislocated Workers	\$8,300	\$10,408	125.4%
	Labor Exchange	\$6,200	\$8,740	141.0%
	Youth	\$3,600	\$5,229	145.3%
Youth Education and Employment Rate QTR2		72%	79.6%	110.6%
Youth Education and Employment Rate QTR4		66%	80.0%	121.2%
Credential Attainment	Adults	62.5%	61.3%	98.0%
	Dislocated Workers	57%	66.9%	117.4%
	Youth	63.5%	73.5%	115.8%
Measurable Skills Gains	Adults	58.5%	75.9%	129.7%
	Dislocated Workers	59.5%	73.6%	123.6%
	Youth	55%	65.3%	118.8%
Employer Effectiveness Measures				
Retention With Same Employer			70.0%	Baseline
Penetration Rate			8.2%	Baseline
Repeat Business			25.9%	Baseline

Maryland exceeded 17 measures and met 1 based on the negotiated goals for PY 2023.

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

WIOA and Labor Exchange Title I Performance - Maryland and Local Workforce Development Areas - PY 2023

ROLLING 4 QUARTERS

		Standard	State Perform.	AA	BA	BM	CC	FR	HC	LS	MG	PG	SM	SQ	US	WM	State Standard	
Performance Measure				Perf.	Perf.	Perf.	Perf.	Perf.	Perf.	Perf.	Perf.	Perf.	Perf.	Perf.	Perf.	Perf.		
Employment Rate QTR2	Local Adjusted Employment Rate QTR2 Adult	76.0%	80.4%	80.3%	72.9%	79.8%	70.2%	70.4%	81.3%	75.0%	79.9%	76.3%	73.3%	81.2%	94.8%	90.2%	76.0%	
	Adults	76.0%	80.4%	80.3%	72.9%	79.8%	70.2%	70.4%	81.3%	75.0%	79.9%	76.3%	73.3%	81.2%	94.8%	90.2%	76.0%	
	Local Adjusted Employment Rate QTR2 DW			80.0%	80.0%	80.0%	80.0%	80.0%	80.0%	80.0%	80.0%	80.0%	78.0%	80.0%	80.0%	80.0%	80.0%	
	Dislocated Workers	80.0%	81.5%	81.0%	84.6%	77.9%	85.2%	86.7%	81.0%	100.0%	83.8%	75.0%	76.9%	75.0%	90.0%	80.0%	80.0%	
	Local Adjusted Employment Rate QTR2 LX			60.0%	60.0%	60.0%	60.0%	60.0%	60.0%	60.0%	60.0%	60.0%	60.0%	60.0%	60.0%	60.0%	60.0%	
Labor Exchange	60.0%	66.6%	66.0%	64.7%	68.7%	65.5%	67.0%	65.5%	73.9%	62.9%	63.5%	68.3%	66.6%	74.1%	65.7%	60.0%	60.0%	
Employment Rate QTR4	Local Adjusted Employment Rate QTR4 Adult			73.5%	73.5%	73.5%	73.5%	73.5%	73.5%	73.5%	73.5%	73.0%	73.5%	73.5%	73.5%	73.5%		
	Adults	73.5%	79.1%	79.9%	78.4%	77.3%	73.3%	76.5%	84.6%	82.9%	74.0%	70.5%	68.0%	78.8%	93.4%	78.1%	73.5%	
	Local Adjusted Employment Rate QTR4 DW			77.0%	77.5%	77.5%	77.5%	77.5%	78.0%	77.5%	77.5%	77.5%	77.5%	77.0%	77.5%	78.0%		
	Dislocated Workers	77.5%	78.0%	75.9%	80.0%	84.4%	94.4%	81.3%	80.6%	100.0%	73.1%	55.6%	69.0%	73.3%	76.2%	78.4%	77.5%	
	Local Adjusted Employment Rate QTR4 LX			60.0%	60.0%	60.0%	60.0%	60.0%	60.0%	60.0%	60.0%	60.0%	60.0%	60.0%	60.0%	60.0%	60.0%	
Labor Exchange	60.0%	67.1%	68.4%	64.8%	71.9%	65.8%	68.0%	68.9%	67.0%	62.5%	64.0%	69.9%	65.8%	72.3%	65.4%	60.0%	60.0%	
Median Earnings	Local Adjusted Earnings Standard Adult			\$7,500	\$7,200	\$6,300	\$6,400	\$7,400	\$6,550	\$6,000	\$7,000	\$8,000	\$6,000	\$8,250	\$6,500	\$7,000		
	Adults	\$6,500	\$9,360	\$9,626	\$9,180	\$7,783	\$8,114	\$9,796	\$9,674	\$9,183	\$10,556	\$10,426	\$5,746	\$10,704	\$9,338	\$8,802	\$6,500	
	Local Adjusted Earnings Standard DW			\$10,000	\$9,500	\$7,300	\$10,100	\$9,250	\$10,500	\$7,300	\$12,000	\$12,500	\$10,000	\$8,700	\$8,300	\$7,800		
	Dislocated Workers	\$8,300	\$10,408	\$9,774	\$14,363	\$6,316	\$10,400	\$12,112	\$12,562	\$9,895	\$12,364	\$10,050	\$5,908	\$14,350	\$11,768	\$9,876	\$8,300	
	Local Adjusted Earnings Standard LX			\$7,500	\$6,800	\$6,000	\$6,800	\$7,300	\$7,300	\$5,500	\$8,500	\$6,700	\$6,300	\$6,700	\$6,000	\$5,700		
	Labor Exchange	\$6,200	\$8,740	\$9,779	\$9,252	\$8,084	\$8,404	\$9,995	\$10,570	\$7,282	\$10,330	\$8,887	\$8,548	\$8,882	\$8,510	\$7,520	\$6,200	
	Local Adjusted Earnings Standard Youth			\$3,700	\$3,800	\$3,450	\$3,850	\$4,000	\$3,600	\$3,500	\$3,700	\$3,600	\$3,500	\$3,900	\$3,800	\$3,500		
Youth	\$3,600	\$5,229	\$7,499	\$7,167	\$4,821	\$5,928	\$5,456	\$7,582	\$4,920	\$5,404	\$4,524	\$3,820	\$4,673	\$4,376	\$4,378	\$3,600		
Local Adjusted Employment Rate QTR2 Youth			72.0%	74.0%	72.0%	71.5%	73.0%	72.0%	73.0%	71.0%	72.0%	73.0%	71.5%	73.0%	72.0%			
Youth Education and Employment Rate QTR2	Local Adjusted Employment Rate QTR2 Youth	72.0%	79.6%	84.7%	88.2%	80.9%	88.2%	41.7%	77.8%	61.9%	79.7%	73.4%	71.4%	87.0%	84.6%	77.8%	72.0%	
Youth Education and Employment Rate QTR4	Local Adjusted Employment Rate QTR4 Youth	66.0%	80.0%	87.2%	85.9%	76.9%	66.7%	100.0%	81.3%	71.4%	86.4%	75.0%	83.3%	72.7%	87.0%	77.3%	66.0%	
Credential Attainment	Local Adjusted Credential Attainment Adult			62.0%	62.5%	62.5%	63.0%	62.5%	62.5%	63.0%	62.0%	62.5%	62.5%	62.5%	62.5%	63.0%		
	Adults	62.5%	61.3%	63.8%	43.6%	43.7%	61.5%	41.2%	66.7%	70.0%	67.3%	54.4%	50.0%	78.9%	80.4%	77.4%	62.5%	
	Local Adjusted Credential Attainment DW			56.0%	57.0%	57.0%	57.0%	57.0%	57.0%	57.0%	57.0%	57.0%	59.0%	57.0%	60.0%	60.0%		
	Dislocated Workers	57.0%	66.9%	59.4%	57.1%	55.2%	64.7%	70.0%	64.0%	100.0%	80.0%	43.8%	61.1%	80.0%	85.0%	87.9%	57.0%	
	Local Adjusted Credential Attainment Youth			65.0%	66.0%	67.0%	63.5%	63.5%	63.5%	63.5%	64.0%	63.5%	63.0%	64.0%	65.0%	63.0%		
Youth	63.5%	73.5%	56.3%	69.8%	85.0%	75.0%	50.0%	66.7%	40.0%	68.8%	37.9%	100.0%	57.1%	81.8%	83.3%	63.5%		
Measurable Skills Gains	Local Adjusted MSG Adult			62.0%	63.0%	58.5%	63.0%	63.0%	58.5%	64.0%	60.0%	63.0%	60.0%	62.0%	60.0%	60.0%		
	Adults	58.5%	75.9%	71.0%	74.5%	75.0%	100.0%	89.5%	66.7%	89.5%	64.9%	76.7%	100.0%	72.2%	79.8%	78.9%	58.5%	
	Local Adjusted MSG DW			63.0%	64.0%	60.0%	64.0%	63.0%	61.0%	61.0%	64.0%	66.0%	59.5%	63.0%	64.0%	62.0%		
	Dislocated Workers	59.5%	73.6%	71.4%	70.9%	77.8%	85.7%	83.3%	67.4%	66.7%	74.0%	87.5%	40.0%	57.1%	70.0%	86.7%	59.5%	
	Local Adjusted MSG Youth			57.0%	56.0%	55.0%	57.0%	55.0%	55.0%	54.0%	64.0%	60.0%	55.0%	55.0%	61.0%	55.0%		
Youth	55.0%	65.3%	75.0%	77.9%	52.6%	90.0%	16.7%	60.0%	33.3%	75.0%	62.7%	100.0%	70.0%	81.1%	66.0%	55.0%		
Local Adjusted Employers																		
Retention With Same Employer		70.0%																
Local Adjusted Employers																		
Penetration Rate		8.2%																
Local Adjusted Employers																		
Repeat Business		25.9%																

Performance

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

Local Workforce Development Areas:

Codes for LWDA

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

Data Validation Process

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

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

Quarterly – The information from the extract file is checked against our state MIS system to ensure the information contained in all federal extract files are accurate. Data is reviewed for errors, inconsistencies, missing data out of range values and any anomalies. Local Areas are contacted to make corrections. This is done prior to the submission in the federal reporting system Workforce Integrated Performance System (WIPS). This proactive approach of reviewing records in our case management system compared to the data extract are conducted on a quarterly basis to ensure the local areas are aware of any issues and can receive technical assistance during the year.

The Monitoring and Compliance Unit then verifies the participant's eligibility against the source documentation to make sure all requirements have been met by reviewing a sample of the participant's records. Local Areas are required to address all findings and/or concerns identified in a timely manner. Monitoring staff verifies the corrections made to a finding or concern within the Maryland Workforce Exchange before the finding or concern is closed. In addition, on a quarterly basis, MD Labor will be providing grant recipients with feedback regarding their performance reports to aid in data integrity efforts and support data accuracy. Their analysis will include, but is not limited to, a review of the data submitted, anomalies and outliers, and other potential data quality issues, which may indicate reporting inaccuracies. On a quarterly basis this data will

be used by Performance for identifying and correcting errors to improve performance reporting and ensuring the data properly reflects the program participants, services, and outcomes.

Workforce Performance staff also use the WIPS logical value and data specification checks to identify issues and concerns. Local areas are contacted to make necessary data changes. Following USDOL's practice, Maryland conducts a regular data integrity review of program data quarterly to search for errors, missing data, out-of-range variances in values reported, and other anomalies. The WIPS system, along with the USDOL Quarterly Performance Reports, assist in this process. To process a clean data file, the MWE changes must be in place for any missing and erroneous data identified during the review process and ensure these were corrected in the system before the extract is submitted.

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

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

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

Reentry Navigators

Maryland has dedicated staff allocated for Reentry services in Maryland. The Reentry Navigators serve all thirteen 13 local

areas. They interface with inmates in correctional education programs (both academic and occupational), local detention centers and serve as the critical point of contact to American Job Centers (AJCs). In addition, Reentry Navigators interact with businesses who hire ex-offenders.

The main purpose of the initiative is to:

- Develop and administer connections between AJC, businesses, and correctional facilities to produce a credentialed, skilled work force benefiting workers and employers
- Assist returning citizens in reentry into the workforce in self-sustaining occupations
- Provide resources to aid in eliminating barriers to employment
- Ensure each returning citizen who requests employment services gains stable employment that fulfills their purpose and financial needs and enables them to maintain employment.

WIOA Performance 4th Quarter

Employment Rate QTR2	62.9%
Employment Rate QTR4	59.2%
Median	\$7,190

Maryland Business Works (MBW)

MBW is an incumbent worker training program administered by MD Labor's DWDAL. The program was established to support employer strategies for retention, growth expansion, and layoff aversion through upgrading the skills of currently employed workers of Maryland's businesses. The program's training funds are available to businesses serious about increasing employee productivity, upgrading the skills of current employees, and creating opportunities for expanding the existing workforce. Projects funded through MBW are focused on in-demand occupations and skill sets, as defined by businesses, and are intended to lead to potential career growth and increased wages for participating workers. Participating companies are required to match the funds provided by the MBW program for the actual training costs on a dollar-to-dollar basis. Companies pay for 100% of total training costs and then receive a 50% reimbursement by MD Labor upon successful completion of the trainee. Since April 2016, Maryland has invested a total of \$2.5 M of Governor set-aside funds in MBW. During PY 2023, 212 incumbent workers received training and industry recognized credentials with the support of the MBW program. A total of \$237,523.88 was spent for training—for an average cost per participant of \$1,120.39. Businesses increased wages for 209 individuals completing training, and 209 new hires were planned. In addition, registered apprenticeships utilized funding to train 192 registered apprentices in Maryland out of the 209 total individuals trained. Industries utilizing the grant included construction trades, manufacturing, IT/cyber, and professional services.

Apprenticeship

Maryland has used its Governor's Set Aside funds to support apprenticeship growth in a variety of ways, including three pilot activities described below.

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

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

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

- Be provided classroom time and space to work with instructors as needed on both the curriculum and hands-on labs.

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

Baltimore Alliance for Careers in Healthcare (BACH)

Maryland invested funds into BACH, recognizing the role that an apprenticeship intermediary in healthcare could have in accelerating awareness and uptake of the RA earn-and-learn model in this non-traditional sector.

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

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

BACH was awarded funding in the amount of \$481,609 over a period of two years beginning on March 21, 2022 and ending on January 31, 2024 to support the continuation and expansion of its Healthcare Apprenticeship Program. Under this grant funding, all five occupational apprenticeship programs became active, and 23 apprentices were enrolled (nine Environmental Care Supervisors, two Central Sterile Processing Technicians, three Licensed Practical Nurses, and nine Medical Assistants). BACH actively promoted apprenticeships throughout the Baltimore area. In August 2023 alone, BACH received 31 new inquiries into apprenticeships programs. The organization actively engaged in the State's observance of National Apprenticeship Week activities as another way to build momentum and awareness for RA in healthcare.

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

The Association of International Professional Accountants received a grant to support the cost of related instruction for a minimum of 25 new registered apprentices for the AICPA's Registered Apprenticeship Program. The apprentices study the Finance Leadership Program, which leads to the occupation of Finance Business Partner and the Chartered Global Management Accountant designation. The maximum allowable costs per new apprentice are \$4,795. As an intermediary and related instruction provider, the AICPA develops and updates related instruction to maintain a world-class global designation and ensure apprentices progress and succeed.

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

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

The Workforce Solutions to Address Homelessness pilot program was conceived by the Interagency Council on Homelessness's (ICH) Workforce Subcommittee. The goal of the pilot is to bridge the gap between workforce and homeless services on both a system and provider level. Using best practices put forth by the ICH and identified via a landscape analysis conducted by the Workforce Subcommittee, grantees were required to form comprehensive partnerships to coordinate the delivery of employment and related services to best meet the needs of individuals experiencing or at-risk of homelessness. Applicants could apply for up to \$200,000 to be spent across a three-year period. The pilot launched in October 2022 and will conclude in September 2025.

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

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

Maryland’s Workforce Development Response to Substance Use and the Overdose Epidemic

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

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

Labor received 33 applications from organizations across the State. The roughly \$1M made available through SRTE ultimately funded 11 behavioral health and social service organizations that provided services across seven different counties. Funded applications provided training in fields such as healthcare IT, manufacturing, construction, and peer recovery. Labor learned from previous grants with a similar scope and purpose that it was often more challenging to serve individuals with direct lived experience of addiction and recovery compared to individuals who had indirect experience through a family member or friend. To address this need, SRTE required that applicants must only use funding to provide services to people with personal experience of addiction and recovery. SRTE also increased the allowable cost per participant from \$6000 under OWIF to \$7500, thus allowing more resources to be directed toward wraparound supportive services. The grant period of performance took place between September 1, 2022 and October 31, 2023. By the conclusion of SRTE, 268 people had completed job training, 219 earned an industry-recognized credential, and 218 people were placed into unsubsidized employment.

Grantee	Geographic Area Served	Award Amount	Project Summary
Health Tech Alley	Baltimore City	\$89,320	Entry-level healthcare IT training, analytics, and HIMSS certification bootcamps. Job readiness training includes digital literacy and social capital building.
Helping Up Mission	Baltimore City	\$80,127	HUM provides wraparound support primarily to men in recovery who also have a history of homelessness. HUM contracted with providers to offer training in manufacturing, logistics, welding, and peer recovery.
Civic Works	Baltimore City	\$97,500	Funding to support training in two “sustainable careers”: solar technician and utility and infrastructure remediation.
The Jude House	Charles County	\$100,000	The Jude House is a residential SUD treatment facility that provides workforce development opportunities in areas such as peer recovery, CDL, and construction.
Tree of Hope Association	Montgomery County	\$74,998	Tree of Hope is the only drop-in recovery center in Montgomery County. They offer Certified Peer Recovery Specialist training and exam preparation assistance.

Historic East Baltimore Community Action Coalition (Dee's Place)	Baltimore City	\$97,142	Dee's Place is a Wellness Recovery Center that offers Certified Peer Recovery Specialist training. Funding also supported a "train-the-trainer" for staff to continue offering CPRS training once funds were exhausted.
Gaudenzia	Baltimore City Anne Arundel County	\$57,644	Gaudenzia is the largest non-profit provider of SUD treatment in Maryland. Funding supported a career pathway for incumbent workers in recovery to advance in title and wages.
PIVOT	Baltimore City	\$100,000	PIVOT is a re-entry program for women that offers work readiness programming, digital literacy, and job placement support.
Voices of Hope	Harford County Cecil County	\$99,633	Voices of Hope used funding to continue their successful peer recovery specialist training and to begin offering Community Health Worker training.
The Light House	Anne Arundel County	\$100,000	Funding supported food service and hospitality training within their social enterprise, The Lighthouse Bistro.
Centre de Apoyo Familiar	Prince George's County	\$100,000	Centra de Apoyo Familiar worked closely with faith-based partners and a MBE training provider to offer CDL training and job placement support.

Baltimore City Mayor's Office of Employment Development \$100,000

MOED received a grant in January 2023 to expand one-on-one services to individuals who engage with the career center and identify as someone in recovery from a SUD. As a result of their participation in the Support to Communities grant (USDOL ETA), MOED identified a need for rapid employment among individuals impacted by SUDs. MOED used this funding from MD Labor to hire a Certified Peer Recovery Specialist to serve as a liaison between behavioral health treatment providers, patients in treatment, and the career center.

The Peer Specialist was co-located twice a week at a drop-in recovery center in East Baltimore. The population served by the drop-in center varied from regular attendees of daily recovery meetings to individuals who came to the center once or twice for a specific need. The Peer Specialist provided services to any who requested employment assistance and most commonly helped with resume writing, career navigation, and goal setting. The grant concluded in May 2024 having achieved the following:

Participant/Activity Category	Cumulative Activity
Total # served	186
Total # referred to Train Up	110
Total # to receive career coaching	114
Total # to enter employment	23



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

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

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

The RR team confidentially meets with companies to assess potential layoffs and closings and work collaboratively to plan a response that meets workers' needs. Depending upon the needs of the impacted workers, coordination with other partners may be necessary or beneficial, such as DUI, the Veteran Services Unit, MSDE's Division of Rehabilitative Services, and/or the approved State of Maryland Contract Interpretation Services.

During RR events, participants receive information concerning the employment services and resources available through AJCs. Impacted workers are encouraged to visit their nearest AJC as soon as possible. Case managers are required to refer and co-enroll Trade Adjustment Assistance (Trade) Program participants in WIOA Dislocated Worker or other appropriate program to ensure optimal service delivery leveraging resources from Trade, discretionary grants, and WIOA Title I programs concurrently. Partner programs may be able to assist with participant assessments, childcare, travel costs, case management, on-the-job training, follow-up services not covered under Trade.

Maryland's Layoff Aversion services include strategies and activities to prevent or minimize the duration of unemployment resulting from layoffs. Related activities continue to be delivered in person, through town hall meetings, or in a virtual or hybrid format, to allow customers the maximum participation and flexibility to access services, which include the following:

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

During PY 2023, RR activities in Maryland included:

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

The Dislocation Services Unit (DSU) works jointly with the local business service teams to stay abreast of employment needs throughout the State and learn of any new industries potentially moving to Maryland.

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

Layoff Aversion

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

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

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

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

MD Labor leveraged its Wagner Peyser funds to augment staffing in the Tax Credit unit to certify applications more efficiently. Work Opportunity Tax Credit benefits are designed to incentivize businesses to hire individuals with barriers to employment or special needs. The addition of staff has allowed the unit to process applications faster.

Funds were also utilized to provide outreach to Migrant Seasonal Farmworkers (MSFWs), to distribute information regarding services available to eligible customers in the AJCs. Outreach to MSFWs was conducted by Regional Business Services staff during the peak season for farm work.

Registered Apprenticeship Navigators' functions were also supported utilizing Wagner-Peyser funds. These funds are leveraged to allow greater flexibility to work with other regional outreach staff to further the registered apprenticeship messaging beyond traditional apprenticeship employers. Use of Wagner-Peyser funds allows apprenticeship federal grant funds to be utilized to assist new program sponsors with funding initial projects. Navigators have transitioned to other federal and State grants in June 2024.

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

Support to Communities: Fostering Opioid Recovery Through Workforce Development

In September of 2020, MD Labor was awarded \$4,589,064 from USDOL to provide training and other services through the Support to Communities grant. MD Labor awarded funding to seven LWDAs representing 14 jurisdictions across Maryland that have experienced negative social and economic impacts due to the opioid crisis. More than 700 Marylanders are expected to participate in the new pilot program, which will provide participants with job training and recovery services, leading to employment in 14 high demand industries and occupations. As of June 2024, nearly 625 individuals completed training and over 485 entered employment. MD Labor was awarded a no-cost extension to continue the Support to Communities grant through December 31, 2024.

Port of Baltimore Dislocated Worker Grant

On March 26, 2024, the Francis Scott Key Bridge (“the Bridge”), which spans the Patapsco River between Baltimore City and Dundalk in Baltimore County, Maryland, collapsed after being struck by a large container vessel, blocking the shipping channel. Six construction professionals working on the Bridge at the time lost their lives and one was seriously injured. As a result, operations at the Port of Baltimore (Port) were significantly reduced. Governor Wes Moore declared a State of Emergency to coordinate the response to the incident. Recognizing the potential for significant economic impact for businesses and workers reliant on the Bridge – including employers at the Port, transportation and logistics businesses, and restaurants reliant on Port workers – Maryland acted swiftly to mitigate negative consequences.

On March 29, 2024 the United States Small Business Administration declared the incident an official economic disaster, allowing MD Labor to apply for a Dislocated Worker grant from USDOL. MD Labor was awarded \$3.5 million to provide employment and training activities and connect dislocated workers to disaster recovery employment. A portion of that funding was retained by the MD Labor to cover staffing costs for the Worker Support Program, which provided temporary relief to Port workers who lost work and income due to the reduction in Port operations following the Bridge collapse. The remainder of the funding went to the three local workforce areas most impacted by the collapse: the Baltimore City Mayor’s Office of Employment Development (MOED), the Baltimore County Department of Economic and Workforce Development (DEWD), and the Anne Arundel Workforce Development Corporation (AAWDC).

MOED and DEWD are both using funding to provide disaster relief employment opportunities. AAWDC is serving as the fiscal agent for disaster relief employment payroll expenses. All three LWDAs are also using funding to provide employment and training activities for dislocated workers. As of June 30, 2024, the LWDAs were still in the planning phase of their grant. The grant period of performance concludes on March 25, 2026.

Quality Jobs, Equity, Strategy & Training (QUEST) Disaster Recovery Dislocated Worker Grant

In September 2023, MD Labor was awarded \$3,925,086 to provide training and services through the QUEST Disaster Recovery National Dislocated Worker Grant. This grant is meant to support workers impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. MD Labor is utilizing the grant award to support two unique projects in partnership with four Local Workforce Development Boards.

First, the Western Maryland Consortium will provide Trade Adjustment Assistance-like services to workers impacted by dislocations in Garrett, Allegany, and Washington counties. The second project is focused on Anne Arundel County, Baltimore City, and Montgomery County, and will provide services to individuals recently released from incarceration. Subawardees will be responsible for providing training and supportive services, developing and/or expanding strategic partnerships, community and participant outreach, and business engagement. It is expected that at least 340 dislocated workers will be served over the grant period.

MD Labor spent the first several months of the grant award developing a policy which will guide all project activities. The policy, which was developed with significant stakeholder feedback, was released in March 2024. As of October 2024, more than 60 individuals have enrolled in training and 33 have received supportive services. Thirty-six individuals have completed training and 12 have obtained employment.

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

MD Labor strives to improve the lives of all Marylanders by implementing innovative, responsive practices that nurture an inclusive, skilled workforce, connect citizens to good jobs, and ensure businesses have the skilled workforce they need to compete in the global economy. Maryland's workforce system would benefit from technical assistance in several key areas to realize these goals.

Support for Building and Sustaining Healthy Partnerships

An overarching goal of WIOA is to ensure jobseeker and business customers have the fullest possible access to the services they need by effectively marshaling, integrating, and coordinating services available through the workforce system's complex network of State and local programs and agencies. To achieve this sophisticated level of organization, we need technical assistance (TA) in the form of policies, processes, and tools that guide and support collaboration, facilitate referrals, and meaningfully synthesize divergent performance metrics.

In concrete terms, TA will help us:

- Build system cohesion
- Align eligibility criteria
- Expand the network of partnerships to deliver holistic supportive services
- Align the goals of training institutions, business, and community organizations
- Develop a shared referral system and a method for implementing continuous improvement
- Develop shared funding schemes.

Support for Improved Data Infrastructure and Management

TA requests related to the State's need to improve data infrastructure and partner management include the following:

- Training and professional development for staff to improve service delivery and outcomes.
- Policy and process guidance and tools to help us ensure customers are gaining equal access to workforce development programs, particularly individuals with disabilities.
- Guidance and tools to help us effectively integrate and coordinate the services of workforce system partners so that customers can benefit from all of the available resources.



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

WAGNER-PEYSER EMPLOYMENT SERVICES | Serving the Community

Howard County Career Fair helps employers find qualified workers

The AJC in Columbia, Maryland, hosted a highly successful career fair in early July of 2023 that brought together eight major area employers and over 120 jobseekers. Staff representing both the Howard County Workforce Development system as well as Maryland's Professional Outplacement Assistance Center teamed up to help jobseekers maximize their success. MD Labor staff person Teresa Mena, who led planning for the event, sent out information in advance on how to effectively prepare for and participate in career fairs.

Jobseekers in attendance at the career fair had the opportunity to meet a group of outstanding local employers that included:

- US Cyber Command
- The Federal Highway Administration
- Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratory
- Howard County Government
- Howard County Fire and Rescue Services
- Maryland Department of Transportation
- The Columbia Association

Employers were seeking candidates to fill positions ranging from entry-level to high-level professional roles. Post-event survey responses from employers were very positive. At least three jobseekers received employment offers at the event!

ADULT SERVICES | Meet Amy

Incumbent worker receives training to advance her career.

Amy works for the Maryland Farm to Food program, part of the Maryland Food Bank. The Maryland Food Bank relies on donations and volunteers to provide food services to the needy, but they struggle with transportation challenges getting the food donations shipped to distribution areas on the Upper Shore. When Amy discovered she could be eligible for a scholarship through the Upper Shore Workforce Investment Board to participate in a seven-week CDL training that would allow her to drive the vehicles to pick up food donations, she jumped at the chance. “I am so glad I now have the CDL license to help the Food Bank,” said Amy. “Last week I hauled a tractor trailer load of potatoes from Baltimore to Dorchester County. It was a big deal because it was right before the holidays. A lot of people count on the Food Bank at that time of year. Not only that, but I can now help haul grain for my Dad and brother as well as another local farmer. Just my pure appreciation for the Upper Shore Workforce Investment Board! Thank you so much! I had no knowledge of this program prior to my application for the CDL program. I now tell anyone who asks me about how I paid for my CDL about the scholarship money!”

ADULT SERVICES | Meet One of Maryland’s Dedicated Reemployment Staff

Andrea comes up with creative solutions to reach jobseekers with transportation barriers.

Like MD Labor workforce staff across the State, Workforce Development Specialist Andrea Kenney sometimes needs to come up with creative solutions to get her customers the help they need. Although she usually leads reemployment workshops offered at the Salisbury, Maryland AJC, she was working with two jobseekers in August of 2023 who needed immediate assistance with interviewing skills ahead of upcoming job interviews. Unfortunately, neither had the transportation to meet Andrea at the AJC. To get these customers the help they needed to succeed, Andrea scheduled an AJC Mobile Workforce Unit to meet them at a local library they could both reach. Grateful for her support, they arrived on time, participated in mock interviews, and used the computers available on the mobile unit to print out paper copies of their resumes to distribute to their prospective employers at their scheduled interviews. Because they were meeting in person, Andrea noticed one of the jobseeker’s body language and encouraged her to sit up straight in her chair and make eye contact with the hiring manager during the interview to convey confidence. Both customers reported back within three weeks that they had landed jobs, and Andrea was thanked by the jobseeker whose posture she called attention to. Andrea shared that “she told me she was surprised at how different she felt about herself just by throwing back her shoulders. She credited that one factor as the most important part of convincing the employer she was the right person for the job.”

RECOVERY | Brooke’s House

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

Women in Western Maryland who are struggling with substance use disorder are grateful there is a place like Brooke’s House where they can find support. Located in Hagerstown, Maryland, the facility provides a clean, safe, and stable living environment for women in early recovery. Brooke’s House implements a recovery process based on three essential pillars: promoting recovery, addressing mental health, and offering real-world work experience through participation in social enterprises operated by the organization. These employment opportunities allow Brooke’s House residents to develop good work habits while pursuing recovery. As women progress through the program, they receive the tools and resources they need to transform their lives.

The Western Maryland Consortium (WMC) and Brooke’s House began working together a little over three years ago as part of MD Labor’s Support to Communities grant program. WMC used grant funds to support transitional work experiences, sponsor financial literacy classes, and offer a variety of trainings that helped women achieve self-sufficiency and long-term sobriety. Since the partnership began, WMC has enrolled 56 clients from Brooke’s House. Fifty-one have been successfully discharged with full-time employment.

The effective partnership between WMC, Brooke’s House, local employers, and the recovery community created a program that allowed women to break the cycle of addiction. The positive outcomes demonstrate that recovery is possible, and that including a focus on employment is an essential ingredient in success.

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

As Shelby finishes her year in the RFC program, she will also complete her last class to earn her college degree in Communications from Salisbury University! But her success story doesn't end there. She has also accepted a position as a Job Specialist II with MD Labor and will be working to help other Marylanders get back to work!

Looking back on her experience, Shelby says, "There are so many people willing to help, so many programs established to help those of us who want to live our lives differently in recovery. But it doesn't happen all at once. It's an ongoing journey that takes time and effort every day. The best opportunities I found have been entirely unexpected, and the RFC program is most definitely at the top of the list! Working with someone understanding and non-judgmental makes all the difference."

Jobs for Veterans State Grants | Meet Christopher

The JVSG program helped veteran Christopher Alley give back to the community that had supported him for so long.

Army veteran Christopher Alley was referred to the JVSG program through the Veteran Readiness and Employment Program, sponsored by the Department of Veterans Affairs, at the end of July 2023. By mid-August, Christopher was fully immersed in the case management process and working his way toward new gainful employment.

Christopher has over 32 years of military experience serving in the Active Army and the Pennsylvania Army National Guard, eventually retiring as an Active Guard and Reserve soldier. During his military tenure, he functioned as a Senior Small Group Leader, Operations Non-commissioned Officer, Quality Assurance Officer, and Chief of Training for a Basic Leadership Course. He found a home training other military members and was drawn to training and administrative occupational fields.

Christopher was motivated to find employment working with veterans. The JVSG Disabled Veterans Outreach Specialist (DVOP) Kevin Madara suggested that he apply to the upcoming position opening at the MD Labor for a DVOP/Local Veterans Employment Representative (LVER) in the State's JVSG program when it became available. Christopher did just that after the State job opened for application in mid-September. He had already established an updated résumé and had organized all of his service-related documentation, which helped him land an interview.

Mr. Alley interviewed for the LVER/DVOP position on October 20, 2023 and was offered the job. Mr. Alley is now part of the Western Maryland's Veteran Services team, functioning as a DVOP/LVER for the region with a home base in Hagerstown, Maryland.

Regarding the services he received through the Veteran Program, Christopher commented "I just put my faith in the Veterans Program to find a way to give back to the same community. I am enjoying my current position and look forward to the challenges it will bring."

BUSINESS SERVICES | Customized Recruitment

Local workforce system conducts extensive recruitment activities to help employers meet talent needs.

The Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command (NAVFAC) is a major employer in southern Maryland that operates facilities located in a region that spans both sides of the Maryland/Virginia border. NAVFAC Deputy of Public Works Officer James Thompson reached out to the Southern Maryland workforce development area's Business Engagement Specialist Jacklyn Chembars to help him address some serious staffing challenges confronting his organization. He had nearly 30 openings that needed filling immediately, in various construction-related positions.

After consulting with Officer Thompson to thoroughly understand his requirements, Jacklyn promptly started the ball rolling to organize a customized recruitment campaign for NAVFAC. She cast a wide net for talent with a series of four recruitment events, conducted in different locations throughout the region. Jacklyn partnered with the College of Southern Maryland (CSM) to secure space for three of the four recruitment events. CSM hosted one event at the college's Center for Trades and two additional events at CSM's Velocity Center.

Jacklyn and her team worked hard to promote the recruitment events, utilizing a variety of social media platforms, email communications, and other advertising avenues. The recruitment team fielded questions from interested jobseekers, conducted initial assessments of their employment needs, made referrals to partner services, as appropriate, and pre-screened potential applicants to ensure the recruitment produced quality candidates with the technical skills NAVFAC needed. They continued to accept incoming résumés via email, even after each event, to capture leads on candidates who were not able to attend the recruitment events due to schedule conflicts.

All the hard work paid off! In addition to 326 registrants (217 attended), another 61 jobseekers joined one of the recruitment events as walk-ins. As a result of the customized recruitment, NAVFAC extended 17 job offers, and 14 candidates were successfully onboarded.

REEMPLOYMENT SERVICES | Meet Janet

A Reemployment Opportunity Workshop (ROW) helped Janet replace discouragement with optimism, and gave her tools to succeed in her job search.

Janet had lost her job through no fault of her own and was receiving Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits through the MD Labor's Division of Unemployment Insurance. To help Janet return to work as soon as possible, the UI team referred her to the State's Reemployment Opportunity Workshop (ROW) program. Per instructions she received in the mail, Janet completed a registration on the Maryland Workforce Exchange and signed up to attend a ROW workshop offered through the American Job Center (AJC) in Wheaton, Maryland, facilitated by workforce specialist Richard Montalvo. Richard recalled Janet seeming depressed and withdrawn at the start of the workshop, a reaction he often encounters early in ROW sessions. As Richard began to draw Janet out of her shell, she shared that the job interviews she had been on so far hadn't gone well, and she was becoming discouraged.

Richard devoted an entire section of his ROW sessions to effective interviewing techniques. He couldn't help but notice that Janet was completely engrossed in the presentation, particularly when he discussed the importance of having a positive attitude, and preparing responses to interview questions to strategically highlight how her skills qualified her for the employment opportunity.

Janet left the workshop with a solid plan mapped out for a successful reemployment campaign – and much more up-beat demeanor than when she'd arrived. Following the workshop, she sent Richard the following note:

*Good morning, Richard,
First and foremost, thank you for facilitating a wonderful reemployment workshop (ROW) yesterday. Honestly, I wasn't looking forward to attending, as I have been very discouraged about my job loss and reemployment. However, you brought such positive energy and enthusiasm that opened the door for honest and helpful discussions. Yesterday's workshop was just the shot of adrenaline I needed. It made me realize it's imperative to have a positive attitude. And take a good look at how I am interviewing. As you mentioned in the workshop, we need to start with a realistic objective when it comes to our job search and then know the reason(s) why we are there. Again, thank you Mr. Montalvo, for making me feel hopeful. Keep up the good work.*

SPECIAL GRANT PROGRAM | Meet Ron

WIOA Discretionary Grant helps Ron and his wife finally get ahead.

Ron and his wife had always worked, but the low-skilled, minimum wage jobs they held kept them trapped in poverty. Things were finally starting to look up when Ron enrolled in a Registered Apprenticeship with Chaney Enterprises, a large east coast concrete supplier headquartered in Gambrills, Maryland. He was glad to have landed a good job on a career path, but he and his spouse were still struggling to make ends meet. Their paycheck-to-paycheck existence had never allowed them to save enough for the upfront costs required to rent an apartment, such as the security deposit, advanced monthly rent and utility deposits. They used their meager resources to secure extended stay motel rooms, and when they lacked even enough to pay for this shelter, they lived in their car – until Ron’s new employer found out about the situation.

As it happened, Chaney Enterprises had an unusual resource to help Ron. The company had recently been awarded a grant through the Jobs that Build (JTB) Employer Fund. MD Labor designed the JTB program, which utilized federal resources allocated to Maryland under the American Rescue Plan Act to support businesses in implementing creative solutions to address barriers significantly hindering workforce participation and retention. The fund prioritized employee support programs and payroll incentives as keys to increasing competitiveness to attract and retain the most qualified workers.

Ron’s new employer used money from their JTB grant award to immediately move Ron and his wife into an apartment. Not only was the pressing issue of housing immediately addressed but Ron was now able to put all his energy into focusing on his apprenticeship.

When management at Chaney Enterprises was asked why they elected to use the funding to address Ron’s housing challenges, they responded: “This funding provided a unique opportunity for us to look beyond the traditional role of an employer. Not only were we able to use the JTB grant to help retain apprentices by supplying completion bonuses, but it gave us a once in a lifetime opportunity to supply one of our apprentices with a career pathway and the stable housing situation he would need to be successful in it. At the same time, we are gaining a much-needed driver!”

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

While Maryland has shown consistent growth since the downturn of the pandemic, the State has come across a variety of challenges that must be addressed. In 2023, USDOL conducted a comprehensive monitoring of the State’s workforce system, resulting in a series of changes that must be made. These include updating certain policies, including a larger update of the policy process, correctly assigning roles and responsibilities between the Governor’s Workforce Development Board and MD Labor, and ensuring WIOA compliance for Local Workforce Development Areas. The Department is underway in resolving these findings but they will require significant staff effort and time to complete.

Additionally, the State faces the challenge of expanding workforce services while simultaneously facing a more restrictive funding environment. With the closure of the COVID relief funding, the State and Local Areas must find new sources of funding to continue certain programming. For example, MD Labor is committed to the expansion of Registered Apprenticeship Statewide, however, the rate of growth may be limited by the fiscal landscape. With a State goal of 60,000 Registered Apprentices by 2030, the Department must be creative and innovative to scale and grow Registered Apprenticeship in new, emerging, and non-traditional industries.





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