

# WIOA State Plan for the State of Maryland

## Overview

Under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), the Governor of each State must submit a Unified or Combined State Plan to the U.S. Secretary of Labor that outlines a four-year workforce development strategy for the State's workforce development system. The publicly-funded workforce system is a national network of Federal, State, regional, and local agencies and organizations that provide a range of employment, education, training, and related services and supports to help all jobseekers secure good jobs while providing businesses with the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy. States must have approved Unified or Combined State Plans in place to receive funding for core programs. WIOA reforms planning requirements, previously governed by the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA), to foster better alignment of Federal investments in job training, to integrate service delivery across programs and improve efficiency in service delivery, and to ensure that the workforce system is job-driven and matches employers with skilled individuals. One of WIOA's principal areas of reform is to require States to plan across core programs and include this planning process in the Unified or Combined State Plans. This reform promotes a shared understanding of the workforce needs within each State and fosters development of more comprehensive and integrated approaches, such as career pathways and sector strategies, for addressing the needs of businesses and workers. Successful implementation of many of these approaches called for within WIOA requires robust relationships across programs. WIOA requires States and local areas to enhance coordination and partnerships with local entities and supportive service agencies for strengthened service delivery, including through Unified or Combined State Plans.

## Options for Submitting a State Plan

A State has two options for submitting a State Plan — a Unified State Plan or a Combined State Plan. At a minimum, a State must submit a Unified State Plan that meets the requirements described in this document and outlines a four-year strategy for the core programs. The six core programs are—

- the Adult Program (Title I of WIOA),
- the Dislocated Worker Program (Title I),
- the Youth Program (Title I),
- the Adult Education and Literacy Program (Title II),
- the Wagner-Peyser Act Program (Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by title III), and
- the Vocational Rehabilitation Program (Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by Title IV).

Alternatively, a State may submit a Combined State Plan that meets the requirements described in this document and outlines a four-year strategy for WIOA's core programs plus one or more of the Combined Plan partner programs. When a State includes a Combined State Plan partner program in its Combined State Plan, it need not submit a separate plan or application for that particular program. If included, Combined State Plan partner programs are subject to the "common planning elements" (Sections II and III of this document) where specified, as well as the program-specific requirements for that program. The Combined State Plan partner programs are—

- Career and technical education programs authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.)
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.)
- Employment and Training Programs under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (Programs authorized under section 6(d)(4) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(d)(4)))
- Work programs authorized under section 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(o))
- Trade Adjustment Assistance for Workers Programs (Activities authorized under chapter 2 of Title II of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2271 et seq.))
- Jobs for Veterans State Grants Program (Programs authorized under 38, U.S.C. 4100 et. seq.)
- Unemployment Insurance Programs (Programs authorized under State unemployment compensation laws in accordance with applicable Federal law)
- Senior Community Service Employment Program (Programs authorized under Title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3056 et seq.))
- Employment and training activities carried out by the Department of Housing and Urban Development

- Community Services Block Grant Program (Employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant Act (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.))\*
- Reintegration of Ex-Offenders Program (Programs authorized under section 212 of the Second Chance Act of 2007 (42 U.S.C. 17532))

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\* States that elect to include employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Act (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.) under a Combined State Plan would submit all other required elements of a complete CSBG State Plan directly to the Federal agency that administers the program. Similarly, States that elect to include employment and training activities carried by the Department of Housing and Urban Development and programs authorized under section 6(d)(4) and 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 that are included would submit all other required elements of a complete State Plan for those programs directly to the Federal agency that administers the program.

## How State Plan Requirements Are Organized

The major content areas of the Unified or Combined State Plan include strategic and operational planning elements. WIOA separates the strategic and operational elements to facilitate cross-program strategic planning.

- The **Strategic Planning Elements** section includes analyses of the State's economic conditions, workforce characteristics, and workforce development activities. These analyses drive the required vision and goals for the State's workforce development system and alignment strategies for workforce development programs to support economic growth.
- The **Operational Planning Elements** section identifies the State's efforts to support the State's strategic vision and goals as identified in the Strategic Planning Elements section. This section ensures that the State has the necessary infrastructure, policies, and activities to meet its strategic goals, implement its alignment strategy, and support ongoing program development and coordination. Operational planning elements include:
  - State Strategy Implementation,
  - State Operating Systems and Policies,
  - Assurances, and
  - Program-Specific Requirements for the Core Programs, and
  - Program-Specific Requirements for the Combined State Plan partner programs.

When responding to Unified or Combined State Plan requirements, States must identify specific strategies for coordinating programs and services for target populations.\* While discussion of and strategies for every target population is not expected, States must address as many as are applicable to their State's population and look beyond strategies for the general population.

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\* Target populations include individuals with barriers to employment, as defined in WIOA Sec. 3, as well as veterans, unemployed workers, and youth.

Maryland is excited to share the enclosed plan, which represents the State's beginning blueprint for implementation of a Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) compliant system. Under the leadership of Governor Larry Hogan, Maryland has taken this opportunity to "hit the reset button" by critically analyzing the current workforce system with the assistance of subject matter experts to ensure that Maryland's system under WIOA is highly responsive to the needs of both businesses and jobseekers.

The Plan represents the work of nine WIOA workgroups constituted to provide recommendations for the formulation of the plan, as well as the efforts of staff from state and local agencies and organizations. Input was also received from a wide array of subject matter experts from the national, state, and local levels, as well as the public at large.

The Plan's formulation process has been nearly unprecedented, as hundreds of specific comments have poured in over two comment periods. A group of subject matter experts from the Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation's Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning, the Governor's Workforce Investment Board, the Department of Human Resources' Family Investment Administration, the Maryland State Department of Education's Division of Rehabilitative Services, and the Maryland Workforce Investment Network met to review and discuss each comment received during the public comment period. Every comment submitted was thoroughly discussed and vetted. The Governor's Workforce Investment Board has also reviewed and unanimously recommended the Plan.

WIOA calls for workforce partners to communicate and collaborate, and Maryland's efforts, to date, are a testament to that process. While we have come a long way, there is much more to be done. The Plan that is contained in the following pages is just that, a plan. It presents goals and strategies for the next four years and beyond. It does not contain all of the answers. It does not outline a solution to every contingency. This Plan does, however, pledge that Maryland's approach to implementing the provisions of the federal Act will continue to be collaborative and inclusive. With every regulation promulgated pursuant to the federal Act, with every guidance issued by the federal agencies charged with oversight of the programs included in this Plan, with every technical assistance and training received, Maryland dedicates to learn together, to discuss the pressing issues, and to come to lasting solutions for our collective customers.

In the pages of this Plan, Maryland outlines a strategy to "place people before performance." For Maryland, this is a promise for a way forward into implementation and not just a platitude on a page. Placing people before performance means that Maryland's workforce system is dedicated to focusing its efforts on those who need our assistance the most. While recognizing that resources and funding sources are often scarce, Maryland's WIOA Partners are dedicated to finding new opportunities to focus on the customer's needs and tailoring solutions to address those needs. Maryland is dedicated to serving those with barriers to employment and finding a way not merely to walk the individual through a pre-determined process, but to place jobseekers who desire to work on a path toward sustainability. This may require a longer term commitment to our customers.

This strategy does not mean that Maryland is going to forsake all performance measures. Rather, requires a change in focus from numbers and figures on a page to people who walk through the doors of any one of Maryland's American Job Centers, local Department of Social Services offices, or other local career centers. It means that Maryland's workforce system is dedicated to improving the lives of Marylanders. As Maryland's workforce system focuses its attentions and efforts on the system's customers, we change the lives of the people we serve and grow our State and local economies.

The Plan outlined in the following pages accentuates Maryland's commitment to a customer-centric system. The Plan will serve as a roadmap for the formulation and implementation of local and regional plans. The same collaboration and dedication to communication that formed the Plan will also be the approach taken by Maryland in implementing the Plan. To that end, Maryland is will establish an Alignment Group of partners from state and local agencies to ensure that implementation of the Plan and integration of services is as seamless as possible.

The seamless integration of services and the implementation of Maryland's customer-centric workforce system require a dedication to:

- Engaging business through a more a more collaborative and proactive strategy;
- Providing excellent customer service to businesses and individuals through improved customer intake processes and an increased focus on businesses and jobseekers as customers of the system;
- Building an efficient workforce system through staff training and information sharing, increasing collaboration, streamlining service delivery using a "systems approach" where necessary partner strengths are maximized, and improving customer flow and access;
- Developing standards, policies, and procedures to ensure the sustainability of best practice efforts throughout the State through: the integration of career pathway models in competitive grant applications; the implementation of continuous improvement plans for service delivery; the provision of technical assistance and best practice resources; the negotiation of local performance measures utilizing regression models, the expansion of apprenticeship opportunities in high-demand industries; and, through the establishment of a robust Eligible Training Provider List;
- Utilizing technology to ensure a collaborative system through: the integration of technology and data sharing between WIOA Partners; enhancing functionality of the Maryland Workforce Exchange; the creation of metrics, process maps, and models; working towards full accessibility of websites and web presences for those with disabilities; and, implementing enhanced technologies that increase data sharing and access; and,
- Ensuring a system that serves all and is accessible to individuals through the development of clear guidelines outlining the process for managing and referring customers between and among partners; ensuring provision of culturally appropriate materials and services; implementing universal design practices; creating multiple access points to increase outreach; and to ensure that all jobseekers can access services.

This Combined State Workforce Plan outlines program specific requirements for:

- WIOA Title I – Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth;
- WIOA Title II – Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Program;
- The Wagner–Peyser Act Program;
- The Vocational Rehabilitation Program;
- The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program;
- The Trade Adjustment Assistance for Workers Program;
- The Jobs for Veterans State Grant Program; and,
- The Reintegration of Ex–Offenders Program

In all, Maryland is committed and excited to engage state, local, and non-profit partners as we build a system that is responsive to the needs of businesses and jobseekers alike. While the road toward integration may not be easy and the tasks may, at times, seem daunting, Maryland's workforce system's singular focus on the customers it serves will change Maryland for the better.

# I. WIOA State Plan Type

**Unified or Combined State Plan.** Select whether the State is submitting a Unified or Combined State Plan. At a minimum, a State must submit a Unified State Plan that covers the six core programs.

**Unified State Plan.** This plan includes the Adult Program, Dislocated Worker Program, Youth Program, Wagner-Peyser Act Program, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Program, and Vocational Rehabilitation Program. No

**Combined State Plan.** This plan includes the Adult Worker Program, Dislocated Worker Program, Youth Program, Wagner-Peyser Act Program, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Program, and Vocational Rehabilitation Program as well as one or more of the optional combined State Plan partner programs identified below. Yes

## Combined Plan partner program(s)

Indicate which Combined Plan partner program(s) the state is electing to include in the plan.

Career and technical education programs authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.) No

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.) Yes

Employment and Training Programs under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (Programs authorized under section 6(d)(4) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(d)(4))) No

Work programs authorized under section 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(o))) No

Trade Adjustment Assistance for Workers Programs (Activities authorized under chapter 2 of title II of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2271 et seq.)) Yes

Jobs for Veterans State Grants Program (programs authorized under 38, U.S.C. 4100 et. seq.) Yes

Unemployment Insurance Programs (Programs authorized under State unemployment compensation laws in accordance with applicable Federal law) No

Senior Community Service Employment Program (Programs authorized under title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3056 et seq.)) No

Employment and training activities carried out by the Department of Housing and Urban Development No

Community Services Block Grant Program (Employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant Act (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.)) No

Reintegration of Ex-Offenders Program (Programs authorized under section 212 of the Second Chance Act of 2007 (42 U.S.C. 17532)) Yes

## II. Strategic Elements

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include a Strategic Planning Elements section that analyzes the State's current economic environment and identifies the State's overall vision for its workforce development system. The required elements in this section allow the State to develop data-driven goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce and to identify successful strategies for aligning workforce development programs. Unless otherwise noted, all Strategic Planning Elements apply to Combined State Plan partner programs included in the plan as well as to core programs.

### a. Economic, Workforce, and Workforce Development Activities Analysis

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the economic conditions, economic development strategies, and labor market in which the State's workforce system and programs will operate.

# 1. Economic and Workforce Analysis

## A. Economic Analysis

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the economic conditions and trends in the State, including sub-State regions and any specific economic areas identified by the State. This must include-

### i. Existing Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations

Provide an analysis of the industries and occupations for which there is existing demand.

### ii. Emerging Industry Sectors and Occupation

Provide an analysis of the industries and occupations for which demand is emerging.

### iii. Employers' Employment Needs

With regard to the industry sectors and occupations identified in 1 and 2 above, provide an assessment of the employment needs of employers, including a description of the knowledge, skills, and abilities required, including credentials and licenses.

Based on real-time Labor Market Information (LMI), Maryland identified the top 10 occupations by number of job openings advertised online through the Maryland Workforce Exchange, the State's job bank. The charts provided are based on annual data obtained from the Maryland Workforce Exchange during 2015. The State has established the WIOA Alignment Group. This body consists of the leadership of State agency partners and local areas. It serves to provide a collaborative forum for the discussion of implementation and alignment efforts, and to address the progress and opportunities for improvement throughout the system, reviewing the real-time LMI generated by the Maryland Workforce Exchange. The identified top 10 occupations will be reviewed on a bi-annual basis for any changes.

Included in this listing are many of the previously mentioned occupations, such as: Computer and mathematical occupations, Healthcare practitioners and technical occupations, and Management occupations.

Occupation	Job Openings	Mean (Average) Wage
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	25,564	\$70,233
Management Occupations	24,133	\$72,048
Computer and Mathematical Occupations	21,188	\$73,680
Sales and Related Occupations	17,859	\$30,989
Office and Administrative Support Occupations	15,173	\$31,139
Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	12,820	\$31,775
Architecture and Engineering Occupations	12,149	\$76,645
Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	8,850	\$29,434
Business and Financial Operations Occupations	7,644	\$60,047
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	4,889	\$40,182

According to the top jobs advertised online, job openings are available at a range of education and experience levels.

Occupation	Education Level	Job Openings	Mean (Average) Wage
Computer and Mathematical Occupations	Bachelor's Degree	4,616	\$79,385
Management Occupations	Bachelor's Degree	3,048	\$78,149
Office and Administrative Support Occupations	High School Diploma or Equivalent	2,258	N/A
Architecture and Engineering Occupations	Bachelor's Degree	2,208	\$72,329

Sales and Related Occupations	High School Diploma or Equivalent	1,846	N/A
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	Bachelor's Degree	1,749	\$72,783
Business and Financial Operations Occupations	Bachelor's Degree	1,645	\$59,840
Management Occupations	High School Diploma or Equivalent	1,121	N/A
Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	High School Diploma or Equivalent	1,079	N/A
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	No Minimum Education Requirement	841	N/A
Occupation	Experience Level	Job Openings	Mean (Average) Wage
Computer and Mathematical Occupations	Less than 1 year	3,676	\$80,946
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	Less than 1 year	2,133	\$56,002
Office and Administrative Support Occupations	Less than 1 year	1,573	\$27,490
Business and Financial Operations Occupations	Less than 1 year	1,496	\$59,018
Management Occupations	Less than 1 year	1,185	\$68,664
Sales and Related Occupations	Less than 1 year	1,155	\$26,590
Architecture and Engineering Occupations	Less than 1 year	1,057	\$67,442
Management Occupations	2 Years to 5 Years	742	\$78,870
Management Occupations	1 Year to 2 Years	697	\$63,678
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	1 Year to 2 Years	655	\$83,518

According to the top certifications included in employers' online job postings, certifications sought by employers in Maryland ranged from healthcare-related to computer-related certifications (See Table 14).

Advertised Certification Group	Job Opening Match Count
Certification in Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)	5,073
Commercial Drivers License (CDL)	3,923
Basic Life Support (BLS) Certification	2,905
Advanced Cardiac Life Support Certification (ACLS)	1,786
Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA)	1,628
Certified Information Systems Security Professional (CISSP)	1,057
Certified Public Accountant (CPA)	881
Cisco Certified Network Associate (CCNA)	881
Certified Manager of Exhibits	753
GIAC IT Security Administration Certification	628

Table 14: Top Certifications Advertised; Source: MWE, 2015

Occupation	Occupation Needs
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	Customer service skills, interpersonal skills, problem solving, Registered Nurse (RN) skills, decision making, flexibility, critical thinking, time management, occupational therapist skills, and ability to educate patients
Management Occupations	Customer service skills, managerial skills, marketing skills, operations, manufacturing, technical skills, human relations, work effectively with people, conceptual skills, interpersonal skills, oral and written communication, constructive listening, honest and direct dialogue, sensitivity, flexible and adaptable, high energy level, ability to synthesize, work ethic, initiative, business judgment, self-confidence, leadership ability, decisiveness, and problem solving ability[1]
Computer and Mathematical Occupations	Repairing, quality control analysis, programming, troubleshooting, systems evaluation, installation, equipment selection, technology design, equipment maintenance, operation monitoring, systems analysis, operations analysis, judgment and decision making, operation and control, persuasion, instructing, service orientation, coordination, social perceptiveness, negotiation, management of material resources, management of financial resources, time management, management of personnel resources, complex problem solving, speaking, mathematics, science, writing, active learning, learning strategies, monitoring, active listening, reading comprehension, and critical thinking[2]
Sales and Related Occupations	Customer service skills, interpersonal skills, relationship management, business development skills, telemarketing skills, cold calling, time management, problem solving, ability to analyze, marketing skills, and closing skills
Office and Administrative Support	Customer service skills, problem solving, interpersonal skills, travel agent skills, time management, office clerk skills, word processing, typing, receptionist skills, answering phones, administrative assistant skills, and

Occupations	administrative management
Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	Customer service skills, problem solving, truck driving skills, unloading deliveries, web developer skills, application development, operate tractor-trailer, interpersonal skills, flexibility, unloading freight, and transportation management
Architecture and Engineering Occupations	Customer service skills, apply mathematical and scientific principles to building design; concentrate on structural demands, functionality, and economic and safety factors; diagram designs manually and through computer-aided drafting; communication skills; ability to work with a team; and comfortable with different work environments[3]
Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	Customer service skills, food preparation worker skills, cooking skills, proper food handling, ability to speak clearly, following recipes, interpersonal skills, greeting customers, flexibility, restaurant manager skills, be a team player, positive attitude
Business and Financial Operations Occupations	Customer service skills, problem solving, business development skills, interpersonal skills, time management, ability to resolve issues, risk analyst skills, risk management, project manager skills, project manager experience, contract administrator skills, web developer skills, and application development
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	Customer service skills, maintenance technician skills, preventative maintenance, general maintenance, building maintenance, construction worker skills, caulking, interpersonal skills, be a team player, time management, and welding skills

[1] Source: <http://careers-in-business.com/gmskill.htm>

[2] Source: <http://datausa.io/profile/soc/150000/skills>

[3] Source: [http://study.com/articles/Architectural\\_Engineers\\_Job\\_Description\\_and\\_Requirements\\_for\\_a\\_Career\\_in\\_Architectural\\_Engineering.html](http://study.com/articles/Architectural_Engineers_Job_Description_and_Requirements_for_a_Career_in_Architectural_Engineering.html)

## B. Workforce Analysis

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the current workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment, as defined in section 3 of WIOA.\* This population must include individuals with disabilities among other groups\*\* in the State and across regions identified by the State. This includes: Individuals with barriers to employment include displaced homemakers; low-income individuals; Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians; individuals with disabilities, including youth who are individuals with disabilities; older individuals; ex-offenders; homeless individuals, or homeless children and youths; youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system; individuals who are English language learners, individuals who have low levels of literacy, and individuals facing substantial cultural barriers; farmworkers (as defined at section 167(i) of WIOA and Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 35-14); individuals within 2 years of exhausting lifetime eligibility under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program; single parents (including single pregnant women); and long-term unemployed individuals.

\*\* Veterans, unemployed workers, and youth, and others that the State may identify.

### i. Employment and Unemployment

Provide an analysis of current employment and unemployment data, including labor force participation rates, and trends in the State.

### ii. Labor Market Trends

Provide an analysis of key labor market trends, including across existing industries and occupations.

### iii. Education and Skill Levels of the Workforce

Provide an analysis of the educational and skill levels of the workforce.

### iv. Skill Gaps

Describe apparent 'skill gaps'.

**Workforce Analysis: Population** In 2014 it was estimated that Maryland had a population of 5,976,407, which had risen from the 2013 estimate of 5,938,737. Maryland has exhibited positive growth in population and is projected to continue to increase to a level of 6,429,750 by 2025. Maryland is home to a diverse population with the three major races represented being White (60.1 percent), Black or African American (30.3 percent), and Asian (6.4 percent). In regards to ethnicity, Maryland is 9.3 percent Hispanic or Latino. Gender is equally distributed, with females accounting for 51.5 percent of the population. In 2014, the median age of Marylanders was 38.2 years and the distribution of people by age categories was similar to that of the U.S. Maryland is home to a well-educated population and ranks third in the nation for percent of population with a graduate degree or higher. However, 6.3 percent of Maryland's workforce possesses a 9th to 12th grade education level and 4 percent have less than a 9th grade level education.

Most Maryland residents work in Maryland, with more than 80 percent of working residents holding primary jobs within Maryland. Montgomery County accounted for the largest share, nearly 15 percent, of primary jobs held by employed Maryland residents. Baltimore City and Baltimore County followed closely, accounting for approximately 13 and 12 percent respectively. Working Maryland residents also commuted to locations outside of Maryland.

The District of Columbia and Virginia were the two most popular destinations, accounting for approximately 10 and 5 percent of primary jobs respectively. Pennsylvania and Delaware tied for the third most popular out-of-state destination with nearly one percent of jobs each. Additionally, residents from other states commute in to Maryland for work. Most out-of-state workers come from Virginia, which accounts for nearly four percent of jobs. Pennsylvania and the District of Columbia follow closely, accounting for three and two percent respectively. West Virginia and Delaware round up the Mid-Atlantic region with a one percent share of Maryland's primary jobs being held by residents of those states. It is important to note that although these commuting patterns describe the state as a whole, the percentage of out-of-state workers varies by workforce area. For example, Western Maryland has a higher percent, more than 5 percent, of residents whose primary jobs are located in West Virginia, and nearly 14 percent of primary jobs in Western Maryland are filled by workers commuting in from Pennsylvania. The same is true with the Upper Shore, with Delaware accounting for more than 5 percent of primary jobs held by Maryland residents and more than 6 percent of primary jobs in the Upper Shore being held by workers commuting in from Delaware.

Ensuring that all of Maryland's workers have the skills they need to compete in the global, regional, and local economies, Maryland's WIOA Partners are dedicated to ensuring that opportunities are available to adult learners who wish to obtain their high school diploma through passage of the GED® Test or through the National External Diploma Program. Maryland's integration of adult learning opportunities into workforce development programming serves as a national model, especially in light of the provisions of WIOA. Additionally, many of Maryland's EARN grantees emphasize the need for participants who do not otherwise have their high school diploma to obtain the same through GED® preparation and literacy advancement. Both the employers who participate in the EARN Maryland program and DLLR's Youth Apprenticeship Advisory Committee have identified the need to incorporate soft skills training into workforce development programming. The need for soft skills training is an emerging theme within almost all of the EARN Maryland workforce training plans, regardless of industry, region or subset of the workforce.

Soft skills, also known as essential skills, are an important component of job-readiness training. Examples of soft skills include, but are not limited to, skills related to professionalism, problem-solving, timeliness, interpersonal communication and customer service. Many employers who participate in the EARN Maryland program have stated that soft skills are equally as important as the hard skills, or technical skills, that are necessary to be proficient in a career. EARN Maryland's partnerships are implementing soft skills training in the classroom, as well as modeling on-the-job work experiences throughout the training program. Time management, customer service, personal appearance, appropriate conduct and personal responsibility are all essential skills identified by DLLR's Youth Apprenticeship Advisory Committee as important skills needed for the development of a youth apprenticeship talent pipeline. The Committee, formed to evaluate the effectiveness of existing high school youth apprenticeship programs in the State, other states, and other countries, concluded in its initial report outlining the steps the State needs to take in order to establish apprenticeship opportunities in both traditional and non-traditional apprenticeable fields.

**Workforce: Characteristics of the Employed** Those who work in the state of Maryland are not just Maryland residents, but also

include commuters from Virginia, Pennsylvania, and the District of Columbia. Maryland's workers are predominantly 30 to 54 years of age; however, a sizeable portion of workers are 55 years or older indicating that replacement needs could be high in the near future (See Graph 8). Maryland's workers are well-educated with 34 percent having a Bachelor's or advanced degree; however, 11 percent of those employed in Maryland possess less than a high school degree (See Graph 7).

**Workforce:** Characteristics of the Unemployed Maryland's unemployment is not equally distributed among demographic groups, or geographic areas as is later shown, and poses unique opportunities and challenges for the state. Maryland's youth, certain minority groups, and those with fewer credentials face higher unemployment rates and makeup a smaller portion of those employed in Maryland (See Graphs 8 and 9).

**Employment and Unemployment Trends** Maryland has been fortunate to maintain an unemployment rate that is better than or on par with that of the United States. The annual unemployment rate (not seasonally adjusted) in Maryland has exhibited a downward trend since 2010 and from 2013 (annual average) to 2014 (annual average) decreased by 0.8 percentage points (BLS, 2015). Maryland's labor force averaged 3,111,329 persons in 2014, slightly down from 3,124,102 in 2013. From 2013 to 2014, the number of employed persons rose by 0.4 percent and unemployed persons decreased by 12.3 percent. Maryland's labor force participation rate remained relatively constant over the course of 2014, hovering around 66 percent (BLS, 2015).

As previously alluded to employment and unemployment are not equally distributed across the state, which creates an additional complexity in forming policies aimed at curbing unemployment in Maryland. The eastern shore of Maryland, especially the counties of Dorchester, Somerset, and Worcester, experienced high unemployment rates in 2014. Additionally, Baltimore City, a large urban area, has consistently exhibited higher unemployment rates than those of the State as a whole. On a positive note, the unemployment rate fell in all areas from 2013 to 2014 (See Figure 1 and 2).

In terms of individuals with barriers to employment, youth, individuals with disabilities, and low-income individuals have higher rates of unemployment in comparison to Marylanders in general. According to the American Community Survey (ACS) estimates, in 2014 123,117 Marylanders with a disability were employed with individuals with an ambulatory difficulty accounting for the largest share with an estimated employment of 43,335 (See Table 7). In 2014, there were 24,360 unemployed persons with a disability in Maryland. Those with a cognitive disability accounted for the largest share with nearly 13,000 individuals unemployed (See Table 7). It is important to note that those with disabilities have a higher rate of unemployment than Marylanders with no disability and also have a lower labor force participation rate.

Maryland Estimate Total: 3,737,434 In the labor force: 3,015,521 Employed: 2,799,997 With a disability: 123,117 With a hearing difficulty 30,829 With a vision difficulty 25,679 With a cognitive difficulty 37,622 With an ambulatory difficulty 43,335 With a self-care difficulty 11,142 With an independent living difficulty 22,517 No disability 2,676,880 Unemployed: 215,524 With a disability: 24,360 With a hearing difficulty 3,409 With a vision difficulty 4,738 With a cognitive difficulty 12,975 With an ambulatory difficulty 10,584 With a self-care difficulty 2,613 With an independent living difficulty 5,121 No disability 191,164 Not in labor force: 721,913 With a disability: 167,451 With a hearing difficulty 21,617 With a vision difficulty 29,022 With a cognitive difficulty 78,703 With an ambulatory difficulty 101,690 With a self-care difficulty 38,416 With an independent living difficulty 77,715 No disability 554,462

Table 7: Employment Status of Individuals with Disabilities; Source: Census, 2015

According to ACS 2014 estimates, youth experience much higher unemployment rates, especially those 16 to 19 years of age (See Table 8). For older workers, they enjoy a relatively low rate of unemployment in Maryland (See Table 8).

Maryland Male Female Total 16 to 19 years: 157,216 150,386 307,602 In labor force: 55,678 57,556 113,234 In Armed Forces 2,320 815 3,135 Civilian: 53,358 56,741 110,099 Employed 39,231 46,423 85,654 Unemployed 14,127 10,318 24,445 Not in labor force 101,538 92,830 194,368 20 and 21 years: 82,886 79,791 162,677 In labor force: 55,043 55,129 110,172 In Armed Forces 2,851 709 3,560 Civilian: 52,192 54,420 106,612 Employed 42,457 45,522 87,979 Unemployed 9,735 8,898 18,633 Not in labor force 27,843 24,662 52,505 55 to 59 years: 197,682 217,621 415,303 In labor force: 159,596 158,652 318,248 In Armed Forces 110 0 110 Civilian: 159,486 158,652 318,138 Employed 151,039 151,119 302,158 Unemployed 8,447 7,533 15,980 Not in labor force 38,086 58,969 97,055 60 and 61 years: 69,476 75,709 145,185 In labor force: 49,495 48,451 97,946 In Armed Forces 0 41 41 Civilian: 49,495 48,410 97,905 Employed 47,223 45,998 93,221 Unemployed 2,272 2,412 4,684 Not in labor force 19,981 27,258 47,239 62 to 64 years: 93,553 110,932 204,485 In labor force: 58,236 60,123 118,359 In Armed Forces 0 0 0 Civilian: 58,236 60,123 118,359 Employed 55,576 57,430 113,006 Unemployed 2,660 2,693 5,353 Not in labor force 35,317 50,809 86,126 65 to 69 years: 128,476 151,857 280,333 In labor force: 56,381 51,835 108,216 Employed 54,216 49,815 104,031 Unemployed 2,165 2,020 4,185 Not in labor force 72,095 100,022 172,117 70 to 74 years: 90,519 108,165 198,684 In labor force: 24,593 18,072 42,665 Employed 23,443 17,401 40,844 Unemployed 1,150 671 1,821 Not in labor force 65,926 90,093 156,019 75 years and over: 134,548 208,606 343,154 In labor force: 13,738 10,515 24,253 Employed 13,193 10,031 23,224 Unemployed 545 484 1,029 Not in labor force 120,810 198,091 318,901 Table 8: Employment Status by Age; Source: Census, 2015

In Maryland, veterans experience a lower unemployment rate than is experienced by Marylanders who are nonveterans according to the 2014 ACS data (See Table 9).

Maryland Estimate Total: 3,778,919 Veteran: 224,299 In labor force: 185,203 Employed 176,677 Unemployed 8,526 Not in labor force 39,096 Nonveteran: 3,554,620 In labor force: 2,830,422 Employed 2,623,424 Unemployed 206,998 Not in labor force 724,198 Table 9: Employment Status for Veterans and Nonveterans; Source: Census, 2015 Lastly, for those Marylanders with income below the poverty level the unemployment rate is much higher than those with income levels at or above the poverty level (See Table 10).

Maryland Total: 4,634,898 Income in the past 12 months below poverty level: 435,201 Male: 181,690 In labor force: 87,449 Employed 60,277 Unemployed 27,172 Not in labor force 94,241 Female: 253,511 In labor force: 105,472 Employed 73,425 Unemployed 32,047 Not in labor force 148,039 Income in the past 12 months at or above poverty level: 4,199,697 Male: 2,013,033 In labor force: 1,542,596 Employed 1,450,605 Unemployed 91,991 Not in labor force 470,437 Female: 2,186,664 In labor force: 1,477,747 Employed 1,398,906 Unemployed 78,841 Not in labor force 708,917 Table 10: Poverty and Employment Status; Source: Census, 2015

### Skills Gap Analysis

As the State continues to recover from the recession, job growth is expected to continue across many sectors, leading to an increase in overall hiring demand. Moreover, employers often cite difficulty in recruiting and hiring qualified, trained candidates. To ensure employers have the talented workforce necessary to compete and grow, it is essential that the workforce system understand and address any existing skills gaps.

Through 2020, several sectors are expected to experience a substantial increase in hiring demand, including healthcare, hospitality and tourism, business services and education. According to the National Skill Coalition’s Maryland’s Forgotten Middle-Skill Jobs, many of these jobs will be classified as middle-skill, which comprises the largest share of jobs in Maryland. Healthcare has the largest portion of middle-skill jobs available, with 38 percent. Other sectors that have a significant number of middle-skill jobs include bioscience and information technology, with 13 percent identified as middle-skill, and business services and construction reporting 12 percent. Despite hiring demand and a large number of available middle-skilled jobs, employers report difficulty in hiring for these positions.

One-third of the State’s workforce is comprised of individuals who either have not earned a high school diploma, or identify high school as the highest attainment of education. Additionally, ninety percent of the State’s adult education enrolled participants are below the high school level of skills. Typically, educational attainment correlates with occupational skill level, meaning one with low educational attainment will likely be suited to perform a low-skill job. This disparity highlights the need to provide greater access to training opportunities, such as pre-apprenticeship and Registered Apprenticeship, to low-skilled workers so that they can acquire the skills and credentials to qualify for middle-skill jobs.

The Job Opportunities Task Force recently released a study on youth and workforce development. Disconnected youth, who are neither working nor enrolled in school, make up a significant portion of the unemployed population. These youth often face significant barriers to employment, including low math and reading skills, a history of incarceration, and mental health issues. It is imperative that these barriers be removed before or during participation in skills training to ensure the individual is ready to work upon completion of training.

While technical skills are essential to job performance, employers identify essential skills, such as professionalism, problem-solving, timeliness, interpersonal communication, and customer service, as critically important, yet lacking in many candidates. To ensure employers have the talent they need to compete and grow, essential skills development should be integrated into training curricula across all industries.

As detailed in this Plan, Maryland has identified several target jobseeker populations that the WIOA system will work to support. The State has conducted a literature review to identify key barriers to employment for each target population:

### Barriers to Employment

Population	Barriers to Employment
Displaced Homemakers	Anxiety/depression; more education/job training required; low self-confidence/decision making; financial dependence; violence, emotional, and/or sexual abuse; divorce/separation; legal assistance; lack of affordable housing; lack of access to affordable childcare; no medical insurance; medical problems; parenting issues; transportation; language barrier; disability
Low-income individuals (including TANF and SNAP recipients)	Transportation; lack of access to affordable childcare; need for social supports; criminal records hindering job applications; need to dress professionally and other necessities for an interview; healthcare; mental health issues; addiction issues; reduced access to education and training; fewer job-related resources (ex: computer access); diminished social capital; fewer community resources; disability
	Pay inequality; obstacles to advancement; stereotyping; prejudice; discrimination; poverty; early

Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians	parenthood; substance abuse; lack of education opportunity and attainment; cultural strains and restraints; positive potential of indigenous values; social-structural factors
Individuals with disabilities, including youth who are individuals with disabilities	Discrimination; lack of information about reasonable accommodations; cost of providing reasonable accommodations; other increased costs; employer fear of litigation based on the Americans with Disabilities Act; lack of adequate education, training, and skills; lack of job experience; risk of losing benefits; need for accommodations; transportation; health care needs; lack of information about jobs; family responsibilities
Older Individuals	Ageism; disability; structural racism; lack of affordable housing; transportation; lack of technology literacy; diminished social capital; lower education levels; greater health problems; reductions in pay after re-entering the workforce after periods of unemployment
Ex-Offenders	Low literacy; lack of vocational skills; low math skills; lack of steady history of employment; lack of technology literacy; stigma; discrimination; lack of proof of identification; transportation; low social capital; low education levels; mental health issues; disability; employer reluctance
Homeless individuals or homeless children and youth	Lack of security; lack of housing; transportation; lack of steady history of employment; lack of education and training; physical or mental health issues; criminal records hindering job applications; stigma; discrimination; employer reluctance; disability; trauma; need to dress professionally and other necessities for an interview
Youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system	Low stability; mental health issues; substance abuse problems; criminal records hindering job applications; lack of guidance for professional development; low social capital; need for mentoring; young parenting; need for public assistance; lack of understanding career options
Individuals who are English language learners, individuals who have low levels of literacy, and individuals facing substantial cultural barriers	Language and communication skills; lack of social capital; lack of understanding career options; undervalued foreign credentials; age/time out of school; discrimination; licensing barriers
Eligible migrant and seasonal farmworkers	Health challenges from nature of work; poverty; mobility; living and working arrangements; limited access to healthcare; lack of health insurance; language barriers; low math skills; wage theft; illegal employment practices; geographic isolation
Individuals within 2 years of exhausting lifetime eligibility under Part A of the Social Security Act	Transportation; lack of access to affordable childcare; need for social supports; criminal records hindering job applications; need to dress professionally and other necessities for an interview; healthcare; mental health issues; addiction issues; reduced access to education and training; fewer job-related resources (ex: computer access); diminished social capital; fewer community resources; disability
Single parents (including pregnant single women)	Unequal opportunities in education and employment; low wages; undervalued caregiving; domestic violence; lack of access to affordable childcare; low child support; low social capital; marital status; number and ages of children; structural racism
Long-term unemployed individuals	Lack of education and training; lack of technology literacy; low math skills; lack of essential skills; transportation; employer bias; lack of standardized credentials across regions and facilities; criminal records hindering job applications; low literacy; homelessness; poverty; structural racism; mental health issues
Individuals who have low levels of literacy	High School Diploma as prerequisite for jobs; low wages; low literacy; lack of technology literacy; low math skills; transportation; lack of education and training; lack of work experience; lack of social capital; lack of affordable housing; criminal records hindering job applications; lack of understanding career options; need to dress professionally and other necessities for an interview
Individuals without a High School Diploma	High School Diploma as prerequisite for jobs; low wages; low literacy; lack of technology literacy; low math skills; transportation; lack of education and training; lack of work experience; lack of social capital; lack of affordable housing; criminal records hindering job applications; lack of understanding career options; need to dress professionally and other necessities for an interview

Maryland is committed to ensuring its target jobseeker populations receive the support they need to increase their earning capacity and self-sufficiency. To more deeply understand the barriers the State's target populations face, Maryland will establish Jobseeker Advisory Focus Groups to engage jobseekers. The focus groups will ensure that the WIOA Partners are continually aware of the barriers faced by jobseekers and workers in securing and maintaining stable employment, and earning a family-supporting wage.

Engagement of focus groups will allow the WIOA Partners to further develop an understanding of how processes could be streamlined and services could be enhanced from the customer's perspective. Members of these focus groups will help identify and validate skill(s) gaps and barriers to employment by providing first-hand information on how WIOA programs can more effectively and efficiently help jobseekers.

## 2. Workforce Development, Education and Training Activities Analysis

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the workforce development activities, including education and training in the State, to address the education and skill needs of the workforce, as identified in *Education and Skill Levels of the Workforce* above, and the employment needs of employers, as identified in *Employers' Employment Needs* above. This must include an analysis of –

### A. The State's Workforce Development Activities

Provide an analysis of the State's workforce development activities, including education and training activities of the core programs, Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan, and required and optional one-stop delivery system partners.\*

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\* Required one-stop partners: In addition to the core programs, the following partner programs are required to provide access through the one-stops: Career and Technical Education (Perkins), Community Services Block Grant, Indian and Native American programs, HUD Employment and Training programs, Job Corps, Local Veterans' Employment Representatives and Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program, National Farmworker Jobs program, Senior Community Service Employment program, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) (unless the Governor determines TANF will not be a required partner), Trade Adjustment Assistance programs, Unemployment Compensation programs, and YouthBuild.

**For the first time in the State's history, Maryland has submitted a Combined State Plan that was careful to include the workforce functions of three state agencies: the Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation (DLLR), the Department of Human Resources (DHR) as the agency charged with administration of Maryland's Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, and the Maryland State Department of Education's Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) as the agency charged with administration of the State's vocational rehabilitation program.**

#### **DLLR - Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning**

**Administration of the majority of the programs set forth in this Combined State Workforce Plan is the responsibility of the Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation's Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning. The Division administers the WIOA Title I, Title II, and Wagner-Peyser Programs. The Division also administers the Trade Adjustment Assistance Act program, and the Jobs for Veterans State Grant Program.**

**The Division coordinates the efforts of Maryland's 32 American Job Centers, which provide comprehensive services to both jobseekers and businesses. While jobseekers are offered a wide range of career and training services, businesses are provided with numerous types of assistance and growth services. The Division's Dislocated Worker Services unit provides centralized oversight and administration of Maryland's Rapid Response and Trade Assistance Act (Trade) Program activities.**

**The Division also has a number of specialized offices focused on the diverse needs of Maryland's businesses and jobseekers.**

- **Professional Outplacement Assistance Center (POAC) provides assistance to individuals who are in the professional, executive, technical, managerial, and/or scientific occupations, along with recent college graduates, who find themselves in need of assistance in getting reconnected to the labor market.**
- **Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) Program was developed by the USDOL in an effort to reduce the number of weeks that UI claimants receive benefits, and is designed to help claimants to identify potential barriers to employment and assesses work search progress.**

- **Reemployment Opportunities Workshop (ROW) Program** is a full-day workshop offered to certain UI claimants to shorten the duration of UI benefits received through reemployment efforts
- **Veteran Services Unit** operates the **Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG)**. The JVSG Program's mission is two-fold: it offers employment and training services to Veterans with significant barriers to employment and connects employers with work-ready Veterans.
- **Foreign Labor Certification Program** is an employment-based immigration program which assists applicable employers, who have obtained USDOL approval to begin the hiring process of permanent or temporary foreign workers.
- **Tax Credit Unit** is charged with administering federal and State tax credit programs which offer income tax incentives to employers for hiring members of targeted population groups, such as ex-offenders or certain individuals with disabilities.
- **Migrant Seasonal Farm Worker Program** ensures migrant and seasonal farm workers are receiving the same employment services that non-migrant seasonal farm workers receive at the State's American Job Centers.
- **Maryland Re-Entry Initiative (MRI)** is a statewide initiative to increase the employability of Maryland citizens with criminal backgrounds. The program provides technical assistance to jobseekers, staff, and employers to increase the number of individuals hired with criminal history and facing barriers to employment. The MRI administers the Federal Bonding Program through the State's American Job Centers.
- **Youth and Disability Services** provides disability and youth services coordination and technical assistance to the State of Maryland's Local Workforce Development Areas and partners responsible for serving WIOA Title I youth program participants and American Job Center customers with disabilities.
- **Business Services Unit** exists to help companies grow and thrive, to foster economic growth and stability, and to ensure that Marylanders have opportunities for gainful employment.

The Division is also home to the **Office of Adult Education and Literacy Services**. As the WIOA Title II provider in the State, the Office selects local providers of adult education instructional services via a statewide competition made available to eligible providers every five years. Instructional services include Adult Basic and Secondary Education, English Language Acquisition / Integrated English Literacy and Civics, Family Literacy, High School Diploma preparation, and Correctional Education. Maryland's current providers include a wide-range of community colleges, local public school systems, community-based organizations, public libraries, and the State's Correctional Education program.

The **Office of Correctional Education** also provides educational opportunities for incarcerated men and women enabling them to become independent and productive workers, citizens, and parents. The Office, with the oversight of the Correctional Education Council, and in partnership with the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS) is responsible for the academic and vocational educational programs

provided in Maryland's correctional institutions.

## **Maryland State Department of Education - Division of Rehabilitation Services**

The public Vocational Rehabilitation Program in Maryland is administered by the Maryland State Department of Education's Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) in accordance with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, most recently by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014. DORS is funded primarily by the United States Department of Education's Rehabilitation Services Administration. The federal funding includes a State matching requirement (Federal 78.7 percent and State match of 21.3 percent) and maintenance of effort requirement.

DORS provides services and supports to assist eligible students, youth, and adults with significant disabilities transition to post-secondary education, training, and employment. DORS also engages with businesses throughout Maryland, assisting them in recruiting and maintaining qualified, valuable employees. DORS also serves as a resource on disability and employment matters such as disability awareness training, workforce diversity and inclusion initiatives, training on the Americans with Disabilities Act, solutions for reasonable accommodations, and worksite consultations. DORS continues to be dedicated to the creation of the aforementioned Maryland Business Services team.

## **Department of Human Resources - Family Investment Administration**

In Maryland, the TANF program is called Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA) and is delivered at the local departments of social services level. Local Department of Social Services (LDSS) Offices, a listing of which can be found at [http://www.dhr.state.md.us/blog/?page\\_id=805](http://www.dhr.state.md.us/blog/?page_id=805), is the statewide framework for delivering education, job training, job placement, and other services to assist TANF customers with overcoming barriers to obtaining self-sustaining employment. In Maryland, our efforts led to record TANF job placements in each year of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2012-2014 period. Key components of the program include:

- Collaborating with private and public sector partners to identify local growth occupations and their associated education and training requirements
- Assessing a customers respective skill sets, career interests and barriers to obtaining self-sustaining employment
- Developing or procuring appropriate work-related services, including academic remediation, targeted sector training, and job placement services.

TANF workforce development is built on a philosophy of "universal engagement." This means that customers are expected to participate in activities based on the results of individual assessments with the goal of employment or removing barriers to employment. Many of the remaining welfare families, in addition to many of the new families applying for TCA can be considered "hard to place" into jobs. Workforce development is designed to meet the critical, essential needs of the under-employed, newly unemployed and hard-to-place.

In addition to workforce development, our TANF program provides a broad range of services. The Department's Family Investment Administration (FIA) formed partnerships with other administrations within DHR, including the Child Support Enforcement and Social Services divisions and with other State agencies

and community organizations. FIA works with these partners to promote DHR's goal to protect children by assisting their families to become independent through work, personal and family responsibility, and community involvement. The Department expanded its goal to include support for low-income working families and continues to strengthen those partnerships by empowering staff in the LDSS across the State to work together to provide employment and training activities, supportive services, and benefits that enable customers to obtain jobs and improve their economic circumstances.

The Governor's Workforce Development Board (GWDB) is the Governor's chief policymaking body for workforce development. The GWDB is a business-led board of 53 members, a majority of whom represent the business community, as mandated by WIOA. Specifically, 37 members represent business, 11 represent workforce, and 15 represent government. Members include the Governor and the Lieutenant Governor, cabinet secretaries, college presidents, the State Superintendent of Schools, elected officials, labor, and representatives of non-profit organizations.

The Workforce Investment Network for Maryland (WIN) is a coalition of executive directors from Maryland's 12 local workforce agencies. WIN works closely with GWDB and DLLR to support a comprehensive workforce system. WIN, GWDB and DLLR meet monthly to discuss important matters pertaining to the workforce system and to provide perspective on issues that may arise. The collaboration between WIN, GWDB and DLLR creates a strong workforce system in Maryland.

Local workforce boards are established in each of these twelve areas to ensure that each area's workforce is well-prepared to meet the current and future needs of local businesses.

## **B. The Strengths and Weaknesses of Workforce Development Activities**

Provide an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the workforce development activities identified in (A) above.

As noted above, the State provides a wide-range of services to Maryland's jobseeker and businesses. However, in order to efficiently provide an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of Maryland's workforce system, one must first look at it as a system. As the State begins to implement the provisions of the federal Act, it is clear that Maryland's jobseekers and businesses require a systems approach to the delivery of services. While the WIOA Partners have and continue to refer customers to each other, the true systems integration under the federal Act demands more. Maryland, as noted in the Executive Summary to this plan, is taking our federal partners at their word and "hitting the reset button."

As such, rather than analyze a system as it was under the Workforce Investment Act, Maryland has decided to critically analyze itself under WIOA. Therefore, Maryland proposes the following plan to achieve this through a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis.

By July 1, 2017, the Maryland WIOA Alignment Group will meet and develop a SWOT analysis of Maryland's Workforce System. The analysis will identify all of the workforce activities being carried out by all of the plan partners, then provide an earnest assessment of each. This analysis will be provided to the Governor's Workforce Development Board for their review at their earliest quarterly meeting. As leaders in Maryland's business community, and as the Governor's policy advisors for workforce related items, the GWDB will be a good sounding board for the SWOT analysis. The SWOT analysis will also be shared with the jobseeker focus groups created under this plan. The goal here is to provide valuable feedback from the customers using Maryland's workforce system.

Maryland plans to revise the SWOT analysis every two years, and provide it with updated versions of this plan. The SWOT analysis will also serve as a guide for a system that is continually evolving to meet the needs of the State's businesses and jobseekers.

## **C. State Workforce Development Capacity**

Provide an analysis of the capacity of State entities to provide the workforce development activities identified in (A) above.

Maryland's WIOA State Plan is Governor Hogan's blueprint for the creation of an effective and efficient workforce system. Governor Hogan has directed the Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation (DLLR), the Department of Human Resources (DHR), and the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to work collaboratively to develop a strategic and operational plan to include

the following programs:

WIOA State Plan Program Core WIOA Program as determined by law Additional WIOA Program as determined by Governor MD State Agency Responsible for Oversight Adult Program • DLLR Dislocated Workforce Program • DLLR Youth Program • DLLR Wagner-Peyser Act Program • DLLR Adult Education & Family Literacy Act Program • DLLR Vocational Rehabilitation Program • MSDE Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program • DHR Trade Adjustment Assistance for Workers Program • DLLR Jobs for Veterans State Grant Program • DLLR Reintegration of Ex-Offenders Program • N/A

The inclusion of these key programs, in combination, will ensure that Maryland effectively leverages its existing resources to deliver outstanding customer service to workers and businesses that are vital to Maryland's economic growth and prosperity. Key partners from these state agencies as well as representatives from the Governor's Workforce Investment Board (GWIB) and local workforce development areas (collectively referred to as the "WIOA Partners"), pursuant to the Governor's charge, worked together to ensure that Maryland is poised to develop a WIOA compliant workforce system.

Overview of Maryland's Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Transition The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) was signed into law on July 22, 2014, and went into effect July 1, 2015. WIOA supersedes the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, and amends the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, the Wagner-Peyser Act, and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. WIOA is designed to help both jobseekers and businesses. WIOA addresses the needs of jobseekers through establishing a workforce system that helps them access, education, training, and support services to gain employment and succeed in the labor market. WIOA addresses employer needs by matching them to the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy.

In order to ensure Maryland's effective implementation of the requirements of the new federal law, the WIOA Partners agreed on the development and implementation of proven best practices and strategies towards system improvement. As a part of the transition, DLLR convened nine WIOA workgroups comprised of subject matter experts and advocates from a variety of State and local agencies, community colleges, businesses, and key advocacy groups. By design, all workgroups are chaired by DLLR leadership staff and co-chaired by local leadership staff in an effort to ensure collaborative decision making.

Maryland's 9 WIOA Workgroups Governance Policy Fiscal Accountability American Job Center Operations & Partnerships Youth Services & Partnerships Business & Industry Partnerships Performance Accountability Labor Market Information & Sector Strategies Adult Education & Career Pathways

The following chart lists the key goals and organizations represented for each of the 9 WIOA Work Groups:

WIOA Workgroup

Key Goals Organizations Represented

Governance • Review statewide policies and programs to develop recommendations on actions Maryland should take to align core and other partner programs • Develop guidance for the implementation and continuous improvement of the workforce system • Revise and implement Local Workforce Development Board certification requirements • Anne Arundel Workforce Development Corporation • Baltimore City Mayor's Office of Employment Development • Governor's Workforce Investment Board • Maryland Department of Aging • Maryland Department of Disabilities • Maryland Department of Human Resources - Family Investment Administration • Maryland Department of Juvenile Services • Maryland DLLR- Division of Workforce Development & Adult Learning • Maryland State Department of Education - Division of Career and College Readiness • Maryland State Department of Education - Division of Rehabilitation Services • Montgomery County Division of Workforce Services • Upper Shore Workforce Investment Board

Policy • Assess and evaluate Workforce Investment Act policies to determine and improve overall processes, policies, and procedures in light of WIOA • Coordinate policy development with core partners at State and local levels • Identify policy and regulatory changes for State and Local Workforce Development Areas • Anne Arundel Workforce Development Corporation • Baltimore City Mayor's Office of Employment Development • Baltimore City Department of Social Services • Baltimore County Department of Social Services • Goodwill Industries of the Chesapeake • Governor's Office for Children • Governor's Workforce Investment Board • Howard Community College • Maryland Association of Adult Community and Continuing Education • Maryland Department of Human Resources—Family Investment Administration • Maryland Department of Disabilities • Maryland DLLR—Division of Workforce Development & Adult Learning • Maryland DLLR—Division of Unemployment Insurance • Maryland DLLR—Office of the Secretary • Maryland State Department of Education—Division of Rehabilitation Services • Mid Maryland Workforce Investment Area • Susquehanna Workforce Network, Inc.

Fiscal Accountability • Determine needed and required fiscal and monitoring policies • Update grant agreements to align with WIOA and OMB Uniform Guidance • Review resource sharing and infrastructure costs • Anne Arundel Workforce Development Corporation • Baltimore City Mayor's Office of Employment Development • Baltimore County Department of Economic & Workforce Development • Carroll County Government • Frederick County Workforce Services • Harford County Department of Social Services • Maryland Department of Human Resources - Budget Office • Maryland Department of Human Resources - Family Investment Administration •

Maryland DLLR - Division of Workforce Development & Adult Learning • Maryland State Department of Education - Division of Rehabilitation Services • Montgomery County Division of Workforce Investment Services • Prince George's County Economic Development Corporation • Susquehanna Workforce Network, Inc. • Tri-County Council for the Lower Eastern Shore of Maryland • Upper Shore Workforce Investment Board • Western Maryland Consortium

American Job Center Operations & Partnerships • Engage partners and improve customer flow within career services, including how to better serve Unemployment Insurance claimants and hardest-to-serve customers • Improve the use of technology in the American Job Centers • Develop templates for Memorandums of Understanding and Resource Sharing Agreements, including the sharing of infrastructure expenses • Determine staff training needs and opportunities during WIOA transition, including developing relevant board member fact sheets • Review training provider list • Anne Arundel County Department of Social Services • Anne Arundel Workforce Development Corporation • Baltimore City Mayor's Office of Employment Development • Baltimore County Department of Economic & Workforce Development • Baltimore City Community College • Carroll County Government • Enoch Pratt Free Library • Frederick County Workforce Services • Goodwill Industries of the Chesapeake • Lower Shore Workforce Alliance • Maryland Department of Human Resources—Family Investment Administration • Maryland Department of Human Resources—Office for Refugees and Asylees • Maryland DLLR—Division of Workforce Development & Adult Learning • Maryland DLLR—Division of Unemployment Insurance • Maryland DLLR—Office of Administration • Maryland DLLR—Office of General Services • Maryland Higher Education Commission • Maryland State Department of Education—Division of Rehabilitation Services • Mid-Maryland Workforce Investment Area • Montgomery County Division of Workforce Investment Services • Prince George's County Economic Development Corporation • Susquehanna Workforce Network, Inc. • Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland • Upper Shore Workforce Investment Board • Western Maryland Consortium

Youth Services & Partnerships • Ensure that 75% of youth funds are properly allocated to serve Out-of-School Youth • Expand system capacity • Improve work-based youth activities • Enhance services for youth with disabilities • Anne Arundel Workforce Development Corporation • Baltimore City Mayor's Office of Employment Development • Baltimore County Department of Economic & Workforce Development • Caroline County Department of Social Services • Governor's Office for Children • Governor's Workforce Investment Board • Humanim • Kent County Department of Social Services • Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene • Maryland Department of Juvenile Services • Maryland Department of Human Resources—Social Services Administration • Maryland DLLR- Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning • Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council • Maryland State Department of Education—Division of College and Career Readiness • Maryland State Department of Education—Division of Rehabilitation Services • Maryland State Department of Education—Division of Special Education • Mid-Maryland Workforce Investment Area • Montgomery County Division of Workforce Investment Services • Somerset County Department of Social Services • Talbot County Department of Social Services • Woodlands Job Corps • Wor-Wic Community College

Business & Industry Partnerships • Involve existing Local Area business engagement plan teams • Collect input from Local Areas then share ideas with the work group • Allow for input and data at local, regional, and state levels • Develop common measures and platforms • Anne Arundel Workforce Development Corporation • Baltimore City Mayor's Office of Employment Development • Frederick County Workforce Services • Governor's Workforce Investment Board • Hagerstown Community College • Maryland Department of Commerce • Maryland Department of Human Resources—Family Investment Administration • Maryland DLLR—Division of Workforce Development & Adult Learning • Maryland DLLR—Division of Unemployment Insurance • Maryland State Department of Education—Division of Rehabilitation Services • Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland • Wicomico County Department of Social Services

Performance Accountability • Implement new performance accountability measures • Determine best presentation of WIOA performance reports for state and Local Areas • Develop recommendations for potential additional State measures • Negotiate levels of performance/adjustment factors • Anne Arundel Workforce Development Corporation • Baltimore City Mayor's Office of Employment Development • Baltimore County Department of Social Services • Baltimore County Department of Workforce & Economic Development • Carroll County Government • Dorchester County Department of Social Services • Frederick County Workforce Services • Maryland Department of Human Resources—Family Investment Administration • Maryland DLLR- Division of Workforce Development & Adult Learning • Maryland Higher Education Commission • Maryland State Department of Education—Division of Rehabilitation Services • Maryland State Department of Education—Division of College and Career Readiness • Montgomery County Division of Workforce Investment Services • Prince George's County Economic Development Corporation • Susquehanna Workforce Network, Inc. • Tri-County Council for the Lower Eastern Shore of Maryland • Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland • Upper Shore Workforce Investment Board • Western Maryland Consortium

Labor Market Information & Sector Strategies • Inform sector strategies of Labor Market Information (LMI) • Shape state and local plans with LMI • Use LMI in the regional delineation of economic activity • Evaluate current LMI tools and resources • Baltimore Development Corporation • Lower Shore Workforce Alliance • Maryland Department of Commerce • Maryland Department of Human Resources—Family Investment Administration • Maryland DLLR—Division of Workforce Development & Adult Learning • Maryland State Department of Education—Division of Rehabilitation Services • Towson University • Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland DLLR • University of Baltimore—Jacob France Institute • Upper Shore Workforce Investment Board

Adult Education & Career Pathways • Identify best practices for integration and alignment of adult education with other WIOA core

and partner programs via a career pathways systems approach • Suggest strategies addressing any challenges to the integration and alignment of activities, including but not limited to the funding gaps • Address the assurance of non-duplication of services for eligible populations • Annie E. Casey Foundation • Baltimore City Mayor's Office of Employment Development • Baltimore Strive • Carroll Community College • Cecil College • Charles County Public Schools • Enoch Pratt Free Library • Frederick Community College • Goodwill Industries of the Chesapeake • Job Opportunities Task Force • Maryland Association of Adult Community and Continuing Education • Maryland Cash Campaign • Maryland Department of Human Resources - Family Investment Administration • Maryland DLLR - Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning • Maryland State Department of Education - Division of College and Career Readiness • Maryland State Department of Education - Division of Rehabilitation Services • Montgomery County Department of Social Services • Prince George's Community college • Prince George's County Department of Social Services • Susquehanna Workforce Network, Inc. • Worcester County Department of Social Services

## **b. State Strategic Vision and Goals**

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include the State's strategic vision and goals for developing its workforce and meeting employer needs in order to support economic growth and economic self-sufficiency. This must include—

### **1. Vision**

Describe the State's strategic vision for its workforce development system.

Changing Maryland for the Better Governor Hogan's vision for Maryland centers on five main principles: (1) Economic Development and Jobs; (2) Reduce Taxes and Fees; (3) Fiscal Responsibility; (4) Government Reform; and, (5) Improving Quality of Life.

Providing businesses with the skilled workforce they need to compete in the global, regional, and local economies is central to Governor Hogan's vision and to his charge to ensure that Maryland is "open for business." Maryland's workforce system provides that talent pipeline through a partnership of State and local partners, businesses, economic development, education, and community stakeholders.

To ensure that the workforce system efficiently meets the needs of both the businesses and the jobseekers that it serves, Governor Hogan has directed Maryland's workforce agencies to jointly develop the State's workforce plan. For the first time, Maryland's Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation, the Department of Human Resources, the Maryland State Department of Education, the Governor's Workforce Investment Board, and local workforce partners joined to develop the operational components of Maryland's plan. The Governor's charge to these state agencies was to develop a plan that leverages state resources in order to deliver outstanding customer service to workers and businesses that are vital to Maryland's economic growth and prosperity. The agencies were further encouraged to collaborate and innovate to ensure that Maryland's citizens have access to quality workforce training and employment opportunities.

Economic Development and Jobs "Our focus will be on jobs, struggling Maryland families, and restoring our economy." -Governor Hogan's 2015 State of the State Address

Maryland thrives as the economy flourishes. As businesses grow, jobs are created. As jobs are created, qualified workers are needed to meet the demand. As workers become more highly skilled, innovations occur resulting in the emergence of new economic drivers. A sound and thriving economy creates quality careers, provides financial stability for Maryland's families and communities, and reduces dependency on government programs. In short, business must play a key role in Maryland's workforce system.

Workforce initiatives must be driven by industry. A workforce system that is disconnected from business fails to meet the needs of jobseekers who do not obtain the training needed to obtain gainful employment. Previously, business' input into the workforce development system was largely based on its role as "employer." While providing employment is a very important role that a business plays, businesses must focus on successfully providing a product or service. Therefore, Maryland's workforce system must strive to produce the workforce needed for them to accomplish this.

Businesses serve as partners to the workforce system by providing input regarding in-demand training needs, and policy guidance for the system to ensure that initiatives are driven by industry demands. As businesses change and adapt to labor markets, a workforce development system that successfully partners with business must also evolve to ensure that jobseekers receive proper training and opportunities for in-demand careers.

The Governor's Workforce Investment Board is comprised of business leaders in targeted industry sectors. Board members serve as ambassadors for Maryland's business community and further advise Governor Hogan and the workforce system on workforce development and training needs for Maryland's businesses. Maryland's workforce partners must proactively engage with businesses

to ensure that workforce training funds are utilized in the most effective and efficient way possible.

Maryland has been recognized as a national leader in industry-led partnerships through the EARN Maryland program. The program, whose acronym stands for Employment Advancement Right Now, is a state-funded initiative that provides training opportunities for Maryland's jobseekers and those individuals seeking to obtain additional training to further their careers in a wide variety of fields. Partnerships have been formed to advance careers in health care, construction, biotechnology, cybersecurity and information technology, transportation and logistics, and many more. While there is wide variety in the partnerships funded through a DLLR competitive grant process, all partnerships are driven by industry needs and have a number of business partners involved in shaping each individual program. To date, over 500 employer partners are participating in the EARN Maryland program.

Businesses are also customers of the workforce system in so far as they receive the benefits of a pipeline of skilled workers equipped with the knowledge and abilities needed for the changing workforce. Maryland's workforce agencies must work together to ensure quality customer service to the business. Previously, Maryland's business outreach has been disjointed as agencies independently built relationships with businesses without collaboration or coordination. As a result, multiple agencies from State and local entities make multiple, and sometimes overlapping inquiries of business. Rather than building lasting relationships with this consumer of workforce services, businesses are often pulled away from their businesses to meet with government agencies. Thus, Maryland's workforce and economic agencies must coordinate efforts to provide consulting services in order to service business needs.

Specifically, the Maryland Department of Commerce ("Commerce"), the Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation, and the Maryland State Department of Education's Division of Rehabilitation Services have already begun the process of deeper and more meaningful collaboration. These agencies have staff dedicated to interacting with businesses on a regular basis. Business development representatives from Commerce are charged with retaining and growing existing Maryland businesses, providing support for businesses to expand through assistance with business development, finance and regulatory issues, as well as actively recruiting new businesses nationally. The Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation's Business Service representatives work with companies throughout the State to understand specific business employment needs and assist with workforce development strategies. This includes Local Veterans' Employment Representatives funded through the Jobs for Veterans State Grant Program who are dedicated to the specific needs of Maryland's veteran population. The Department employs Apprenticeship Navigators who interact with businesses to promote apprenticeship opportunities to businesses. The Division of Rehabilitative Services also serves as a resource for businesses on disability and employment matters, including: disability awareness training, workforce diversity and inclusion initiatives, and as a key resource for Americans with Disabilities Act reasonable accommodations solutions. Worksite consultations are also available to help businesses hire and retain quality employees with disabilities. Local workforce development areas and the Department of Human Resources must also play an important role in business outreach.

In frequent communication, these agencies will develop a deeper understanding of the services each offer, and, after understanding a business's needs, will be able to refer the business to the services of the appropriate agency. This will require that the agencies collaborate on a shared communications platform. In short, the State's workforce agencies must be proactively engaged with Maryland's business community. It cannot wait for business to come to the State for assistance. Through relationship-building, the State's workforce system must be attuned to the needs of Maryland's businesses, and must tailor workforce training opportunities to ensure that those needs are being met.

Improving Quality of Life "Marylanders are among the nation's hardest working and most educated people." -Governor Hogan's 2015 State of the State Address

Jobseekers must also be the focus of Maryland's workforce system. Whether a jobseeker is entering an American Job Center, submitting a resume to apply for jobs on the Maryland Workforce Exchange, or receiving training through one of Maryland's twelve local partners, the services received must be tailored to the individual's needs.

The State of Maryland is geographically diverse. From the mountains of Western Maryland, to the Interstate 95 corridor, to the waters of the Chesapeake Bay, Maryland is truly "America in miniature." The people who call Maryland home are just as diverse. They come from a large array of backgrounds, education, and social and political perspectives. They carry with them unique life stories and experiences that can contribute greatly to Maryland's economic well-being.

A jobseeker from Cumberland may face different barriers to employment than the same jobseeker in Tacoma Park faces. The State's workforce system must be responsive to the needs of both jobseekers. Thus, collaboration on both the State and local levels is key to ensuring that customers who enter any American Job Center, local social services office, or any other entry point into the Maryland workforce system is provided with specific, customized services.

In the end, the primary goal of the workforce system must be to serve the person above serving only performance measures. This is not to say that performance measures are not important. However, when the workforce system focuses on the needs of our fellow Marylanders, and not just the prescribed goals of a particular program, performance will naturally increase. In serving our fellow Marylanders, the State's workforce system will not only change the lives of those jobseekers it serves, but it will also affect the lives

of that individual's family and that their community. By placing people before performance, the State workforce system will truly be changing Maryland for the better.

This change in philosophy will not occur overnight. Maryland's WIOA Partners must ensure that message of placing people before performance is captured throughout the workforce system and not merely an empty platitude written on the pages of a lengthy State plan. As the workforce system dedicates its efforts to ensuring that all of Maryland's jobseekers are provided quality services, particular focus must be placed on those individuals who face barriers to employment that hinder them from entering into a fulfilling and meaningful career. Individuals with barriers to employment, as defined by the WIOA and Maryland include the following.

- Displaced homemakers
- Eligible migrant and seasonal farm workers
- Ex-offenders
- Homeless individuals
- Individuals facing substantial cultural barriers
- Individuals with disabilities, including youth with disabilities
- Individuals within two years of exhausting lifetime eligibility under Part A of the Social Security Act
- Individuals who are English language learners
- Individuals who are unemployed, including the long-term unemployed
- Individuals who have low levels of literacy
- Individuals without a high school diploma
- Low income individuals, including TANF and SNAP recipients
- Long-term unemployed individuals
- Native Americans, Alaskan Natives, and Native Hawaiians
- Older individuals
- Single parents (including single pregnant women and non-custodial parents)
- Veterans
- Youth who are in, or have aged out of, the foster care system

Those with barriers to employment, as described above, deserve the attention of the workforce system. Along with these barriers comes a multitude of stigmas, myths, and fallacies. Low expectations and misconceptions abound when dealing with those with disabilities, those who are ex-offenders, and those with low levels of literacy or who are otherwise without a high school diploma. In creating a customer-centric system that is dedicated to providing services to those who were previously deemed "the hardest to serve," Maryland's workforce system will be dedicated to eliminating the stigmas, myths, and misconceptions that exists.

One way to "bust" misconceptions is through the creation of a workforce system fosters the creation of a career pathway for all Marylanders. WIOA defines a career pathway, as a combination of rigorous and high-quality education, training, and other services that:

- Aligns with the skill needs of industries in the economy of the State or regional economy involved;
- Prepares an individual to be successful in any of a full range of secondary or post-secondary education options, including apprenticeships;
- Includes counseling to support an individual in achieving the individual's education and career goals;
- Includes, as appropriate, education offered concurrently with, and in the same context as, workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster;
- Organizes education, training, and other services to meet the particular needs of an individual in a manner that accelerates the educational and career advancement of the individual to the extent practicable;
- Enables an individual to attain a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and at least one recognized post-secondary credential; and,
- Helps an individual enter or advance within a specific occupation or occupational cluster.

A career pathway system ensures that Maryland's jobseekers are offered education and skills training along with the necessary credentials to meet industry demands. Recognizing the varying backgrounds of Maryland's jobseekers, a career pathway system provides participants with multiple entry points to accommodate varying education levels, and multiple exit points as the jobseeker obtains the necessary skill or credential. Again, business partnerships are key in the development of this pathway to ensure that the jobseeker obtains industry-recognized credentials and has the potential to obtain a rewarding career. As Maryland's WIOA Partners implement the provisions of the federal act and the vision set forth in the pages of this Combined Workforce Plan, they must commit to providing concrete steps for the creation of career pathways. In doing so, Maryland's WIOA Partners must provide technical assistance on carrier pathways.

To accomplish this, Maryland's WIOA Partners must dedicate their efforts to serve the person and not the performance measure. Maryland has taken an important first step in dedication to this vision through its interagency collaboration on the Combined Workforce State Plan. For the first time, Maryland's workforce system is required to purposefully combine the services to include service delivery for individuals who receive Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) benefits as well as those jobseekers with disabilities. Both groups often have significant barriers to employment; therefore, Maryland's workforce system will be newly aligned to meet their needs.

Increased customer service requires that Maryland's WIOA Partners collaboratively identify all services that are provided among their varying programs, and find ways to combine resources, when practicable, to ensure efficiency. Education partners, such as the Maryland State Department of Education, the Maryland Higher Education Commission, and Maryland's community colleges are also key to the development of a career pathways system. As Maryland's youth exit the K-12 system and enter into post-secondary opportunities, the transition must be seamless.

Opportunities for Youth Programs must be developed to ensure that Maryland's youth are truly ready to enter into the workforce just as much as they are being academically prepared to enter into college. Maryland currently offers Career Technology Education (CTE) programs to high school students. CTE programs include a work-based learning opportunity (e.g. internships, clinical experiences, or industry-mentored projects) tied to the student's area of interest. These programs are aligned to establish academic,

technical, and employability skill standards, and are centered on ten career clusters.

Maryland's CTE Career Clusters Arts, Media and Communication Health and Biosciences Business, Management and Finance Human Resource Services Construction and Development Information Technology Consumer Services, Hospitality and Tourism Manufacturing, Engineering and Technology Environmental, Agricultural and Natural Resources Transportation Technologies

These career clusters connect educators and employers, and provide a framework that is responsive to industry demands. The Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation, in partnership with the Maryland State Department of Education, piloted a program in 2015 to establish a youth apprenticeship in science, technology, engineering, mathematics or manufacturing in two Maryland counties, Frederick and Washington. The pilot program is part of a larger initiative to foster youth apprenticeships in the State for both traditional and non-traditional apprenticeable fields. Providing opportunities for Maryland's youth that contextualize classroom training into the workplace must remain a priority for the workforce system in its delivery of services to youth in-school and out-of-school, alike. Additionally, due to the new WIOA focus on older, out-of-school youth, as well as including TANF as a mandated partner, Maryland views this as a prime opportunity to engage younger TANF recipients between the ages of 18-24 in local WIOA youth services. This earlier engagement in workforce development for young TANF recipients can place individuals on a career pathway that will lead to self-sufficiency and earlier independence from public assistance.

Opportunities for Adult Learners Adult Education is a vital element to Maryland's workforce system. Providing academic instruction and high school equivalency testing to adult learners provides these individuals with the skills they need to compete in global, regional, state, and local economies. Effectively assessing the needs of the adult learner is key to ensuring that the individual receives the time and attention he or she needs to not only secure a job, but to secure a career, and thrive in his or her community and family. Maryland's workforce system must ensure that front-line staff are properly trained to ensure that, when an adult is assessed, it is done according to all applicable testing standards. By accurately measuring a learner's literacy, numeracy, and English language skills, Maryland's WIOA system is better equipped to meet the learner or jobseeker exactly where they are in their education or training needs, and ultimately assist the individual in obtaining gainful employment.

Maryland's adult learners not only have a variety of skill levels, but also have a number of cultural obstacles that must be addressed. Ninety percent of adult education enrolled participants are below a high school level of skills. Additionally, English language learners represent a large subset, approximately 49 percent, of the adult education population. Immigrant populations make up approximately 17 percent of Maryland's workforce system. They provide substantial contributions to Maryland's economy every day. In turn, Maryland's workforce system must strive to tailor services for this population as they obtain literacy and high school equivalency, training, and employment services. Opportunities for Ex-Offenders Efforts must continue to provide services for individuals in Maryland's correctional facilities. While Maryland's workforce system currently provides both academic and occupational training for this subset of the adult learner population, efforts within the correctional education system must not simply be "out of sight, out of mind."

Providing career opportunities for those who are currently incarcerated is key to reducing recidivism. It provides an investment in Maryland's communities, as those who return to their communities with a nationally recognized credential or skill are more likely to succeed. Correctional education opportunities must be tailored to the labor market, so that inmates receive training in the skills they need to successfully transition into the workforce. Greater collaboration must also occur between State agencies to identify those individuals who are slated to be released to ensure they receive job service counseling and the opportunity to obtain a marketable skill.

This population needs ongoing support to address necessary changes in mindset and realistic expectations, especially for those individuals who are not incarcerated long term. Creating and increasing efforts to assist those who have returned to society from confinement invests in individuals as they overcome the most significant barriers to employment. There is a great need to eliminate stigma against people with criminal records by providing a network of support.

While there are multiple worthwhile programs that have previously been implemented that specifically target and address the needs of this group of jobseekers, a more collaborative approach is needed under the WIOA system. For example, the Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation, through the administration of the State's American Job Center system, has a number of programs which include: participation in a federal program that provides bonding and tax credits for employers who hire ex-offenders; the utilization of staff specifically trained in ex-offender employment; and, the establishment of workshops aimed at opportunities for record expungement. The Department's Office of Correctional Education partners with organizations such as Vehicles for Change to provide opportunities for those returning to society. Individuals who successfully complete an auto mechanics program administered through the Department while behind the fence are not only provided an opportunity to obtain Automotive Service Excellence certification, but may continue their training upon release at Vehicles for Change. Additional training sets the returning citizen on the path toward employment. The organization, recognizing that transportation is often a significant barrier to employment, also provides individuals with the independence associated with owning their own vehicle. Maryland commits to exploring additional avenues to provide opportunities like these to this important population.

Opportunities for Veterans Maryland's workforce system must also ensure that opportunities for veterans are plentiful and robust.

Veterans make incredible and lasting impacts on their places of employment, their communities, and their families. Maryland's workforce system must be seen as a partner for veterans transitioning from active service to civilian life, no matter when that transition occurred. Currently, veterans staff are available at every American Job Center to exclusively serve the needs of veteran jobseekers with significant barriers to employment, and businesses who seek to employ veterans. Maryland's workforce system must provide greater outreach to this community, and to ensure that, veterans employment staff at both the State and local levels must be invested in this population. Professional development for staff must continuously take place on a regular basis. Furthermore, veterans staff must be continuously aware of businesses who wish to hire Maryland's veterans. Thus, greater collaboration between business services personnel and veterans representatives must occur.

**Opportunities for Individuals with Disabilities** Every working age Marylander with a disability, including those with significant disabilities, must have access to opportunities which lead to employment in competitive, integrated settings. The opportunity to learn necessary skills and receive needed support through the State's workforce system and its key partners enables individuals with disabilities to experience success in the full cross section of Maryland's businesses and industries. Employment is critical to ensuring quality lives for Marylanders with disabilities while reducing reliance on public assistance and strengthening the economic fabric of our State.

Marylanders with disabilities possess the ability to contribute to the state's economic growth and achieve financial self-sufficiency. Historically, however, this population has had a low level of workforce participation, particularly those with the most significant disabilities. In an effort to capitalize on the attributes of this untapped workforce, Maryland's workforce system will play a key role in embracing nationally recognized best practices including Employment First, a national effort to assure that all individuals with significant disabilities can work in meaningful positions in integrated settings when provided with adequate, appropriate support. All aspects of the workforce system, including state partner agencies, local public and private partners, and businesses will coordinate to effectively strengthen employment outcomes for Marylanders with disabilities. To that end, the Maryland Department of Disabilities, a member of the Governor's Workforce Investment Board, will provide leadership to the workforce system and other key partners. This leadership will focus on aligning policies and service delivery practices that will ensure progress toward competitive, integrated employment as the top priority for publicly funded services supporting youth and adults with disabilities. The WIOA Partners must also collaborate to offer cross-training for staff on disability awareness. Employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities should further be accentuated at recruitment events and job fairs. In short, there is much to do to ensure that individuals with disabilities can effectively access the workforce system.

**Reduce Taxes and Fees** "High taxes, over-regulation, and an anti-business attitude are clearly the cause of our economic problems." -Governor Hogan's 2015 State of the State Address

High taxes stifle economic growth and a business' desire to expand its operations within the State. Unemployment Insurance in Maryland is one of the many taxes and fees businesses are required to pay under Maryland law. Maryland's businesses will see a significant reduction in Unemployment Insurance rates, which will be the lowest possible rates allowed under State law, beginning in the First Quarter of 2016. While a decrease in the Unemployment Insurance tax rate is a sign of the Administration's continued commitment to improve the State's business climate, there is much more to be done.

Maryland's workforce system must partner with its Unemployment Insurance counterparts to ensure that reemployment strategies are fully integrated and proactively implemented for both the benefit of the Unemployment Insurance claimants and Maryland's businesses. Unemployment Insurance claimants benefit from reduced unemployment duration, increased reemployment and likely increased earnings. Businesses benefit by even lower Unemployment Insurance taxes and a robust pool of candidates ready to work to meet the workforce needs of business and industry.

Increased cooperation and communication between Maryland's workforce and Unemployment Insurance systems will ensure that once an individual is eligible for Unemployment Insurance benefits, he or she will quickly and efficiently be placed on the path toward meaningful reemployment. Increased cooperation and communication will also ensure that Maryland's Unemployment Insurance claimants have a clear understanding of the responsibilities required of them as a condition for receiving Unemployment Insurance benefits.

**Fiscal Responsibility** Maryland's workforce system must be effective and efficient. If the focus is truly on the people and businesses that are served through the system, Maryland's workforce partners will naturally seek to create, coordinate, and revise systems to ensure greater delivery of services. Maryland's WIOA Partners must continuously coordinate efforts, finding efficiencies not only within their own agencies, but also finding ways in which they can coordinate efforts with their sister agencies.

One way this may be accomplished is through the sharing of data and technological resources. Maryland's workforce agencies have varying systems that, as of March 2015, simply do not communicate with each other to the extent needed. As a result, a customer obtaining services through DLLR must provide the same basic demographic information all over again when obtaining human services, like TANF. This lack of coordination leads to duplicative efforts and frustrated customers. Government Reform

"Our administration will chart a new course; one guided by simple, common sense principles." -Governor Hogan's 2015 State of the

## State Address

While the path toward government reform is not an easy one, it is nonetheless a necessary journey Maryland's workforce system must take. Maryland's WIOA Partners must be innovative. They must find new ways in which they can provide services to Maryland's businesses and jobseekers. Just because something was previously done a certain way does not mean that it must continue to be done that way.

For the first time, Maryland is combining its workforce efforts across multiple agencies into one State plan. The end result will be a greater dedication by Maryland's workforce agencies to deliver services to Maryland's jobseekers from diverse backgrounds, with diverse needs. By committing to serve low-income individuals receiving services through the Maryland Department of Human Resource's TANF program, as well as those with disabilities receiving services from the Maryland State Department of Education's Division of Rehabilitation Services, and to Maryland's adult education population, the workforce system is devoted to serving all of Maryland's jobseekers.

The renewed focus on serving these deserving populations requires a change in philosophy. Maryland's workforce system can no longer place a label on a jobseeker as merely a customer of one single agency. Rather, under this new customer-centric workforce system, the agencies together, with their respective local partners, will identify the services that are needed for the customer. This will be done not by shuffling the customer from one referring agency to another, but through collaboration and increased communication. In doing so, the system focuses on the person before the performance measures an agency reports to federal agencies.

When the focus is on meeting the customer's needs, the workforce system's efforts will be on meeting the needs of the individual, not on meeting the goals written on a page. Maryland's workforce system will recognize that jobseekers are not an input into a system that must be moved through prescribed processes. Rather, the jobseekers who enter Maryland's American Job Centers, or visit local Department of Social Services locations are our neighbors, friends, and fellow Marylanders who are in need of the critical services these agencies, and their local partners, deliver. This change is what Maryland's jobseekers and businesses not only deserve, but require.

This shift in focus also requires a change in the way that Maryland measures its performance. As Maryland has treated the enactment of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act as a way to critically analyze and ultimately "reset" the workforce system, the enactment of the federal act is also an opportunity to "reset" the performance standards that were negotiated under the Workforce Investment Act. Over the next two years, Maryland's workforce system and its partner agencies are dedicated to establishing a baseline measure as they serve an increased number of customers entering the workforce system that were not served under previous models. In doing so, Maryland is reforming the operations of the workforce system and is truly placing people before performance measures.

Further, Maryland's efforts to increase and foster the growth of apprenticeship opportunities must be aligned with the workforce system. Previous efforts in apprenticeship focused heavily on the traditional trades-based models. However, in order to truly promote apprenticeships, greater opportunity must be given to expand this "earn and learn" model to other traditionally non-apprenticable fields.

In aligning apprenticeship opportunities with Maryland's workforce system, a pipeline of talent is created. Businesses that participate will be able to train their employees in the skills they need to succeed. It further fosters a continuation of the career pathways approach to workforce development. Youth who pursue an apprenticeship opportunity will be able to obtain on-the-job training in a high-demand career of their choice. The same is true for those adults who wish to begin a new career path. Currently, DLLR has begun efforts to establish a cyber security apprenticeship in Maryland. Through working with and learning from Maryland's business community and stakeholders, the Department determined that establishing a talent pipeline for this emerging industry is key to the growth of the cybersecurity and information technology fields in the State.

By aligning apprenticeships with the WIOA system, Maryland will ensure that traditional apprenticeship opportunities expand alongside the creation of new opportunities that are grounded in labor market demand.

## 2. Goals

Describe the goals for achieving this vision based on the above analysis of the State's economic conditions, workforce, and workforce development activities. This must include—

- Goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce, including preparing youth and individuals with barriers of employment\* and other populations.\*\*
- Goals for meeting the skilled workforce needs of employers.

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\* Individuals with barriers to employment include displaced homemakers; low-income individuals; Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians; individuals with disabilities, including youth who are individuals with disabilities; older individuals; ex-offenders; homeless individuals, or homeless children and youths; youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system; individuals who are English language learners, individuals who have low levels of literacy, and individuals facing substantial cultural barriers; eligible migrant and seasonal farmworkers (as defined at section 167(i) of WIOA and Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 35-14); individuals within 2 years of exhausting lifetime eligibility under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program; single parents (including single pregnant women); and long-term unemployed individuals.

\*\* Veterans, unemployed workers, and youth and any other populations identified by the State.

The Path Forward This new collaborative approach to the workforce system, while not easy, is a necessity for Maryland's businesses and jobseekers. Thus, each decision regarding the workforce system must be centered on how the decision will affect these two groups.

To that end, the following is a list of goals to achieve this overall vision:

#### Goals & Outcomes Strategies for Accomplishing the Goals & Outcomes

Leverage existing resources and minimize costs • Integrating of technology and data sharing between WIOA partners • Enhancing functionality of the Maryland Workforce Exchange • Streamlining service delivery from WIOA Partners • Using a "systems approach," where partner strengths are relied on and maximized • Reducing staff costs as a result of improved customer flow and access

Increase access to education, training, and key services for individuals with barriers to employment • Integrating of career pathway models in competitive grant applications • Expanding collaborative efforts to provide robust supportive services to customers • Strengthening input of customers (jobseekers and business) through implementation of continuous improvement plans for service delivery that involve customer satisfaction surveys, focus groups, etc. • Providing technical assistance and best practice resources • Negotiating local performance measures utilizing regression models • Expanding apprenticeship opportunities in high-demand industries • Ensuring the State has a robust Eligible Training Provider List

Improve customer intake processes via standardization to reduce the amount of time it takes for a customer to engage in services • Creating of metrics, process maps, and models • Implementation of universal design practices • Implementation of enhanced technologies that increase data sharing and access • Readily identifying and proactively engaging unemployed individuals in intensive reemployment strategies soon after job loss

Increase focus on businesses and jobseekers as customers of the system • Enhancing business engagement through the development of comprehensive business services teams and strategies which align businesses, trade associations, trade unions, chambers, community colleges, and other community-based organizations with resources dedicated to business outreach • Creating of regional business service units working with business, as well as Rapid Response teams, to engage jobseekers early and to identify skills for other business partners • Aligning of apprenticeship opportunities with workforce development • Expanding of industry-driven models, like EARN

Develop standards, policies, and procedures to ensure the sustainability of these best practice efforts throughout the State • Consistent and regular communication between WIOA Partners at leadership and service delivery levels • Increase collaboration between State agencies to determine best practices for service delivery • Reliance on subject matter experts throughout the WIOA system when developing policies and procedures • Soliciting input from WIOA system experts when creating State legislative agendas • Provide technical assistance and financial incentive to Local Areas meeting standards of excellence

### 3. Performance Goals

Using the table provided in Appendix 1, include the State's expected levels of performance relating to the performance accountability measures based on primary indicators of performance described in section 116(b)(2)(A) of WIOA. (This Strategic Planning element only applies to core programs.)

As Maryland has treated the enactment of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act as a way to critically analyze and ultimately "reset" the workforce system, the enactment of the federal act is also an opportunity to "reset" the performance standards that were negotiated under the Workforce Investment Act. Over the next two years, Maryland's workforce system and its partner agencies are

dedicated to establishing a baseline measure as they serve an increased number of customers entering the workforce system that were not served under previous models. In doing so, Maryland is reforming the operations of the workforce system and is truly placing people before performance measures.

## ASSUMPTIONS IN DEVELOPING APPENDIX 1 FOR PY16-PY17 STATE PLAN

Many key concepts associated with performance accountability are still in draft form. We are awaiting complete guidance, and made the following assumptions in analysis and data preparation work. If any of the assumptions are proven inconsistent with the final regulations/guidance provided by the Departments, we reserve the right to revisit any and all projections and proposals contained with this appendix.

1) General Concepts a. Participants –the definition proposed in the Notices of Proposed Rulemaking issued on April 16, 2015 (NPRM), which meant excluding self-service only Title III job seekers. However, many members of Maryland’s WIOA Performance Accountability Group objected to the exclusion of those customers only receiving self-services from the Participant definition. "Self-service only" are included in these estimates. If the definition is modified, we will have to propose different targets for Title III. b. Exit –the “pre-WIOA” definition of exit does not match the NPRM proposed definition. The NPRM proposed that a Period of Participation not be extended by self-service (such as when a staff-assisted customer continues to utilize the system through self-service). We were unable to do this and used pre WIOA definition of exit. c. Common Periods of Participation – The NPRM requested feedback on whether “Common Periods of Participation” should be used in WIOA reporting across all WIOA programs. Data below is based on WIOA Adult, DW, Youth and WP sharing a common participation period for reporting. 2) Measure Definition/Calculation Issues – Most of the measure definition proposals proposed by the Departments in the Joint Performance Reporting Information Collection Request (JPRICR) were complete and appeared to conform to the statutory definitions. However, there were exceptions that impacted developing data for the appendix. a. Credential Rate – The proposed specifications within the JPRICR contained a conflict between different components of the guidance which made it impossible to follow the specifications in determining who was in the denominator. In the absence of clear guidance, assumed that the denominators contained only those Participants who were enrolled in education or training intended to result in a recognized degree or certificate (and thus had a reasonable chance to be in the numerator). This allowed to submit target proposals for the Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth populations 3) Performance Periods – The Departments did not propose performance periods for the WIOA measures, so we assumed the periods would match the pre-WIOA performance periods.

## 4. Assessment

Describe how the State will assess the overall effectiveness of the workforce development system in the State in relation to the strategic vision and goals stated above in sections (b)(1), (2), and (3) and how it will use the results of this assessment and other feedback to make continuous or quality improvements.

Assessments, Performance and Alignment To ensure that the workforce system continuously improves, Maryland’s WIOA Partners must dedicate themselves to placing people before performance standards. In placing the customers (businesses and jobseekers) that rely on the workforce system at the center of the decisions that are made regarding the system, Maryland’s WIOA Partners must continue to strive for excellence, innovation, and the best service delivery possible. People who need the services the most will benefit from a system that operates out of realistic expectations and is empowered with the flexibility to take risks needed to serve target populations. To that end, the WIOA Partners will work with USDOL and the federal Department of Education and other federal funders to agree on performance standards once further guidance is provided. Alignment Group and Refocusing of the Maryland WIOA Workgroups In order for the Plan to succeed, leadership from the WIOA Partners must ensure that the programs they administer adapt and integrate to ensure seamless delivery of services for the workforce system’s collective customers. This requires a greater level of communication between the WIOA Partners, as well as a communication throughout the system. The constituent programs within Maryland’s workforce system must be aligned to provide businesses and jobseekers with the best possible service. To ensure that the transition into WIOA implementation is as smooth as possible, the WIOA Partners will establish an Alignment Group. The Alignment Group will be a forum for the WIOA Partners to continue to collaboratively approach the challenges of WIOA implementation.

The group will include key leadership in all of the core and combined programs represented in the Maryland State Plan. Specifically, the Alignment Group will be comprised of representatives from:

- The Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation’s Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning;
- The Maryland Department of Human Resources’ Family Investment Administration;
- The Maryland State Department of Education’s Division of Rehabilitative Services;
- The Governor’s Workforce Investment Board;
- Local Workforce Development Areas and local WIOA Partner programs; and,
- Representatives from the Community College System of Maryland.

The Alignment Group will provide key oversight to the WIOA workgroups, as Maryland continues to implement the provisions of the

federal act. In the months following the initial submission and approval of the State Plan, the Alignment Group will work to repurpose the previously established WIOA workgroups. While the workgroups will continue to provide valuable input into the development of Maryland's WIOA system, their focus will be on implementation of the provisions of the Plan. The Alignment Group will further focus on:

- Ensuring that Maryland continues to develop a baseline of performance for serving customers;
- Ensuring that the message set forth in this Plan is carried out throughout the system;
- Developing customer flow strategies that are formalized;
- Ensuring that system efficiencies are maximized;
- Ensuring the integration of resources connected to all employment and training–related funding;
- Ensuring seamless access to information for businesses and jobseekers alike;
- Developing shared assessment tools that emphasize customer service;
- Ensuring new technologies are harnessed for ease of access for the consumer; and,
- Developing common branding to effectively promote Maryland's workforce system.

To that end, the WIOA Partners are committed to convening on a monthly basis for at least the first two years of implementation. Additionally, local workforce areas are encouraged to find ways to collaboratively engage their local partners during both the formulation and implementation of local plans and the implementation of the same. For instance, all local partners can establish a monthly event for their joint customers. Information for the event can be posted in local libraries, food pantries, and other public spaces to provide inclusiveness to the public who may not regularly be aware that these resources exist. Jobseeker Advisory Focus Groups Maryland's customer–centric approach requires that the WIOA Partners continue to meet the needs of jobseekers and businesses who utilize the services of the WIOA system. As GWIB continues to ensure that businesses are proactively engaged and that the voice of business is represented, the WIOA Partners are also dedicated to establishing a Jobseeker Advisory Focus Groups. To ensure that Maryland's workforce system continually focuses on placing people before performance, this effort will engage jobseekers throughout the State in an effort to better understand the barriers they face in securing employment.

The focus groups will advise the workforce system by giving a voice to the jobseekers it serves. As Maryland's system continues to dedicate its efforts to those with barriers to employment, the focus groups will ensure that the WIOA Partners are continually aware of the barriers faced by jobseekers and workers in securing and maintaining stable employment, and earning a family–supporting wage.

Engagement of focus groups will allow the WIOA Partners to further develop an understanding of how processes could be streamlined from a customer's point of view. Members of these focus groups could also help improve the reemployment efforts, Rapid Response, and other programs provided at the American Job Centers throughout the State by providing first–hand information on how these programs can help jobseekers overcome the barriers they face in order to become re–employed quickly.

The WIOA Partners will develop a process upon which customers are selected to participate in the focus groups without interrupting their lives. Local Areas are also encouraged to include in their local plans how they intend to engage jobseekers who use their services. Maryland State WIOA Convening The WIOA Partners recognize that continuous communication is necessary to ensure that Maryland's customer–centric workforce model is not just words on a page. During the summer of 2016, the WIOA Partners will hold a WIOA convening. The convening will include the cabinet secretaries representing the WIOA Partners, key management from the WIOA Partners, GWIB representatives, and key local operational representation.

The vision for an integrated system, as set forth in this Plan, will be communicated at this convening. Additionally, best practices will be discussed, and partners from all levels must be afforded the opportunity to discuss issues as this combined Plan is implemented. The goal of the convening is to ensure that the provisions set forth in the Maryland State Combined Plan will be implemented in the most effective and efficient way to better serve Maryland's jobseekers and businesses.

The convening should include:

- A communication of a shared vision for Maryland's customer–centric workforce approach
- Breakout sessions regarding ways to integrate vocational rehabilitation and TANF customers into the American Job Center system
- Sessions on barriers to employment and best practices on barrier removal
- Sessions on leveraging funding for supportive services
- Sessions on best practices such as ACE and MI–BEST, as well as sector–based training programs and sector partnerships, including EARN, should be discussed
- Sessions on integrating apprenticeships into the workforce system

In all, Maryland is dedicated to ensuring that communication regarding the State's implementation efforts is not a singular event. The WIOA Partners are committed to incorporating mass communication systems, such as GovDelivery, to ensure that important messages regarding implementation are continually provided to frontline staff and local providers. Furthermore, Maryland is dedicated to utilizing WIOA implementation funding to ensure that local and State staff are provided professional development and other training opportunities.

## **c. State Strategy**

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include the State's strategies to achieve its strategic vision and goals. These strategies must take into account the State's economic, workforce, and workforce development, education and training activities and analysis provided in Section (a) above. Include discussion of specific strategies to address the needs of populations provided in Section (a).

**1. Describe the strategies the State will implement, including industry or sector partnerships related to in-demand industry sectors and occupations and career pathways, as required by WIOA section 101(d)(3)(B), (D). “Career pathway” is defined at WIOA section 3(7). “In-demand industry sector or occupation” is defined at WIOA section 3(23).**

Businesses serve as partners to the workforce system by providing input regarding in-demand training needs, and policy guidance for the system to ensure that initiatives are driven by industry demands. As businesses change and adapt to labor markets, a workforce development system that successfully partners with business must also evolve to ensure that jobseekers receive proper training and opportunities for in-demand careers.

Maryland has been recognized as a national leader in industry-led partnerships through the EARN Maryland program. The program, whose acronym stands for Employment Advancement Right Now, is a state-funded initiative that provides training opportunities for Maryland’s jobseekers and those individuals seeking to obtain additional training to further their careers in a wide variety of fields. Partnerships have been formed to advance careers in health care, construction, biotechnology, cybersecurity and information technology, transportation and logistics, and many more. While there is wide variety in the partnerships funded through a DLLR competitive grant process, all partnerships are driven by industry needs and have a number of business partners involved in shaping each individual program. To date, over 500 employer partners are participating in the EARN Maryland program.

In frequent communication, these agencies will develop a deeper understanding of the services each offer, and, after understanding a business’s needs, will be able to refer the business to the services of the appropriate agency. This will require that the agencies collaborate on a shared communications platform. In short, the State’s workforce agencies must be proactively engaged with Maryland’s business community. It cannot wait for business to come to the State for assistance. Through relationship-building, the State’s workforce system must be attuned to the needs of Maryland’s businesses, and must tailor workforce training opportunities to ensure that those needs are being met.

A career pathway system ensures that Maryland’s jobseekers are offered education and skills training along with the necessary credentials to meet industry demands. Recognizing the varying backgrounds of Maryland’s jobseekers, a career pathway system provides participants with multiple entry points to accommodate varying education levels, and multiple exit points as the jobseeker obtains the necessary skill or credential. Again, business partnerships are key in the development of this pathway to ensure that the jobseeker obtains industry-recognized credentials and has the potential to obtain a rewarding career. As Maryland’s WIOA Partners implement the provisions of the federal act and the vision set forth in the pages of this Combined Workforce Plan, they must commit to providing concrete steps for the creation of career pathways. In doing so, Maryland’s WIOA Partners must provide technical assistance on career pathways.

Increased customer service requires that Maryland’s WIOA Partners collaboratively identify all services that are provided among their varying programs, and find ways to combine resources, when practicable, to ensure efficiency. Education partners, such as the Maryland State Department of Education, the Maryland Higher Education Commission, and Maryland’s community colleges are also key to the development of a career pathways system. As Maryland’s youth exit the K-12 system and enter into post-secondary opportunities, the transition must be seamless.

**2. Describe the strategies the State will use to align the core programs, any Combined State Plan partner programs included in this Plan, required and optional one-stop partner programs, and any other resources available to the State to achieve fully integrated customer services consistent with the strategic vision and goals described above. Also describe strategies to strengthen workforce development activities in regard to weaknesses identified in section II(a)(2).**

Alignment Group and Refocusing of the Maryland WIOA Workgroups In order for the Plan to succeed, leadership from the WIOA Partners must ensure that the programs they administer adapt and integrate to ensure seamless delivery of services for the workforce system’s collective customers. This requires a greater level of communication between the WIOA Partners, as well as a communication throughout the system. The constituent programs within Maryland’s workforce system must be aligned to provide businesses and jobseekers with the best possible service. To ensure that the transition into WIOA implementation is as smooth as possible, the WIOA Partners will establish an Alignment Group. The Alignment Group will be a forum for the WIOA Partners to

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The focus groups will advise the workforce system by giving a voice to the jobseekers it serves. As Maryland's system continues to dedicate its efforts to those with barriers to employment, the focus groups will ensure that the WIOA Partners are continually aware of the barriers faced by jobseekers and workers in securing and maintaining stable employment, and earning a family-supporting wage.

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The convening should include:

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messages regarding implementation are continually provided to frontline staff and local providers. Furthermore, Maryland is dedicated to utilizing WIOA implementation funding to ensure that local and State staff are provided professional development and other training opportunities.

### **III. Operational Planning Elements**

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an Operational Planning Elements section that support the State's strategy and the system-wide vision described in Section II.(c) above. Unless otherwise noted, all Operational Planning Elements apply to Combined State Plan partner programs included in the plan as well as to core programs. This section must include—

#### **A. State Strategy Implementation**

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include—

##### **1. State Board Functions**

Describe how the State board will implement its functions under section 101(d) of WIOA (i.e. provide a description of Board operational structures and decision making processes to ensure such functions are carried out).

The Governor's Workforce Investment Board (GWIB) is responsible for advising the Governor on the development of strategies and policies to form a coordinated WIOA-compliant workforce system by integrating a variety of education, employment, and training programs. It brings together and focuses various workforce development partners and stakeholders on two key outcomes – ensuring there is a properly prepared workforce that meets the current and future demands of Maryland employers, and providing opportunities for all Marylanders to succeed in the 21st century workforce.

**GWIB Mission:** To guide a nationally-recognized workforce development system that aligns with the economic and educational goals of the State of Maryland and will result in a qualified workforce available to employers across the State.

**GWIB Vision:** A Maryland where every person maximizes his or her career potential and businesses have access to the human resources they need to be successful. The vision includes: • Alignment of the business, workforce system, and economic development interests in Maryland • Well-integrated, coordinated, and collaborative systems across agencies, institutions, Local Areas, and business • Preservation and expansion of Maryland's highly-educated workforce • Creation of opportunities for all Maryland residents to participate and succeed in the workforce.

To ensure the State's workforce board's functions are successfully carried out pursuant to WIOA, the GWIB includes the following key oversight and management positions:

- GWIB Chairperson who presides over all meetings, appoints committees, and is responsible for leading the Board in its activities and for serving as the principal liaison between the Governor and the Board. As necessary to facilitate the Board's performance of its WIOA duties and responsibilities, the Chairperson duties include: facilitating and driving high-performance governance; setting the proposed agenda with the Executive Director; holding task force committees accountable; communicating and coordinating with the Executive Director; managing and facilitating meetings; appointing members to committees; serving as an ambassador, and various advocacy and public relations responsibilities.
- An Executive Committee that is comprised of 10 GWIB Board members—6 members of business, 3 government representatives, and 1 member representing community-based organizations. The Executive Committee develops recommendations to the Board in the areas of strategic planning, legislation, and operations. One of their primary duties is to develop the agenda for full Board meetings.
- An Interagency Workforce Committee that is comprised of senior officials from the GWIB's partner agencies. The Committee's purpose is to coordinate and align workforce development initiatives and policies to meet the demands of Maryland's industries.
- GWIB Staff provide strong administrative support to the Board in its efforts to carry out its WIOA functions.

##### **2. Implementation of State Strategy**

Describe how the lead State agency with responsibility for the administration of each core program or a Combined Plan partner program included in this plan will implement the State's Strategies identified in Section II(c). above. This must include a description of—

## **A. Core Program Activities to Implement the State's Strategy**

Describe the activities the entities carrying out the respective core programs will fund to implement the State's strategies. Also describe how such activities will be aligned across the core programs and Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan and among the entities administering the programs, including using co-enrollment and other strategies.

To support Maryland's comprehensive and collaborative workforce system, DLLR, DHR, MSDE, and local partners are committed to ensuring effective coordination and alignment of the State's WIOA programs through strategic policy development and coordinated resource sharing through cooperative agreements, and collaboration with local and regional partners. Together, Maryland's WIOA Partners will facilitate the creation of a strong, skilled workforce that effectively connects with businesses to help them compete in the global, State, and local economies.

Consistent with Governor Hogan's vision, the WIOA Partners will continue to ensure that customers are provided with the services they need, in a way that avoids duplication of programs and activities carried out through the system. DLLR's Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning (DWDAL) leads the State WIOA workforce system's implementation of operational protocols, programs, and practices. The Division is committed to the implementation of policies and procedures that promote systems improvement, efficient operations within the American Job Center system, and the expansion of established best practices related to service provision.

Maryland is positioning itself to make certain that investments in the State's workforce system will now ensure continuous improvement of a comprehensive and robust system that gives the State's businesses the skilled workforce they need to compete in an ever changing global economy. Maryland will continue to take a customer-focused approach to workforce development issues to successfully meet both jobseeker and business needs.

## **B. Alignment with Activities outside the Plan**

Describe how the activities identified in (A) will be aligned with programs and activities provided by required one-stop partners and other optional one-stop partners and activities provided under employment, training (including Registered Apprenticeships), education (including career and technical education), human services and other programs not covered by the plan, as appropriate, assuring coordination of, and avoiding duplication among these activities.

Apprenticeships combine supervised, structured, on-the-job training and related technical instruction to teach apprentices the skills necessary to succeed in a specific occupation. Registered apprenticeships are voluntary, industry-driven programs sponsored by employers, employer associations, and jointly by management and labor. A program sponsor can be an individual employer, groups of employers, or combinations of employers and unions. Each sponsor develops an apprenticeship program based on the needs of their specific occupation.

Apprenticeships offer benefits to both the jobseeker and the sponsor. For the jobseeker, apprenticeships provide jobs where the apprentice receives one-on-one job training, as well as related classroom education, while he or she learns the necessary skills to become fully integrated into the workforce. Apprenticeships provide full-time positions that are in-depth and certified with the minimum length of an apprenticeship of one year with at least 2,000 hours of on-the-job training and 144 hours of related classroom instruction per year. Apprenticeship career pathways are diverse. In Maryland, there are over 230 registered occupations and over 9,000 registered apprentices. Apprenticeships offer career progression and advancement with incremental salary increases throughout duration of the apprenticeship. Additionally, apprenticeships offer healthcare, retirement and fringe benefits. After all program requirements are met, apprentices receive a certificate of completion and are nationally recognized journeypersons. Jobseekers who wish to become an apprentice are encouraged to first research a trade to determine an occupation he/she would like to pursue. A complete list of all apprenticeship occupations can be found on the Maryland Apprenticeship and Training Program page at the following link: <https://www.dllr.state.md.us/labor/appr/>. Once a potential apprentice has decided on a trade, he/she should contact program sponsors directly to inquire about their individual application requirements and hiring schedule. Individuals should research the programs carefully as each sponsor has individual application requirements. Once the individual decides on the program, he/she submits an application to that program. Once the individual has been hired as an apprentice, an Apprentice Agreement will be completed by both the apprentice and the sponsor and filed with the Maryland Apprenticeship and Training Council. This Apprenticeship Agreement classifies the individual as a registered apprentice.

For sponsors, apprenticeships offer many benefits as well. Apprenticeships are designed to meet the workforce needs. Due to the need for highly skilled workers, many sponsors use apprenticeship as a method to train employees in the knowledge necessary to become a skilled worker. Apprenticeships reduce employee turnover and the structured training fosters quality output, increased productivity and teamwork. Apprentices are among the most technically up-to-date workers, as the training programs produce a pool of highly-skilled and motivated workers from which to select future managers. Apprenticeships can help to increase revenue with no

cost to begin the program.

Once a potential sponsor has developed an apprenticeship program and has applied for registration, the Maryland Apprenticeship and Training Council review the “Standards of Apprenticeship” which include: • An organized, written training plan • The terms and conditions of employment • Attendance at related instruction • An equal employment opportunity pledge • Proper supervision of the apprentice(s)

To educate, promote and facilitate the apprenticeship program, the Maryland Apprenticeship and Training Program utilizes “Apprentice Navigators.” The Apprentice Navigator participates in career and job fairs, public events, as well as, conducts public outreach efforts to promote the Maryland State Apprenticeship and Training Program. The Apprenticeship Navigator also attends internal and external stakeholder meetings, including those with current and future sponsors and employers, to help develop and coordinate new apprenticeship programs. The Apprentice Navigator helps both jobseekers and sponsors understand the program and the process to ensure successful apprenticeships. The Apprentice Navigator serves as a liaison between the sponsors and the State to ensure all requirements are met and any questions answered in a timely fashion. The Maryland Apprenticeship and Training Council is responsible for registering and regulating the State approved apprenticeship programs in Maryland. In Maryland, there are over 230 registered occupations and over 9,000 registered apprentices. Most apprenticeships are within the building trades and construction industries.

The State of Maryland is committed to providing opportunities for individuals with disabilities, and the apprenticeship program is no exception. Apprenticeships offer young adults, including those with disabilities, a career pathway that provides employment as the individual learns on the job. Focused attention will be given to developing relationships with apprenticeship employers to encourage increased participation of individuals with disabilities in apprenticeship programs. Outreach efforts will be made to identify and educate individuals with disabilities on the value and opportunities in apprenticeship programs. These would include, but are not limited to, working with State vocational rehabilitation (VR) agencies, the Veterans’ Employment and Training Service (VETS), convening a roundtable of employers who hire people with disabilities to introduce the concept of developing apprenticeable occupations, showcasing an apprenticeship model among disability-friendly businesses, and establishing public-private partnerships to develop outreach strategies for those individuals with disabilities.

DLLR is dedicated to aligning apprenticeship opportunities with the workforce system. Aligning apprenticeships with workforce development resources will ensure that Maryland creates a pipeline of skilled and qualified labor for years to come. In establishing a robust apprenticeship system, Maryland is dedicated to exploring new and innovative ways to create apprenticeship opportunities within the workforce system. One way Maryland has demonstrated this commitment is through the work of the Youth Apprenticeship Advisory Committee. Created by a 2014 act of the Maryland General Assembly, the committee issued its first report to the Maryland General Assembly on December 1, 2015. In it, the Committee outlined eight recommendations in furtherance of the creation of a robust apprenticeship system dedicated to serving the needs of Maryland’s youth. Those recommendations are as follows:

**RECOMMENDATION 1:** The Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation, in consultation with the Department of Commerce, should identify and convene key industry partners to establish an employer engagement campaign for youth apprenticeship.

**RECOMMENDATION 2:** The Committee should identify and evaluate current and needed resources for the State to establish the role of business intermediaries for youth apprenticeship.

**RECOMMENDATION 3:** The Committee should establish targets for implementing youth apprenticeships after reviewing and assessing available data. The Committee should also establish performance matrixes to gauge the success of youth apprenticeship programming.

**RECOMMENDATION 4:** The Committee should review and establish best practices for mentorship.

**RECOMMENDATION 5:** The Committee should identify policies and suggest changes to regulations that prohibit employers from establishing a youth apprenticeship program.

**RECOMMENDATION 6:** The Committee should identify and suggest solutions to additional barriers that would inhibit youth from participating in a youth apprenticeship program. These barriers include, but are not limited to, transportation needs.

**RECOMMENDATION 7:** In consultation with the MSDE and other stakeholders, the Committee should review Maryland’s existing models and recommend ways to integrate soft skills training into the training plans for the Youth Apprenticeship program.

**RECOMMENDATION 8:** The Committee should convene a one-day conference with leading experts to discuss the necessary components of high quality training plans to ensure strong mentorships and the integration of academic, technical, and the essential skills. In addition, the State’s first youth apprenticeship pilot program, Apprenticeship Maryland, awarded two grants to Frederick and Washington Counties in November 2015 to create opportunities for students to enter STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) disciplines, or manufacturing industries. The pilot program was the creation of a partnership between DLLR, the MSDE, and

Commerce.

DLLR will continue to work with Registered Apprenticeship programs to encourage and assist with participation as a provider on the State's Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) to access WIOA funding for training and create pipelines for apprenticeship programs across Maryland. The WIOA Partners will continue to explore opportunities to leverage existing and future discretionary grant opportunities to create and enhance pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs across Maryland. Current models exist with partnerships formed under federal and state grants in which adult, dislocated workers, youth, veterans, ex-offenders and other at risk populations are targeted as a pipeline for pre-apprenticeship programs and connected to apprenticeship opportunities after successful completion. Business Service staff will also receive training on how apprenticeships can serve as a tool for businesses to develop a pipeline of talent.

Though WIOA places a greater emphasis on serving out-of-school youth, Maryland's WIOA Partners remain committed to ensuring that clearly defined career pathways exists for in-school youth as well. The workforce system has a strong, enduring relationship with its Career and Technical Education (CTE) schools across the State. Many CTE administrators sit on Local Workforce Boards and are actively engaged in conversations with businesses and workforce providers to understand how high school programs can be improved to meet industry needs. Representatives from DLLR's Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning are currently meeting alongside MSDE and other key stakeholders to ensure ongoing alignment of Maryland's CTE system with in-demand careers. The group is further committed to placing a greater emphasis on CTE programming as an avenue of college and career readiness for all students.

DLLR has provided training in promising models of career pathways and awarded grants to support career pathways systems planning in various local workforce areas. With leadership from DLLR's adult education office, Maryland also piloted the Maryland Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (MI-BEST) program and the Accelerating Connections to Employment (ACE) initiative, both of which provided accelerated, integrated learning opportunities for low-skilled jobseekers, including individuals with limited English proficiency and those with low reading, writing, and math skills. DLLR will continue to provide technical assistance through the Maryland WIOA Convening, policies, and other means to local partners in an effort to successfully implement career pathways systems. This approach requires an investment of time and resources in order to best serve businesses, as well as jobseekers. Identifying businesses in need of trained, entry-level employees is key to the success of career pathways programming. This requires the expertise of local workforce and economic development agencies. Planning for integrated academic and specific job training requires thoughtful coordination of training providers and adult education providers. Other partners must be engaged to fulfill the need for support services for individuals with barriers to employment. Businesses may provide internships and help guide curriculum development. The success of the program is measured by the percentage of participants who become employed within the specific industry for which they were trained.

The career pathways approach will require a workforce system transformation and can benefit a wide variety of participants, including low-skilled adults, high school students, disconnected youth, veterans, incumbent workers, individuals with disabilities, and other target populations. The system requires aligned and transparent educational progression with multiple entry points and clearly defined "on and off ramps." The system warrants a source of funding to scale up and sustain initiatives, maintain the partnerships that are critical to the process, and must include tools to measure and evaluate outcomes.

The WIOA Partners are dedicated to the career pathways system as a way to further implement a systematic approach to sustainable employment solutions for Maryland's jobseekers. To that end, WIOA Partners pledge to provide resources to establish a robust career pathways system in Maryland. Local workforce partners must address in their local plans how they intend to implement a career pathways model to address their local workforce training needs.

**Supportive Services** To fully address the wide range of barriers that WIOA participants may face, Maryland is committed to offering a diverse array of supportive services as needed and available. Supportive and wrap-around services will provide financial and other assistance to participants who would not be able to successfully participate otherwise.

Using a systems approach, the WIOA Partners are committed to working together to ensure supportive service resources are leveraged effectively for jobseekers. By taking advantage of opportunities to braid funding streams within Maryland's WIOA system, participants may be supported with transportation assistance, suitable attire for work, tools, work or training equipment, child or dependent care, graduation fees, union fees, clothing for interviews or work, and more.

Maryland's WIOA Partners recognize that supportive service needs vary widely by participant and geography and, therefore, supportive services must be designed to assist in the removal of the specific barriers that individual participants face. The Jobseeker Advisory Focus Groups will be of critical importance to the WIOA System in meeting this goal, as it will provide a feedback mechanism from current and past customers. This customer board will make certain that supportive service funding is allocated in a way that truly meets customer needs. Additionally, programs working with out-of-school youth ages 16-24 are strongly encouraged to work with Local Management Boards through the Governor's Office for Children to plan and implement supportive services that respond to the needs of youth in their respective jurisdictions. Local Management Boards are local government designees established in each of Maryland's 24 jurisdictions to ensure the coordinated implementation of a local inter-agency service delivery

system for children, youth, and families. Local Management Boards are able to apply for flexible State funds from the Children's Cabinet to support programming that aligns with Governor Hogan's goal of ensuring economic opportunity for all. These flexible State funds may provide necessary supports that could not otherwise be provided with existing, less flexible federal dollars.

It is envisioned that collaborative planning and implementation will prevent service duplication and ensure that State funds are used to fill gaps in services. Local plans must address how they will leverage and coordinate supportive services in service delivery.

## **C. Coordination, Alignment and Provision of Services to Individuals**

Describe how the entities carrying out the respective core programs, Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan, and required and optional one-stop partner programs will coordinate activities and resources to provide comprehensive, high-quality, customer-centered services, including supportive services to individuals including those populations identified in section II(a)(1)(B). The activities described shall conform to the statutory requirements of each program.

**Jobseekers as Customers: Coordination, Alignment, and Provision of Services** For jobseekers—especially for those jobseekers who are unemployed or who face barriers to employment—this approach means that the State will strive to ensure customers who are receiving multiple services across agencies are not discouraged or disenfranchised by unnecessary bureaucracy. Instead, Maryland customers will feel encouraged and assisted by the workforce system because the WIOA Partners will continue to communicate often and effectively, taking action to align efforts across programs when possible. The WIOA Partners will meet on a monthly basis through the Alignment Group to discuss implementation and alignment efforts, and to address the progress and opportunities for improvement, which would include training opportunities for staff. Maryland will use multiple avenues and access points to provide efficient and effective services and systems for customers to access resources and services needed to achieve their personal goal.

To help operationalize alignment efforts, DLLR, DHR, MSDE, and local workforce partners are committed to cross training employees and sharing resources and data, as appropriate and when possible. Collaboration between State and local workforce partners and the co-location of resources will further foster improved customer service, as it will help identify commonalities and ensure that processes are in place to provide a greater number of services to shared customers.

The WIOA Partners will explore ways to successfully build in incentives for local providers to serve those who are most in need of assistance. The WIOA Partners are further committed to placing jobseekers in the center of service delivery solutions.

Maryland's WIOA Partners are committed to serving the following target populations:

Target Populations: Individuals with Barriers to Employment Displaced Homemakers Eligible migrant and seasonal farmworkers Ex-offenders Homeless individuals Individuals facing substantial cultural barriers Individuals with disabilities, including youth with disabilities Individuals within two years of exhausting lifetime eligibility under Part A of the Social Security Act Individuals who are English language learners Individuals who are unemployed, including the long-term unemployed Individuals who have low levels of literacy Individuals without a High School Diploma Low income individuals (including TANF and SNAP recipients) Long-term unemployed individuals Native Americans, Alaskan Natives, and Native Hawaiians Older individuals Single parents (including single pregnant women and non-custodial parents) Veterans Youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system

Maryland is dedicated to continued discussions regarding the individual barriers noted on the above list, and whether additional barriers to employment should be included. Local plans may include specific additional barriers that the Local Areas may wish to include in their service delivery.

These individuals face challenges that require innovative strategies, solutions, and tools to meet their needs throughout the job acquisition, training, and business recruitment processes. Maryland's WIOA system will:

- Incorporate continuous staff training, which is paramount to understanding and properly utilizing the tools available to facilitate assessment, to disseminate information on services available throughout the system, and to refer customers to appropriate WIOA partner organizations.
- Provide multiple access points to increase outreach and balance efficiency among the various persons involved with the customer experience.
- Create a robust menu of services and appropriate referrals that can effectively meet the needs of a diverse customer base.
- Establish relationships, competence, and accountability among all partners involved in the system. Through the Alignment Group, the WIOA Partners will establish deeper relationships and accountability to enhance our customers' experiences.
- Encourage sharing of information among partners, such as creating a resource map, workforce network blog, WIOA listserv, and a common customer service management system. The Alignment Group will provide guidance to the system.
- Encourage greater business involvement in workforce processes, in Workforce Development Boards, and in the sharing of "industry-related" work skills and behavioral expectations. This includes a greater collaborative role for community colleges and industry organizations in developing programs that meet labor market needs in the Local Area.
- Develop a common intake process that provides the ability to access customer information on services provided and next steps in the process.
- Reduce duplicative

processes to expand staff's ability to serve customers more efficiently. The Alignment Group will provide guidance, and the WIOA workgroups will continue to work on customer flow models, and common intake. • Establish guidelines for WIOA Partners to manage and refer customers to other partners. • Identify liaisons among the various partners to assure that customers experience a seamless flow and referral to appropriate services. • Develop a mechanism for clear identification of resources and service responsibilities among the partners and within the community. • Place people before performance by putting customers at the center of policy decisions regarding service delivery.

Priority of Service Maryland's WIOA system can be a pathway to the middle class and a means to maintain and build the skills necessary to remain in the middle class. Maryland is committed to ensuring its target populations are able to access the WIOA system on a priority basis.

For the WIOA Title I Adult Program, this means that local workforce areas must provide priority for training activities to individuals in the target populations. Under WIA, priority was required to be given to public assistance recipients and low-income individuals only when it was determined that allocated funds were limited. Now, under WIOA, priority must be provided regardless of the level of available funds. Priority must be provided in the following order:

Priority of Service for the WIOA Title I Adult Program  
First Priority Veterans and eligible spouses who are also low-income, recipients of public assistance and/or basic skills deficient  
Second Priority Individuals who are not veterans or eligible spouses, but meet criteria to be considered a target population  
Third Priority Veterans and eligible spouses who did not meet "first priority" conditions  
Fourth Priority Individuals who are not veterans and do not meet criteria to be considered a target population

Local Areas must adhere to these priority provisions and, within their local plans, provide details on how priority shall be given in the Local Area within these parameters.

Supportive Services To fully address the wide range of barriers that WIOA participants may face, Maryland is committed to offering a diverse array of supportive services as needed and available. Supportive and wrap-around services will provide financial and other assistance to participants who would not be able to successfully participate otherwise.

Using a systems approach, the WIOA Partners are committed to working together to ensure supportive service resources are leveraged effectively for jobseekers. By taking advantage of opportunities to braid funding streams within Maryland's WIOA system, participants may be supported with transportation assistance, suitable attire for work, tools, work or training equipment, child or dependent care, graduation fees, union fees, clothing for interviews or work, and more.

Maryland's WIOA Partners recognize that supportive service needs vary widely by participant and geography and, therefore, supportive services must be designed to assist in the removal of the specific barriers that individual participants face. The Jobseeker Advisory Focus Groups will be of critical importance to the WIOA System in meeting this goal, as it will provide a feedback mechanism from current and past customers. This customer board will make certain that supportive service funding is allocated in a way that truly meets customer needs. Additionally, programs working with out-of-school youth ages 16-24 are strongly encouraged to work with Local Management Boards through the Governor's Office for Children to plan and implement supportive services that respond to the needs of youth in their respective jurisdictions. Local Management Boards are local government designees established in each of Maryland's 24 jurisdictions to ensure the coordinated implementation of a local inter-agency service delivery system for children, youth, and families. Local Management Boards are able to apply for flexible State funds from the Children's Cabinet to support programming that aligns with Governor Hogan's goal of ensuring economic opportunity for all. These flexible State funds may provide necessary supports that could not otherwise be provided with existing, less flexible federal dollars.

It is envisioned that collaborative planning and implementation will prevent service duplication and ensure that State funds are used to fill gaps in services. Local plans must address how they will leverage and coordinate supportive services in service delivery.

## **D. Coordination, Alignment and Provision of Services to Employers**

Describe how the entities carrying out the respective core programs, any Combined State Plan partner program included in this plan, required and optional one-stop partner programs will coordinate activities and resources to provide comprehensive, high-quality services to employers to meet their current and projected workforce needs. The activities described shall conform to the statutory requirements of each program.

Business as WIOA Customers: Coordination, Alignment and Provision of Services to Employers Businesses must play a central role in the workforce system. Businesses create jobs and employ Marylanders. They directly benefit from the creation of a pipeline of skilled and knowledgeable workforce. As such, business is a key customer of the workforce system. Recognizing this fact, the majority of GWIB, consistent with the requirements of WIOA, is comprised of business leaders. As Governor Hogan's chief policy-making body on workforce development, innovation and opportunity, the Board is dedicated to promoting comprehensive planning

and coordination of employment and training programs in the State. Business can play an important role in developing training criteria and identifying emerging jobs.

The workforce system must proactively engage business in its processes early and often in the development of processes and services to ensure that the services that will be provided to Maryland's jobseekers are in line with business needs. The workforce system must also introduce businesses to existing processes. For instance, there is a wide array of professional development, social assistance, and incumbent worker resources offered to businesses through the American Job Centers. In short, Maryland's American Job Centers should not be the "best kept secret" for business any longer. Rather, the workforce system will thrive through the relationships it builds with the business community. To that end, GWIB will dedicate efforts to establishing a business engagement taskforce to ensure that business is involved in the delivery of workforce services. The taskforce will provide strategies to the WIOA Partners on conducting outreach to Maryland's businesses, utilization of labor market information, and the development of innovative practices in workforce development training needs. Local Boards must also outline in their respective local plans how they intend to provide a greater business voice in local workforce services.

Furthermore, the WIOA Partners agree to work together to ensure quality customer service to businesses. The Maryland Business Services Team, is comprised of DLLR staff, local workforce staff, and other locally determined partners. It exists to help companies grow and thrive, to foster economic growth and stability, and to ensure that Marylanders have opportunities for gainful employment.

Together, the members of the Business Services Team work with companies throughout the State to understand specific business needs and to proactively assist Maryland's businesses with growth and workforce development strategies. The team partners with agencies and local entities to meet its goal. Additional partners may include, but are not limited to: Maryland Department of Commerce, Department of Human Resources, Maryland State Department of Education, the Maryland Department of Disabilities, local economic development agencies, public libraries, faith-based organizations, community organizations, Chambers of Commerce, industry associations, Maryland businesses and colleges and universities. Moving forward, the aforementioned agencies will have representation on the Business Services Team to ensure that both workforce and economic development needs of a respective business are met, and that State resources are effectively leveraged.

Business Services Team members have participated, and will continue to participate, in joint training sessions and will work collaboratively to develop relationships with Maryland businesses, meet with leaders and provide consulting services related to company stabilization and growth throughout the business life cycle. In frequent communication, the Business Services Team will develop a deeper understanding of the services each offer, and, after understanding a business's needs, will be able to refer the business to the services of fellow team members.

Recognizing that a workforce system that is disconnected from business fails to meet the needs of jobseekers, the WIOA Partners are dedicated to creating an industry-driven solution to workforce development that places businesses in the center of the identification of workforce needs, the development of curriculum, the design of trainings, and the placement of successful participants. Deep involvement of business in the process breeds confidence from employers that program participants are proficient in relevant skills that create contributing employees. This model is currently being utilized in the EARN Maryland program, as administered by DLLR. The program, whose acronym stands for Employment Advancement Right Now, is a nationally recognized initiative with over 500 employer participants.

The WIOA Partners agree that building on the success of this industry-driven model will ensure that the needs of businesses and jobseekers are met. Maryland's WIOA Partners are also dedicated to the expansion of industry-led partnerships that allow participants to obtain industry-recognized credentials, and are invested in providing policy guidance to the workforce system regarding this important component of WIOA. In placing an emphasis on both industry-led partnership opportunities and industry-recognized credentials, Maryland is ensuring that its talent pipeline is responsive to the needs of in-demand careers and industry sectors. To that end, local workforce partners must also identify in their local plans how they will promote and cultivate industry-led partnerships in the delivery of workforce training opportunities. Opportunities to link EARN with the Adult Education/career pathways system should be explored and implemented, in order to establish a bridge to participation for low-skilled individuals and others with barriers to employment.

## **E. Partner Engagement with Educational Institutions**

Describe how the State's Strategies will engage the State's community colleges and area career and technical education schools, as partners in the workforce development system to create a job-driven education and training system. WIOA section 102(b)(2)(B)(iv).

**Partnership with Education** Unlike many states, which face siloed education and workforce systems, Maryland enjoys strong, collaborative partnerships between its educational institutions and workforce entities. By emphasizing career pathways as a key tenet of our State's strategic plan, Governor Hogan recognizes the importance of sustaining and continuing to foster this important relationship.

In Maryland, adult education and literacy programs are housed within DLLR's Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning, alongside the WIOA workforce programs. Co-location of leadership ensures that administrators are communicating often and effectively. Strong communication helps to ensure that local adult education service providers, many of which are community colleges, and local workforce areas are administering programs in a coordinated fashion. It also provides the State with an opportunity to apply for supplemental grants together, and it allows for more easily identifiable alignment opportunities.

For example, Maryland is committed to aligning the required procedures that Title I and Title II providers must use to assess basic skills and English language assessments. The intent of an aligned assessment process is to provide better services to shared customers, to reduce duplicative testing, and to ensure a streamlined referral system between partner agencies. Local WIOA Plans will specify the steps that each jurisdiction will take to align basic skills and English language assessment services. Maryland will continue to explore opportunities to increase efficiency and maximize resources as we move forward.

Maryland is committed to re-evaluating its Eligible Training Provider (ETP) application process, as a way to ensure that WIOA customers have a robust list of diverse, job-driven training and career pathway programs for which Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) can be used. While an interim policy was released by DLLR in July 2015, DLLR has since made efforts to further consolidate responsibilities for the State's administration of the Eligible Training Provider List. A revised policy regarding the process in light of this consolidation will be issued by Summer 2016. DLLR is also committed to convening stakeholders, including, but not limited to, WIOA Partners, community colleges, and EARN Program training providers, to understand how the application process for new providers could be improved. DLLR will also continue conversations with its existing ETPs and the USDOL to gauge how Personally Identifiable Information (PII) concerns can be addressed to ensure that PII is managed scrupulously.

Though WIOA places a greater emphasis on serving out-of-school youth, Maryland's WIOA Partners remain committed to ensuring that clearly defined career pathways exists for in-school youth as well. The workforce system has a strong, enduring relationship with its Career and Technical Education (CTE) schools across the State. Many CTE administrators sit on Local Workforce Boards and are actively engaged in conversations with businesses and workforce providers to understand how high school programs can be improved to meet industry needs. Representatives from DLLR's Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning are currently meeting alongside MSDE and other key stakeholders to ensure ongoing alignment of Maryland's CTE system with in-demand careers. The group is further committed to placing a greater emphasis on CTE programming as an avenue of college and career readiness for all students.

DLLR has provided training in promising models of career pathways and awarded grants to support career pathways systems planning in various local workforce areas. With leadership from DLLR's adult education office, Maryland also piloted the Maryland Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (MI-BEST) program and the Accelerating Connections to Employment (ACE) initiative, both of which provided accelerated, integrated learning opportunities for low-skilled jobseekers, including individuals with limited English proficiency and those with low reading, writing, and math skills. DLLR will continue to provide technical assistance through the Maryland WIOA Convening, policies, and other means to local partners in an effort to successfully implement career pathways systems. This approach requires an investment of time and resources in order to best serve businesses, as well as jobseekers. Identifying businesses in need of trained, entry-level employees is key to the success of career pathways programming. This requires the expertise of local workforce and economic development agencies. Planning for integrated academic and specific job training requires thoughtful coordination of training providers and adult education providers. Other partners must be engaged to fulfill the need for support services for individuals with barriers to employment. Businesses may provide internships and help guide curriculum development. The success of the program is measured by the percentage of participants who become employed within the specific industry for which they were trained.

The career pathways approach will require a workforce system transformation and can benefit a wide variety of participants, including low-skilled adults, high school students, disconnected youth, veterans, incumbent workers, individuals with disabilities, and other target populations. The system requires aligned and transparent educational progression with multiple entry points and clearly defined "on and off ramps." The system warrants a source of funding to scale up and sustain initiatives, maintain the partnerships that are critical to the process, and must include tools to measure and evaluate outcomes.

The WIOA Partners are dedicated to the career pathways system as a way to further implement a systematic approach to sustainable employment solutions for Maryland's jobseekers. To that end, WIOA Partners pledge to provide resources to establish a robust career pathways system in Maryland. Local workforce partners must address in their local plans how they intend to implement a career pathways model to address their local workforce training needs.

Recently, DLLR convened a Youth Apprenticeship Advisory Committee, a group of business, labor, CTE experts, and other stakeholders, to explore the expansion of youth apprenticeships in Maryland pursuant to Chapter 646 of the Acts of 2014, as codified in Section 11-409 of the Labor and Employment Article of the Maryland Annotated Code. The Committee issued a report to serve as a blueprint for the Maryland's youth apprenticeship system in an effort to engage a new generation of workers and employers in Maryland.

The Committee is charged with evaluating the effectiveness of existing high school youth apprenticeship programs in other states and other countries. The Committee is further tasked with reviewing and identifying ways to implement high school youth apprenticeship programs in the State. The Committee must also review and identify means through which employers and organizations can obtain tax credits, grants, and other subsidies to support the establishment and operation of high school youth apprenticeship programs, and set targets for the number of apprenticeship opportunities for youth that the State should reach over the next three years.

As has been learned with the more traditional trade-focused Registered Apprenticeship programs, apprenticeships are a win-win for the business and the apprentice alike. Studies show that apprenticeships can and do reduce turnover costs, increase job satisfaction and increase productivity. Apprenticeships offer employees the opportunity to earn while they learn and reduce sky-rocketing costs associated with education and training necessary to compete effectively in the workforce. Also, a team from MSDE, Commerce, and DLLR identified two school jurisdictions—Frederick and Washington Counties—where youth apprenticeship programs will be piloted beginning in September 2016 with high school juniors and seniors in STEM and manufacturing careers. Legislation creating the pilot was approved by the Maryland General Assembly in 2015 as part of the State’s Economic Development and Business Climate Commission. Over the course of the next few years, DLLR hopes to build on best practices identified by this pilot to potentially expand this earn-and-learn model.

Maryland is dedicated to expanding Integrated Education and Training programming (training models that combine classroom instruction with meaningful workforce experiences), and specifically utilizing this model for the further development of apprenticeship and career pathways opportunities. These are primary tenets of our State’s strategic vision and, as such, our investments will open opportunities for Marylanders to access portable, stackable post-secondary credentials that are recognized across industry and education.

## **F. Partner Engagement with Other Education and Training Providers.**

Describe how the State’s Strategies will engage the State’s other education and training providers, including providers on the state’s eligible training provider list, as partners in the workforce development system to create a job-driven education and training system.

Maryland is committed to re-evaluating its Eligible Training Provider (ETP) application process, as a way to ensure that WIOA customers have a robust list of diverse, job-driven training and career pathway programs for which Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) can be used. While an interim policy was released by DLLR in July 2015, DLLR has since made efforts to further consolidate responsibilities for the State’s administration of the Eligible Training Provider List. A revised policy regarding the process in light of this consolidation will be issued by Summer 2016. DLLR is also committed to convening stakeholders, including, but not limited to, WIOA Partners, community colleges, and EARN Program training providers, to understand how the application process for new providers could be improved. DLLR will also continue conversations with its existing ETPs and the USDOL to gauge how Personally Identifiable Information (PII) concerns can be addressed to ensure that PII is managed scrupulously.

DLLR will continue to work with Registered Apprenticeship programs to encourage and assist with participation as a provider on the State’s Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) to access WIOA funding for training and create pipelines for apprenticeship programs across Maryland. The WIOA Partners will continue to explore opportunities to leverage existing and future discretionary grant opportunities to create and enhance pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs across Maryland. Current models exist with partnerships formed under federal and state grants in which adult, dislocated workers, youth, veterans, ex-offenders and other at risk populations are targeted as a pipeline for pre-apprenticeship programs and connected to apprenticeship opportunities after successful completion. Business Service staff will also receive training on how apprenticeships can serve as a tool for businesses to develop a pipeline of talent.

## **G. Leveraging Resources to Increase Educational Access**

Describe how the State’s strategies will enable the State to leverage other Federal, State, and local investments that have enhanced access to workforce development programs at the above institutions, described in section (E).

DLLR has provided training in promising models of career pathways and awarded grants to support career pathways systems planning in various local workforce areas. With leadership from DLLR’s adult education office, Maryland also piloted the Maryland Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (MI-BEST) program and the Accelerating Connections to Employment (ACE) initiative, both of which provided accelerated, integrated learning opportunities for low-skilled jobseekers, including individuals with limited English proficiency and those with low reading, writing, and math skills. DLLR will continue to provide technical assistance through the Maryland WIOA Convening, policies, and other means to local partners in an effort to successfully implement career pathways systems. This approach requires an investment of time and resources in order to best serve businesses, as well as

jobseekers. Identifying businesses in need of trained, entry-level employees is key to the success of career pathways programming. This requires the expertise of local workforce and economic development agencies. Planning for integrated academic and specific job training requires thoughtful coordination of training providers and adult education providers. Other partners must be engaged to fulfill the need for support services for individuals with barriers to employment. Businesses may provide internships and help guide curriculum development. The success of the program is measured by the percentage of participants who become employed within the specific industry for which they were trained.

The career pathways approach will require a workforce system transformation and can benefit a wide variety of participants, including low-skilled adults, high school students, disconnected youth, veterans, incumbent workers, individuals with disabilities, and other target populations. The system requires aligned and transparent educational progression with multiple entry points and clearly defined “on and off ramps.” The system warrants a source of funding to scale up and sustain initiatives, maintain the partnerships that are critical to the process, and must include tools to measure and evaluate outcomes.

The WIOA Partners are dedicated to the career pathways system as a way to further implement a systematic approach to sustainable employment solutions for Maryland’s jobseekers. To that end, WIOA Partners pledge to provide resources to establish a robust career pathways system in Maryland. Local workforce partners must address in their local plans how they intend to implement a career pathways model to address their local workforce training needs.

Recently, DLLR convened a Youth Apprenticeship Advisory Committee, a group of business, labor, CTE experts, and other stakeholders, to explore the expansion of youth apprenticeships in Maryland pursuant to Chapter 646 of the Acts of 2014, as codified in Section 11-409 of the Labor and Employment Article of the Maryland Annotated Code. The Committee issued a report to serve as a blueprint for the Maryland’s youth apprenticeship system in an effort to engage a new generation of workers and employers in Maryland.

The Committee is charged with evaluating the effectiveness of existing high school youth apprenticeship programs in other states and other countries. The Committee is further tasked with reviewing and identifying ways to implement high school youth apprenticeship programs in the State. The Committee must also review and identify means through which employers and organizations can obtain tax credits, grants, and other subsidies to support the establishment and operation of high school youth apprenticeship programs, and set targets for the number of apprenticeship opportunities for youth that the State should reach over the next three years.

As has been learned with the more traditional trade-focused Registered Apprenticeship programs, apprenticeships are a win-win for the business and the apprentice alike. Studies show that apprenticeships can and do reduce turnover costs, increase job satisfaction and increase productivity. Apprenticeships offer employees the opportunity to earn while they learn and reduce sky-rocketing costs associated with education and training necessary to compete effectively in the workforce. Also, a team from MSDE, Commerce, and DLLR identified two school jurisdictions—Frederick and Washington Counties—where youth apprenticeship programs will be piloted beginning in September 2016 with high school juniors and seniors in STEM and manufacturing careers. Legislation creating the pilot was approved by the Maryland General Assembly in 2015 as part of the State’s Economic Development and Business Climate Commission. Over the course of the next few years, DLLR hopes to build on best practices identified by this pilot to potentially expand this earn-and-learn model.

Maryland is dedicated to expanding Integrated Education and Training programming (training models that combine classroom instruction with meaningful workforce experiences), and specifically utilizing this model for the further development of apprenticeship and career pathways opportunities. These are primary tenets of our State’s strategic vision and, as such, our investments will open opportunities for Marylanders to access portable, stackable post-secondary credentials that are recognized across industry and education.

## **H. Improving Access to Postsecondary Credentials**

Describe how the State’s strategies will improve access to activities leading to recognized postsecondary credentials, including Registered Apprenticeship certificates. This includes credentials that are industry-recognized certificates, licenses or certifications, and that are portable and stackable.

DLLR has provided training in promising models of career pathways and awarded grants to support career pathways systems planning in various local workforce areas. With leadership from DLLR’s adult education office, Maryland also piloted the Maryland Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (MI-BEST) program and the Accelerating Connections to Employment (ACE) initiative, both of which provided accelerated, integrated learning opportunities for low-skilled jobseekers, including individuals with limited English proficiency and those with low reading, writing, and math skills. DLLR will continue to provide technical assistance through the Maryland WIOA Convening, policies, and other means to local partners in an effort to successfully implement career pathways systems. This approach requires an investment of time and resources in order to best serve businesses, as well as

jobseekers. Identifying businesses in need of trained, entry-level employees is key to the success of career pathways programming. This requires the expertise of local workforce and economic development agencies. Planning for integrated academic and specific job training requires thoughtful coordination of training providers and adult education providers. Other partners must be engaged to fulfill the need for support services for individuals with barriers to employment. Businesses may provide internships and help guide curriculum development. The success of the program is measured by the percentage of participants who become employed within the specific industry for which they were trained.

The career pathways approach will require a workforce system transformation and can benefit a wide variety of participants, including low-skilled adults, high school students, disconnected youth, veterans, incumbent workers, individuals with disabilities, and other target populations. The system requires aligned and transparent educational progression with multiple entry points and clearly defined “on and off ramps.” The system warrants a source of funding to scale up and sustain initiatives, maintain the partnerships that are critical to the process, and must include tools to measure and evaluate outcomes.

The WIOA Partners are dedicated to the career pathways system as a way to further implement a systematic approach to sustainable employment solutions for Maryland’s jobseekers. To that end, WIOA Partners pledge to provide resources to establish a robust career pathways system in Maryland. Local workforce partners must address in their local plans how they intend to implement a career pathways model to address their local workforce training needs.

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Maryland is dedicated to expanding Integrated Education and Training programming (training models that combine classroom instruction with meaningful workforce experiences), and specifically utilizing this model for the further development of apprenticeship and career pathways opportunities. These are primary tenets of our State’s strategic vision and, as such, our investments will open opportunities for Marylanders to access portable, stackable post-secondary credentials that are recognized across industry and education.

## **I. Coordinating with Economic Development Strategies.**

Describe how the activities identified in (A) will be coordinated with economic development entities, strategies and activities in the State.

Coordinating with Commerce Recognizing that greater collaboration between agencies may require the use of common platforms, data collection and information sharing, Maryland is committed to exploring technologies that link our business services teams in a more coordinated way. In order to provide relevant information to Maryland’s businesses, Business Services Team members from various state agencies must be cross-trained in a functional knowledge of business services offered by other state agencies and actively facilitate warm referrals to partners. Maryland’s Business Services members will attend quarterly training on business retention, growth and layoff aversion strategies, as well as economic and industry indicators and labor market information. Additionally, representatives from DLLR and Commerce will continue discussions to allow for greater coordination of services, including but not limited to access to Commerce’s current business services platform.

Furthermore, joint investment in incumbent worker training programs support employer strategies for upgrading the skills of currently employed workers. Incumbent worker training programs invest not only in the employee who obtains transferable skills and industry-recognized credentials, but also supports the competitiveness of Maryland's businesses by ensuring that their incumbent employees can effectively adapt to meet continually advancing technologies. Additionally, these programs typically support business retention and expansion efforts. They do so not by developing basic skill levels in occupations with growing demand, a primary focus of Maryland's EARN program, but by supporting company efforts to update skills for new processes and equipment. Both DLLR and Commerce have previously invested in matching grant programs directed to businesses. These investments in Maryland's businesses provided customized training solutions for individual companies with unique or proprietary technical skill requirements.

Under WIOA, incumbent worker training can be used to help avert potential layoffs of employees, or to increase the skill levels of employees. DLLR and Commerce will collaboratively find ways to renew efforts to increase incumbent worker training funds, and will jointly market the availability of these training funds to ensure Maryland's businesses are competitive and their employees are well-trained to compete in a global marketplace.

## **b. State Operating Systems and Policies**

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include a description of the State operating systems and policies that will support the implementation of the State strategy described in **Section II Strategic Elements** . This includes—

### **1. The State operating systems that will support the implementation of the State's strategies. This must include a description of—**

#### **A. State operating systems that support coordinated implementation of State strategies (e.g., labor market information systems, data systems, communication systems, case-management systems, job banks, etc.).**

Maryland's Virtual One-Stop The Maryland Workforce Exchange (MWE) is the State's online operating system that is the foundation, support, and common link aligning Maryland's workforce system to include labor market information, data systems, and communications systems. With funding from various grants, the MWE has improved the State's ability to serve both jobseekers and businesses through an innovative, technology-based approach that provides comprehensive workforce services and online applications for a variety of integrated programs. These programs include the state's key workforce programs – Wagner-Peyser, the WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth Programs, Trade Adjustment Assistance Act, the Jobs for Veterans State Grant Program, national dislocated worker grant programs, and more.

Self-service resource rooms, available in each American Job Center, include computers with internet access and shortcuts to other web-based job search and recruitment tools, labor market information, and career exploration.

The MWE provides the opportunity for increased data integration services and case management. Businesses and employers have access to the portal as a customer service tool to search for qualified candidates, job description tools, understand LMI and salary data, and learn about employment opportunities.

Based upon feedback from the local workforce areas and businesses, the MWE will continue to provide convenient access to a variety of services through technology. This eliminates the necessity for both the jobseeker and business to enter a brick-and-mortar location, and saves travel expense and time. The MWE is consistently updated with the changing and growing needs of both jobseeker and business customers. In 2016, the MWE will be enhanced with the following modules:

- Mobile application – to provide access to MWE from mobile phones and other wireless devices
- Resume Aggregation – to provide resumes collected from external websites nationally. This module will add over 360,000 high quality resumes to MWE to help meet business' recruitment needs.
- Worker Adjustment Retraining Notification (WARN) module – to track company layoff and closure activity as defined by Federal and State regulations automatically alerting staff of a new WARN notifications.

MWE enhancements allow the State to better meet the needs of Maryland's jobseekers and business customers alike. The system allows us the ability to register and establish preliminary eligibility, obtain primary services, create customer profiles, post resumes, access training provider lists, and search thousands of employment opportunities using keyword searches and filters. The system provides helpful resource tools and allows for ease of access to the portal from the office, home, school, library and various locations where internet access is available. Enhancements will also be made to raise business community awareness of MWE, and the

applications will be developed to gain favorable reaction from business leaders. Development of applications should also take into account all accessibility requirements to ensure that MWE is accessible for all of Maryland's jobseekers.

Under WIOA, there is an even greater emphasis on labor market information than in the past. DLLR's Labor Market Information (LMI) Team is a part of the Office of Workforce Information and Performance. The LMI Team works to make workforce and economic data analyses easily accessible for informed decision-making for jobseekers, businesses, and policymakers, alike. These analyses include:

- Analyzing real-time labor market information
- Identifying in-demand industries and occupations
- Analyzing employers' needs in those industries and occupations
- Analyzing the workforce itself, including employment and unemployment rates and patterns, and the educational and skill levels of the workforce

The Team provides Maryland's workforce with information about the local, regional, and national labor market, such as employment levels, unemployment, wage and earnings data, labor supply and demand, and employment projections. The LMI Team develops and deploys new information solution tools and systems that are located on the MWE and DLLR's LMI website (<http://www.dllr.state.md.us/lmi/>).

The MWE is utilized to manage and validate operational activities, via an internet-accessible participant reporting and data collection system that all DLLR and local workforce area case managers use to report, collect, verify, and manage participant data from each of the local and regional teams. The system's case management capabilities allow staff to determine program eligibility, track services, and report results to federal funding sources. MWE is the official data source for all performance and program management data for all WIOA workforce programs. The State has directed considerable funds and resources in this system's development to ensure that performance measure calculations are consistent with current federal reporting requirements as specified by USDOL.

## **B. Data-collection and reporting processes used for all programs and activities, including those present in one-stop centers\*.**

**MARYLAND OPERATING SYSTEMS & POLICIES** Maryland's Virtual One-Stop The Maryland Workforce Exchange (MWE) is the State's online operating system that is the foundation, support, and common link aligning Maryland's workforce system to include labor market information, data systems, and communications systems. With funding from various grants, the MWE has improved the State's ability to serve both jobseekers and businesses through an innovative, technology-based approach that provides comprehensive workforce services and online applications for a variety of integrated programs. These programs include the state's key workforce programs – Wagner–Peyser, the WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth Programs, Trade Adjustment Assistance Act, the Jobs for Veterans State Grant Program, national dislocated worker grant programs, and more.

Self-service resource rooms, available in each American Job Center, include computers with internet access and shortcuts to other web-based job search and recruitment tools, labor market information, and career exploration.

The MWE provides the opportunity for increased data integration services and case management. Businesses and employers have access to the portal as a customer service tool to search for qualified candidates, job description tools, understand LMI and salary data, and learn about employment opportunities.

Based upon feedback from the local workforce areas and businesses, the MWE will continue to provide convenient access to a variety of services through technology. This eliminates the necessity for both the jobseeker and business to enter a brick-and-mortar location, and saves travel expense and time. The MWE is consistently updated with the changing and growing needs of both jobseeker and business customers. In 2016, the MWE will be enhanced with the following modules:

- Mobile application – to provide access to MWE from mobile phones and other wireless devices
- Resume Aggregation – to provide resumes collected from external websites nationally. This module will add over 360,000 high quality resumes to MWE to help meet business' recruitment needs.
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AWARE enables all DORS staff to execute their required tasks, and collect and access all data and reports required to do their case management work and monitor performance. AWARE supports the two primary federal case types that DORS provides – Vocational Rehabilitation and Independent Living Older Blind. In addition, AWARE allows DORS to set up "custom" case types for special programs, such as the new Pre-Employment Transitioning Services. Finally, AWARE has been customized to meet DORS' need to batch transmit client authorizations (POs) directly into the State's FMIS. This allows DORS to integrate client tracking and the vendor payment system into one single system, thus eliminating the duplication of effort. WORKS System The Maryland Department of Human Resources' WORKS system is an online management information system that tracks work activity for a number of human service programs, including TANF. The system is used to collect and report data for federal reporting requirements and to provide both DHR and its local social service departments with information to help monitor results of work programs. WORKS ensures compliance and interfaces with a number of other DHR systems. Enhancing Alignment of Maryland's Management Information Systems As previously mentioned, part of the State's strategic plan calls for greater alignment of Maryland's WIOA programs. While many of the State's WIOA programs use the MWE for the processes previously described, several of the State's WIOA programs operate in a different data system. At times, this can challenge our ability to easily share information on mutual customers. Recognizing this challenge, in the interim, Maryland is committed to establishing data sharing agreements in the absence of one common State system. Maryland is also committed to exploring common platform methods that will help us to improve system coordination. Pages 93–94 provide details on the WIOA Partner's short-term and long-term plans for aligning and sharing information.

#### Performance Accountability System and Related Performance Issues

Performance measures are a regular component of our technical assistance and training activities throughout the year. In addition to specific performance measure training conferences held as needed, staff participate in roundtables and provide locally customized training upon request.

State and local workforce development staffs receive quarterly performance reports and data that help them to monitor and continuously improve their participant reporting and performance outcomes. In addition to locally customized reports that coincide

with the USDOL's quarterly performance reporting formats, DLLR computes program year-to-date performance outcomes so that Local Boards can monitor their progress toward meeting negotiated performance goals. DLLR staff work closely with the local and regional teams to monitor and enhance performance throughout the year. Regularly scheduled training sessions will be held to provide the local and regional teams with basic and specific training on performance indicators, data entry, and data element validation. DLLR is also committed to providing bi-annual performance reports, fiscal and other pertinent information regarding workforce programming to both Local Board chairs and chief local elected officials to ensure that both are well-informed of the workforce activities in their respective Local Areas.

DORS also monitors performance on an ongoing basis. DORS staff have access to AWARE VR standardized performance reports on an ongoing basis - weekly, monthly, quarterly, and annual reports. Performance is monitored regularly to ensure progress toward the achievement of performance goals. Additionally, Alliance Enterprises has been working with DORS and other VR agencies to develop new data reporting elements in accordance with WIOA common performance measures. As Alliance Enterprises updates AWARE, DORS will ensure that staff are provided necessary training. Also, DORS staff will continue to work with its workforce partners toward implementing WIOA common performance measures.

Currently, the Maryland Workforce Exchange (MWE) has the capability to request that the customer participate in a customer service survey outlining his or her experience in obtaining services. Moving forward, the WIOA Partners are dedicated to establishing a common customer service survey to ensure that common measures of customer satisfaction are captured.

\* For the PY 2016 state plan, descriptions of data collection and reporting processes need only include currently known indicators.

**2. The State policies that will support the implementation of the State's strategies (e.g., co-enrollment policies and universal intake processes where appropriate). In addition, describe the State's process for developing guidelines for State-administered one-stop partner programs' contributions to a one-stop delivery system, including benchmarks, and its guidance to assist local boards, chief elected officials, and local one-stop partners in determining equitable and stable methods of funding infrastructure in accordance with sec. 121(h)(1)(B). Beginning with the state plan modification in 2018 and for subsequent state plans and state plan modifications, the State must also include such guidelines.**

WIOA Policy Work The Governor's Workforce Investment Board (GWIB) sets forth public policy guidance for the workforce system. This includes, but is not limited to, the promotion of sector strategies and the development and growth of industry-led partnerships for workforce training delivery. The GWIB plays the critical role of finding ways to promote Maryland's workforce system to businesses and jobseekers alike. GWIB also provides needed insight into the needs of Maryland's businesses and will be apprised of operational policy needs.

Maryland is committed to a collaborative approach to operational policy making and will continue to encourage participation from State and local partners across the WIOA spectrum. The WIOA Partners will develop WIOA policies using DLLR's 8 step process for policy development (<http://www.dllr.state.md.us/employment/mpi/>):

Maryland's 8 Step Process for WIOA Policy Development 1. Determine policy need 2. Policy Session with Subject Matter Experts 3. Policy drafting 4. Review & Comment Period 5. Updates to draft 6. Final approvals 7. Policy dissemination 8. Policy modification (when applicable)

To help identify specific WIOA policy needs, the WIOA Policy Work Group began by soliciting feedback in Spring 2015 from the State's other eight WIOA Workgroups (identified on pages 2-7) to ensure policy needs were documented and subject matter experts from relevant State and local organizations were appropriately identified and engaged. Additionally, DLLR reviewed its existing policies and identified areas that could benefit from improvement and/or alignment with other WIOA programs. As of December 2015, the following policy needs have been identified:

WIOA Policy Need Organizations Represented by Subject Matter Experts in Policy Discussion 1. Local Workforce Development Boards

Policy Issued by GWIB on 7/8/2015: <http://www.gwib.maryland.gov/policy/gwibpi1-15.pdf> • Anne Arundel Workforce Development Corporation • Governor's Workforce Investment Board Maryland • Maryland DLLR-Division of Workforce Development & Adult

## Learning 2. WIOA Eligibility

Title I policy issued by DLLR on 6/25/15: <http://www.dllr.state.md.us/employment/mpi/mpi4-15.pdf> • Baltimore City Mayor's Office of Employment Development • Maryland Department of Disabilities • Maryland DHR-Family Investment Administration • Maryland DLLR-Division of Workforce Development & Adult Learning • Maryland DLLR-Division of Unemployment Insurance • Maryland Department of Planning • Maryland State Dept. of Education -Division of Rehabilitation Services • Mid-Maryland Workforce Investment Area • Montgomery County Division of Workforce Services • Susquehanna Workforce Network, Inc. 3. Youth

Interim policy issued on 7/2/15 & replaced by comprehensive policy issued on 10/2/15:

<http://www.dllr.state.md.us/employment/mpi/mpi8-15.pdf> • Anne Arundel Workforce Development Corporation • Baltimore Co. Department of Economic Development • Maryland DLLR-Division of Workforce Development & Adult Learning • Maryland DHR-Family Investment Administration • Maryland DHR-Social Services Administration • Mid-Maryland Workforce Investment Area • Montgomery County Division of Workforce Services 4. Maryland State List of Eligible Training Providers

Interim policy issued on 7/22/15: <http://www.dllr.state.md.us/employment/mpi/mpi6-15.pdf> • Anne Arundel Community College • Anne Arundel Workforce Development Corporation • Baltimore City Mayor's Office of Employment Development • Community College of Baltimore County • Frederick County Workforce Services • Maryland DLLR-Division of Workforce Development & Adult Learning • Maryland Higher Education Commission • Mid-Maryland Workforce Investment Area 5. Transfer of funds up to 100% allocation (Adult and Dislocated Worker Training Programs)

Policy issued on 1/12/16: <http://www.dllr.state.md.us/employment/mpi/mpi1-16.pdf> • Frederick County Workforce Services • Governor's Workforce Investment Board • Maryland DLLR-Division of Workforce Development & Adult Learning • Mid-Maryland Workforce Investment Area 6. Basic Education Skills & English Language Assessments

Policy issued on 2/26/16: <http://www.dllr.state.md.us/employment/mpi/mpi5-16.pdf> • Anne Arundel Community College • Baltimore City Mayor's Office of Employment Development • Baltimore County Dept. of Economic Development • Frederick County Workforce Services • Hagerstown Community College • Howard Community College • Lifelong Learning Center (Charles County) • Literacy Council of Montgomery County • Maryland DHR – Family Investment Administration • Maryland DLLR-Division of Workforce Development & Adult Learning • Mid-Maryland Workforce Investment Area • Montgomery College • Montgomery County Division of Workforce Services • Prince George's County Economic Development Corporation 7. Monitoring & Data Validation • Baltimore City Mayor's Office of Employment Development • Maryland DLLR-Division of Workforce Development & Adult Learning • Maryland State Dept. of Education-Division of Rehabilitation Services • Mid-Maryland Workforce Investment Area • Montgomery County Division of Workforce Services 8. Memoranda of Understanding/Resource Sharing Agreement

-clarify how an impasse would be handled • Frederick County Workforce Services • Governor's Workforce Investment Board • Maryland DLLR-Division of Workforce Development & Adult Learning • Susquehanna Workforce Network, Inc. • Maryland DHR – Family Investment Administration • Maryland DLLR-Division of Unemployment Insurance • Maryland State Dept. of Education-Division of Rehabilitation Services • Montgomery County Division of Workforce Services • Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland 9. Approved Training & Work Search Waivers for UI Claimants • Maryland DLLR-Division of Workforce Development & Adult Learning • Maryland DLLR-Division of Unemployment Insurance • Mid-Maryland Workforce Investment Area 10. WIOA Career Services and Training • Anne Arundel Workforce Development Corporation • Maryland DLLR-Division of Workforce Development & Adult Learning • Mid-Maryland Workforce Investment Area • Montgomery County Division of Workforce Services • Susquehanna Workforce Network, Inc. 11. Business Services • Frederick County Workforce Services • Maryland Dept. of Commerce • Maryland Dept. of Disabilities • Maryland DHR-Family Investment Administration • Maryland DLLR-Division of Workforce Development & Adult Learning • Maryland State Dept. of Education-Division of Rehabilitation Services • Susquehanna Workforce Network, Inc. 12. Rapid Response • Maryland DLLR-Division of Workforce Development & Adult Learning • Maryland DLLR-Division of Unemployment Insurance • Mid-Maryland Workforce Investment Area 13. Exit Policies for Each Core Program • Baltimore City Mayor's Office of Employment Development • Maryland DLLR-Division of Workforce Development & Adult Learning • Mid-Maryland Workforce Investment Area 14. Determining Planning Regions • Goodwill Industries • Governor's Workforce Investment Board • Department of Commerce • Maryland DLLR-Division of Workforce Development & Adult Learning • Maryland Dept. of Planning • Upper Shore Workforce Investment Board 15. Reporting, Including Closeout • Frederick County Workforce Services • Maryland DLLR-Division of Workforce Development & Adult Learning • Mid-Maryland Workforce Investment Area 16. Grant Award Agreements • Frederick County Workforce Services • Governor's Workforce Investment Board • Maryland DHR-Family Investment Administration • Maryland DLLR-Division of Workforce Development & Adult Learning • Susquehanna Workforce Network, Inc. 17. WIOA Funding Allocations • Frederick County Workforce Services • Maryland DLLR-Division of Workforce Development & Adult Learning • Mid-Maryland Workforce Investment Area • Upper Shore Workforce Investment Board • Western Maryland Consortium 18. Performance Standards • Baltimore City Mayor's Office of Employment Development • Goodwill Industries • Maryland Dept. of Disabilities • Maryland DHR-Family Investment Administration • Maryland DLLR-Division of Workforce Development & Adult Learning • Susquehanna Workforce Network, Inc. • Montgomery County Division of Workforce Investment Services 19. Information Sharing and Integrating Data Systems • Baltimore City Mayor's Office of Employment Development • Maryland DHR-Family Investment Administration • Maryland DLLR-Division of Workforce Development & Adult Learning • Maryland DLLR-Office of Information Technology • Maryland State Dept. of Education –Division of Rehabilitation Services • Mid-Maryland Workforce Investment Area 20. Personally Identifiable

Information and Confidentiality/Ethics • Maryland Dept. of Disabilities • Maryland DHR-Family Investment Administration • Maryland DLLR-Division of Workforce Development & Adult Learning • Maryland State Dept. of Education-Division of Rehabilitation Services • Mid-Maryland Workforce Investment Area 21. Priority of Services (Veteran, WIOA Title I, Adult Edu.) • Adult Education Program Administrators • Anne Arundel Workforce Development Corporation • Maryland DLLR-Division of Workforce Development & Adult Learning • Maryland Department of Disabilities • Mid-Maryland Workforce Investment Area 22. Consequences of Non-Compliance • Governor's Workforce Investment Board • Maryland DLLR-Division of Workforce Development & Adult Learning • Maryland DLLR-Division of Unemployment Insurance • Mid-Maryland Workforce Investment Area 23. Reasonable Accommodations • Maryland Dept. of Disabilities • Maryland DHR-Family Investment Administration • Maryland DLLR-Division of Workforce Development & Adult Learning • Maryland State Dept. of Education-Division of Rehabilitation Services • Mid-Maryland Workforce Investment Area 24. Mandatory workshops for UI claimants - RESEA & ROW • Maryland DLLR-Division of Workforce Development & Adult Learning • Maryland DLLR-Division of Unemployment Insurance • Maryland DLLR- Office of Information Technology • Susquehanna Workforce Network, Inc. 25. Trade • Maryland DLLR-Division of Workforce Development & Adult Learning • Maryland DLLR-Division of Unemployment Insurance 26. National Dislocated Worker Grants • Anne Arundel Workforce Development Corporation • Maryland DLLR-Division of Workforce Development & Adult Learning • Mid-Maryland Workforce Investment Area 27. EARN / Sectors and Interfaces • Baltimore City Mayor's Office of Employment Development • Maryland DLLR-Division of Workforce Development & Adult Learning • Goodwill • Mid-Maryland Workforce Investment Area • Montgomery County Division of Workforce Investment Services • Tri County Council for Southern Maryland 28. Use of funds (braiding and leveraging) • Maryland Association for Adult Community and Continuing Education Maryland DHR-Family Investment Administration • Maryland DLLR-Division of Workforce Development & Adult Learning • Maryland State Dept. of Education-Division of Rehabilitation Services • Susquehanna Workforce Network, Inc. 29. Disaster Plan • Maryland Dept. of Disabilities • Maryland DLLR-Division of Workforce Development & Adult Learning • Prince George's County Economic Development Corporation 30. Use of technology • Maryland Department of Disabilities • Maryland DHR-Family Investment Administration • Maryland DLLR-Division of Workforce Development & Adult Learning • Maryland State Dept. of Education-Division of Rehabilitation Services • Mid Maryland Workforce Investment Area • Prince George's County Economic Development Corporation 31. GED/National External Diploma Program and alternatives to these measures • Maryland Adult Learning Advisory Council • Maryland Association for Adult Community and Continuing Education • Maryland DLLR-Division of Workforce Development & Adult Learning • Maryland State Dept. of Education • Maryland State Board of Education 32. Addressing the growing out of school population to increase graduation rates • Goodwill Industries • Maryland DLLR-Division of Workforce Development & Adult Learning • Maryland State Dept. of Education 33. Work to develop policies to increase work study (School to Work) • Maryland Dept. of Disabilities • Maryland DLLR-Division of Workforce Development & Adult Learning • Maryland State Dept. of Education • Governor's Workforce Investment Board These collaborative, comprehensive policy efforts build on and leverage state policies that promote a systems approach to implementing WIOA. Maryland will continue to build partnerships that will ensure the development of effective policies to support the State's strategies.

### **3. State Program and State Board Overview**

#### **A. State Agency Organization**

Describe the organization and delivery systems at the State and local levels for the programs covered in the plan, including the organizational structure. Include an organizational chart.

Three Maryland State agencies are responsible for administration and oversight of the WIOA System: 1. Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation – Division of Workforce Development & Adult Learning 2. Maryland State Department of Education – Division of Rehabilitation Services 3. Maryland Division of Human Resources – Family Investment Administration

The following section details both the State and local organization and delivery systems for the Maryland's WIOA programs. Appendix B provides organizational charts to supplement this explanation.

Dept. of Labor, Licensing & Regulation – Division of Workforce Development & Adult Learning Maryland's employment and training programs comprise a workforce system that serves the businesses and jobseekers of our State. Among other workforce programs, DLLR's Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning (DWDAL) administers the WIOA Title I, Title II, and Wagner-Peyser Programs. To provide support and oversight DWDAL offers: • Oversight of the State's WIOA Planning Regions that consist of the State's twelve local workforce areas • Guidance to Local Workforce Development Boards on the Development of Regional and Local Plans that support the Governor's vision and goals • Policies and Procedures that guide the overall workforce system • Technical Assistance related to programming and system improvements Maryland has twelve local workforce areas, which are governed by Local Workforce Development Boards (Local Boards). These local workforce areas administer much of the State's public workforce system in collaboration with Wagner-Peyser funded staff, DLLR's central offices, the Governor's Workforce Investment Board, MSDE's Division of Rehabilitation Services, and DHR. Other partners, such as community colleges, provide career and technical education, and adult education services across Maryland. Case management and reporting related to employment services and labor market information are coordinated across the State through a statewide information and technology resource called the

## Maryland Workforce Exchange (MWE).

Office of the Assistant Secretary (OAS) The Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning (DWDAL) is managed by the Division's Assistant Secretary. The Assistant Secretary provides day-to-day supervision of programmatic managers, as well as the strategic vision for the operations of Maryland's workforce system. The office provides centralized oversight for the following:

- Office of Discretionary Grants (ODG) is responsible for developing strategies and partnerships that provide a means for securing additional Federal and State funding through the competitive grant process. The ODG successfully secures competitive funds to enhance Maryland's programs and services. Grants target dislocated workers, the long-term unemployed, veterans, and other targeted populations.

- Policy Director is responsible for leading policies through the process for policy development from beginning to end. When a need for policy is determined, the Director convenes stakeholders and subject matter experts in policy sessions to develop, draft, and implement the Division's policies. The Director works closely with the leadership team and key stakeholders from the business and education community to ensure effective implementation of new laws, regulations, and guidance that affect DLLR DWDAL programs.

- New Americans Workforce Program was created in 2010 in response to the recommendations of the Maryland Council for New Americans 2009 report, which sought to "expedite immigrant integration into the economic and civic life of the state." Through frequent outreach and community engagement efforts, the New Americans Program provides information on the State's training and employment opportunities to those immigrants who call Maryland home. The Program further provides multilingual support for American Job Center staff. The New Americans Workforce Program promotes adult literacy and English language acquisition for immigrants including foreign born professionals.

- Communications and Outreach Unit works in coordination with various internal and external departments and agencies to ensure that accurate, clear, and consistent messaging regarding DWDAL programs and services is effectively relayed to businesses, jobseekers, and the public.

- Monitoring & Compliance Unit provides fiscal and programmatic monitoring of local workforce and adult education entities to ensure compliance with applicable federal and State law. Office of Workforce Development (OWD) The Office of Workforce Development (OWD) coordinates the efforts of Maryland's American Job Centers. Maryland is home to 32 American Job Centers across the State – all of which provide comprehensive services to both jobseekers and businesses. While jobseekers are offered a wide range of career and training services, businesses are provided with numerous types of assistance and growth services.
- American Job Center Operations Unit provides centralized oversight of DLLR's Labor Exchange Administrators who manage employment and training programs and services throughout the State's American Job Centers. The Unit provides administrative oversight and jobseeker services through Wagner-Peyser and WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs funding.

- Dislocated Worker Services provides centralized oversight and administration of Maryland's Rapid Response and Trade Assistance Act (Trade) Program activities. Both programs are designed to help individuals through their transition to reemployment.

o Rapid Response is designed to shorten or eliminate time between employment opportunities for an individual, reducing or eliminating the time an individual would receive Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits. The Rapid Response team, which is comprised of State and local workforce area employees, offers its services to the State's small organizations and large companies alike. DSU employees disseminate essential information to individuals, ranging from how to file for and what to expect from Unemployment Insurance to local resources available for individuals seeking reemployment.

o Trade Adjustment Assistance Program provides aid to eligible workers who lose their jobs, or whose hours of work and wages are reduced, as a result of increased imports or production transfers abroad. The Trade Program, which is considered to be part of Maryland's WIOA System, is a federal program that offers a variety of benefits and services to workers whose employment has been adversely impacted by foreign trade. Through a number of benefits and services, the Trade Program provides trade-affected workers with opportunities to obtain the support, resources, skills, and credentials they need to return to the workforce in a good job. These include employment and case management services, training, job search allowances, relocation allowances, reemployment and Alternative/Reemployment Trade Adjustment Assistance (ATAA/RTAA) wage subsidies for older workers, and income support in the form of Trade Readjustment Allowances (TRA). The TAA State Merit Staff reviews and makes the final determination on the retraining plan, ensuring it meets the federal requirements under the Trade Act. The Trade Act program is administered, staffed and implemented by the Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation, and local workforce areas, and the Unemployment Insurance Division.

- Professional Outplacement Assistance Center (POAC) provides assistance to individuals who are in the professional, executive, technical, managerial, and/or scientific occupations, along with recent college graduates, who find themselves in need of assistance in getting reconnected to the labor market. POAC provides employers with access to an e-service program where they can use active marketing approaches to promote employment opportunities.

- Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) Program was developed by the USDOL in an effort to reduce the

number of weeks that UI claimants receive benefits, by assisting them in quickly returning to the workforce. The RESEA Program is designed to help claimants to identify potential barriers to employment and assesses work search progress. It also includes an eligibility review, which in turn helps the DLLR Division of Unemployment Insurance to identify claimants that may be out of compliance with basic UI laws and policies regarding ability and availability to work, school attendance, and active work search.

- Reemployment Opportunities Workshop (ROW) Program is a full-day workshop offered to certain UI claimants to shorten the duration of UI benefits received through reemployment efforts
- Veteran Services Unit operates the Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG). The JVSG Program's mission is two-fold: it offers employment and training services to Veterans with significant barriers to employment and connects employers with work-ready Veterans.
- Foreign Labor Certification Program is an employment-based immigration program which assists applicable employers, who have obtained USDOL approval to begin the hiring process of permanent or temporary foreign workers. The program assists employers across Maryland in navigating federal program requirements, including application processing, data collection, wage and prevailing practice surveys in specific employment areas where foreign workers have been brought to Maryland.
- Tax Credit Unit is charged with administering federal and State tax credit programs which offer income tax incentives to employers for hiring members of targeted population groups, such as ex-offenders or certain individuals with disabilities.
- Migrant Seasonal Farm Worker Program ensures migrant and seasonal farm workers are receiving the same employment services that non-migrant seasonal farm workers receive at the State's American Job Centers.
- Maryland Re-Entry Initiative (MRI) is a statewide initiative to increase the employability of Maryland citizens with criminal backgrounds. The program provides technical assistance to jobseekers, staff, and employers to increase the number of individuals hired with criminal history and barriers to employment. The MRI administers the Federal Bonding Program through the State's American Job Centers.
- Youth and Disability Services provides disability and youth services coordination and technical assistance to the State of Maryland's Local workforce areas and partners responsible for serving WIOA Title I youth program participants and American Job Center customers with disabilities.
- Business Services Unit exists to help companies grow and thrive, to foster economic growth and stability, and to ensure that Marylanders have opportunities for gainful employment.

Office of Workforce Information and Performance (OWIP) OWIP's mission is to collect, analyze, and produce labor market and workforce information as a service to businesses, jobseekers, students, and workforce entities. OWIP carries out five core functions:

- Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) information sharing
  - Labor Market Information Services
  - Maryland Workforce Exchange – Virtual One-Stop (MWE-VOS) maintenance
  - MWE-VOS Help Desk
  - WIOA Performance Units
- Additionally, through administering USDOL's Workforce Information Grant, OWIP manages and maintains the Workforce Information Database, the production of industry and occupational employment projections, and other workforce information and economic products and services.

Office of Adult Education and Literacy Services The Office of Adult Education and Literacy Services provides services to Maryland's adult learners as required under WIOA Title II. Under the Act, the Office selects local providers of adult education instructional services via a statewide competition made available to eligible providers every five years. Instructional services include Adult Basic and Secondary Education, English Language Acquisition / Integrated English Literacy and Civics, Family Literacy, High School Diploma preparation, and Correctional Education. Maryland's current providers include a wide-range of community colleges, local public school systems, community-based organizations, public libraries, and the State's Correctional Education program. A complete listing of local providers of adult education authorized under Title II can be found at:

<http://www.dlir.maryland.gov/gedmd/programs.shtml>. The Office provides monitoring, technical assistance, professional development, and assistance to these providers. The Office further serves as the State's contact for adult education with the United States Department of Education. Also located within the Office is Maryland's GED® and National External Diploma Program® administration. The Office provides key oversight for the administration of these two opportunities for Maryland's adult learners and out-of-school youth to obtain their Maryland High School Diplomas. A complete listing of GED® testing sites in Maryland are listed at <http://www.dlir.maryland.gov/gedmd/gedlocations.shtml>.

Office of Correctional Education The Office of Correctional Education provides educational opportunities for incarcerated men and women enabling them to become independent and productive workers, citizens, and parents. The Office, with the oversight of the Correctional Education Council, and in partnership with the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS) is responsible for the academic and vocational educational programs provided in Maryland's correctional institutions.

The academic program begins with basic literacy and continues along a learning continuum through high school equivalency

completion. Special education services are also available to eligible students. Upon attainment of the Maryland High School Diploma through passage of the GED® examination, students may participate in one of 23 occupational programs or limited post-secondary education courses. Many of the occupational programs provide a unique opportunity for the inmate to obtain nationally recognized credentials, with the goal of reaching economic self-sufficiency.

Occupational Programs Offered by Maryland Correctional Education Architectural CADD Pre-Apprenticeship Facilities Maintenance Automotive Body Repair Pre-Apprenticeship HVAC/R Automotive Maintenance and Inspection Pre-Apprenticeship Masonry Building Maintenance Pre-Apprenticeship Plumbing Fabric and Upholstery Cleaning Pre-Apprenticeship Sheet Metal Furniture Upholstery Pre-Apprenticeship Welding Graphic Arts and Design Print Communication Introduction to Word and Excel Roofing Office Practice and Management Small Engine Repair Office Technology Warehouse/Distribution Pre-Apprenticeship Carpentry Woodworking/Finish Carpentry Pre-Apprenticeship Electrical

Transitional programs also provide students with skills for developing short and long term employment plans including job search strategies and soft skills training for job readiness. In short, the program seeks to provide educational opportunities to support the inmate's successful reentry and reintegration into the community. Maryland State Department of Education – Division of Rehabilitation Services The public Vocational Rehabilitation Program in Maryland is administered by the Maryland State Department of Education's Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) in accordance with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, most recently by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014. DORS is funded primarily by the United States Department of Education's Rehabilitation Services Administration. The federal funding includes a State matching requirement (Federal 78.7 percent and State match of 21.3 percent) and maintenance of effort requirement.

DORS provides services and supports to assist eligible students, youth, and adults with significant disabilities transition to post-secondary education, training, and employment. Vocational rehabilitation services and Pre-Employment Transition Services are provided by the following branches:

- The Office of Field Services provides services such as career counseling, assistive technology, vocational training and job placement services. Staff members are located in 22 field offices located throughout the State, some of which are co-located with American Job Centers.
- Office for Blindness and Vision Services was established in 2005. Staff located in offices statewide specialize in services to individuals whose primary disability is blindness or vision loss, to assist them in achieving their goals of employment and of independence in their homes and communities. The Office oversees the Maryland Business Enterprise Program (BEP) for the Blind, a program that prepares individuals who are legally blind to operate vending, gift, or food service businesses in public facilities, in accordance with the Randolph Sheppard Act.
- Workforce and Technology Center is a comprehensive vocational rehabilitation facility that offers career assessment services, career and skills training, job placement assistance, assistive technology services, and other medical and support services.

A complete listing of DORS Regions and Offices is available at the following link:  
<http://dors.maryland.gov/resources/Pages/locations.aspx>.

DORS also engages with businesses throughout the State, assisting Maryland businesses to recruit and maintain qualified, valuable employees. DORS also serves as a resource on disability and employment matters such as disability awareness training, workforce diversity and inclusion initiatives, training on the Americans with Disabilities Act, solutions for reasonable accommodations, and worksite consultations. DORS continues to be dedicated to the creation of the aforementioned Maryland Business Services team. Department of Human Resources – Family Investment Administration In Maryland, the TANF program is called Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA) and is delivered at the local departments of social services level. Local Department of Social Services Offices, a listing of which can be found at [http://www.dhr.state.md.us/blog/?page\\_id=805](http://www.dhr.state.md.us/blog/?page_id=805), is the statewide framework for delivering education, job training, job placement, and other services to assist TANF customers with overcoming barriers to obtaining self-sustaining employment. In Maryland, our efforts led to record TANF job placements in each year of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2012-2014 period. Key components of the program include:

- Collaborating with private and public sector partners to identify local growth occupations and their associated education and training requirements
- Assessing customers respective skill sets, career interests and barriers to obtaining self-sustaining employment
- Developing or procuring appropriate work-related services, including academic remediation, targeted sector training, and job placement services.

TANF workforce development is built on a philosophy of “universal engagement.” This means that customers are expected to participate in activities based on the results of individual assessments with the goal of employment or removing barriers to employment. Many of the remaining welfare families, in addition to many of the new families applying for TCA can be considered “hard to place” into jobs. Workforce development is designed to meet the critical, essential needs of the under-employed, newly unemployed and hard-to-place.

In addition to workforce development, our TANF program provides a broad range of services. The Department's Family Investment Administration (FIA) formed partnerships with other administrations within DHR, including the Child Support Enforcement and Social

Services divisions and with other State agencies and community organizations. FIA works with these partners to promote DHR's goal to protect children by assisting their families to become independent through work, personal and family responsibility, and community involvement. The Department expanded its goal to include support for low-income working families and continues to strengthen those partnerships by empowering staff in the LDSS across the State to work together to provide employment and training activities, supportive services, and benefits that enable customers to obtain jobs and improve their economic circumstances.

## **B. State Board**

Provide a description of the State Board, including—

**MARYLAND'S STATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD** The Governor's Workforce Investment Board (GWIB) is the Governor's chief policymaking body for workforce development. The GWIB is a business-led board of 53 members, a majority of whom represent the business community, as mandated by WIOA. Specifically, 37 members represent business, 11 represent workforce, and 15 represent government. Members include the Governor and the Lieutenant Governor, cabinet secretaries, college presidents, the State Superintendent of Schools, elected officials, labor, and representatives of non-profit organizations.

### Membership Roster

#### Representatives from State Agencies

Larry Hogan

Governor

State of Maryland

Sam J. Abed

Secretary

Department of Juvenile Services

Carol Beatty

Secretary

Department of Disabilities

James D. Fielder

Secretary

MD Higher Education Commission

R. Michael Gill

Secretary

Department of Commerce

Rona E. Kramer

Secretary

Department of Aging

Samir Malhotra

Secretary

Department of Human Resources

Stephen T. Moyer

Secretary

Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services

George W. Owings, III

Secretary

Department of Veterans Affairs

Kelly M. Schulz

Secretary

Department of Labor

Jack Smith

Interim Superintendent of Schools

Department of Education

Representatives from the Maryland General Assembly

Honorable Vanessa Atterbeary

Maryland State Delegate

District 13, Howard County

House Judiciary Committee

Honorable Douglas J.J. Peters

Maryland State Senator

District 23, Prince George's County

Senate Budget & Taxation Committee

Representatives from Local Government

Allan H. Kittleman

County Executive

Howard County

Recommended by the Maryland Association of Counties (MACO)

Michael J. Pantelides

Mayor

City of Annapolis

Recommended by the Maryland Municipal League (MML)

Business and Community Leaders

The Board's Chairman and majority membership represent the business community in Maryland. These hand-picked business leaders are established advocates in their varying areas of expertise. In establishing his Board of workforce advisors, Governor Hogan emphasized the need to ensure that a diverse group of business, community and government leaders were selected to ensure that public policy recommendations from the Board represented Maryland's diverse population and growth industries.

Francis 'Hall' Chaney, III

Board Chair

Executive Vice President

Chaney Enterprises

Ronald R. Peterson

Board Vice-Chair

President

The Johns Hopkins Health System

Gary Batey

Retired Plan Manager

Holcim US

Michelle A. Bell

President & CEO

1st Choice, LLC

Gary E. Bockrath

Consultant – Operational & Financial Tatum

Timothy R. Campbell

President/CEO

Callas Contractors, Inc.

Adrian P. Chapman

President and COO

Washington Gas

Veronica A. Cool

Founder & Managing Director

Cool & Associates, LLC

Chris Desautels

Plant Manager

General Motors Corporation

Louis Myerberg Dubin

Managing Partner

Redbrick LMD

E. Katarina Ennerfelt

President/CEO

Torid Corp. / ARCON Welding Equipment, LLC

Christopher M. Ensey

Chief Operating Officer

Dunbar Security Solutions

Steve W. Groenke

Chief Executive Officer

Curtis Bay Energy

Tony Hill

Managing Partner

Edwards & Hill Office Furniture

Francis X. Kelly, III

Chief Executive Officer

Kelly & Associates Insurance Group, Inc.

Larry Letow

President & CEO

Convergence Technology Consulting

Brian A. Mattingly

President

Goldin & Stafford, LLC

Roya Mohadjer

Senior Technology Strategist

Lockheed Martin

Stephen W. Neal

President/CEO

K. Neal International Trucks, Inc.

K. Neal Idealease, Inc.

Alexander G. Núñez

Vice President, Governmental and External Affairs, BGE

BGE Exelon Corporation

Preterald "P.C." Price

President/CEO

Legal Services Associates, Inc.

Charles A. Ramos

CEO/President

CR Dynamics & Associates, Inc.

Edward C. Rothstein (COL Ret.)

ERA Advisory LLC

Gerald "Jerry" M. Shapiro

President

Shapiro & Duncan, Inc.

Karen Tomasello

Owner

Sello's, Inc.

Matt Turpin

President and CEO

ZenTech Manufacturing, Inc.

Michelle J. Wright

SVP, Human Resources

CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield

#### COMMUNITY AND WORKFORCE LEADERS

Maryland's workforce system is dependent on a network of community and workforce leaders to provide innovative services, education and training resources, and services that support the needs of jobseekers. Governor Hogan has selected community and workforce leaders with a proven track record of delivering quality services to Maryland's jobseekers and businesses alike.

Bernie Fowler

Founder and President

Farming 4 Hunger, Inc.

Alvin C. Hathaway, Sr.

Senior Pastor

Historical Union Baptist Church of Baltimore

Charles W. Ketner

Director

National Automatic Sprinkler Industry

Local Union 669, MD

Sandra Kurtinitis

President

Community College of Baltimore County

Representing the Maryland Association of Community Colleges (MACC)

Andrew B. Larson

National Project Coordinator

Job Corp Pre-Apprenticeship Program

International Union of Painters and Allied Trade

Dawn Lindsay, Ed.D.

President

Anne Arundel Community College

Fred D. Mason, Jr.

President

MD State & D.C. AFL-CIO

Kirkland 'Kirk' J. Murray

President & CEO,

Anne Arundel Workforce Development Corporation

President, MD Workforce Investment Network

Michael Posko

CEO

Habitat for Humanity of the Chesapeake

Lisa Rusyniak

President & CEO

Goodwill Industries of the

Chesapeake, Inc.

Martin 'Marty' Schwartz

President

Vehicles for Change

- Board Activities

## Board Activities

Governor Hogan's Executive Order 01.01.2015.19 established the new Governor's Workforce Investment Board, pursuant to Section 101 of WIOA. Pursuant to the Executive Order, the GWIB shall advise the Governor on the following matters:

- (1) The development, implementation, and modification of the State Plan under the 2014 Act;
- (2) The review of statewide policies and programs and the recommendations on actions to align workforce development programs in a manner that supports a comprehensive and streamlined workforce development system in the State;
- (3) The development and continuous improvement of the workforce development system in the State including: the identification and removal of barriers to employment, development of strategies to support career pathways, providing effective outreach and improved access for individuals and employers who could benefit from services, expansion of strategies for sector partnerships to meet the needs of employers, workers and jobseekers;
- (4) The identification of regions, the designation of local area, and the improvement of the one-stop delivery system to local areas to support effective delivery of services to workers, jobseekers and employers;
- (5) The development and updating of comprehensive State performance accountability measures to assess the effectiveness of core programs;
- (6) The identification and dissemination of information on best practices related to effective operation of the one-stop delivery system, local boards, training programs that respond to real-time labor market analysis and competency assessments to support efficient placement into career pathways or employment;
- (7) The development and review of statewide policies affecting the coordinated provision of services through the one-stop delivery system, including objective criteria for assessing effectiveness, guidance for allocation of infrastructure funds, and policies relating to the appropriate roles and contributions of one-stop partners;
- (8) The development of strategies for technological improvements to facilitate access to, and improve the quality of, services and activities provided through the one-stop delivery system, including improvements to enhanced digital literacy skills, acquisition of postsecondary credentials by participants, strengthen professional development of providers and workforce professionals, and ensure accessibility of technology to individuals with disabilities and individuals residing in remote areas;
- (9) The development of strategies for aligning technology and data systems across one-stop partner programs to enhance service delivery and improve efficiencies in reporting on performance accountability measures;
- (10) The development of allocation formulas for the distribution of funds for employment and training activities for adults, and youth workforce areas;
- (11) The preparation of the 2014 Act annual reports;
- (12) The development of the statewide workforce and labor market information system under the Wagner-Peyser Act; and
- (13) The development of any other policies or procedures as may promote statewide objectives for the workforce development system in the State.

## MARYLAND'S LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARDS

The Workforce Investment Network for Maryland (WIN) is a coalition of executive directors from Maryland's 12 local workforce agencies. WIN works closely with GWIB and DLLR to support a comprehensive workforce system. WIN, GWIB and DLLR meet monthly to discuss important matters pertaining to the workforce system and to provide perspective on issues that may arise. The collaboration between WIN, GWIB and DLLR creates a strong workforce system in Maryland.

Local workforce boards are established in each of these twelve areas to ensure that each area's workforce is well-prepared to meet the current and future needs of local businesses. Pursuant to WIOA Section 107(b)(2), at a minimum, Local Board membership must include:

- Majority representation from representatives of Business
- At least 20% representation from representatives of Workforce

- Representatives of Education and Training, including government and economic and community development entities

The Governor's Workforce Investment Board, on July 1, 2015, issued GWIB Policy Issuance 2015–01, Maryland's Local Workforce Development Boards under WIOA. The Policy is accessible at the following link: <http://www.gwib.maryland.gov/policy/gwibpi1–15.pdf>. The Policy outlines the responsibilities of the Local Boards, membership composition, and the appointment, certification and decertification processes.

In light of the Combined State Plan, Local Boards are strongly encouraged to include Local Directors from both VR and TANF programs. The individual selected by Local Areas to serve on the Local Board must have decision-making authority for the local vocational rehabilitation and/or TANF programs. The WIOA Partners strongly encourage inclusion of local presentation of these programs on the Local Boards as a way to ensure constant communication and alignment of programming at the local level.

## **1. Membership roster**

Provide a membership roster for the State Board, including members' organizational affiliations.

- Membership Roster - <http://www.gwib.maryland.gov/board/members.shtml>.

## **2. Board Activities**

Provide a description of the activities that will assist State Board members and staff in carrying out State Board functions effectively.

The Board's Activities are outlined in the Executive Order signed by Governor Hogan in June 2015. The Executive Order can be accessed at: <http://www.gwib.maryland.gov/board/execorder.pdf>

## **4. Assessment and Evaluation of Programs and One-Stop Program Partners**

### **A. Assessment of Core Programs**

Describe how the core programs will be assessed each year based on State performance accountability measures described in section 116(b) of WIOA. This State assessment must include the quality, effectiveness, and improvement of programs broken down by local area or provider. Such state assessments should take into account local and regional planning goals.

MEASURING MARYLAND'S SUCCESS: PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY WIOA makes changes to the performance accountability system and creates a requirement that the United States Secretaries of Labor and Education create a statistical adjustment model which will replace the regression-based levels that the USDOL used in performance negotiations under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998.

The implementation of WIOA performance accountability requirements will be phased in and must be implemented by July 1, 2016 (Program Year 2016). To accommodate Maryland's development of a WIOA-compliant performance accountability system, USDOL has extended Maryland WIA Program Year (PY) 2014 performance goals into PY 2015. While DLLR, MSDE, and DHR are capable of reporting on each individual program to the respective federal oversight agency, Maryland does not currently have an integrated system that includes partner programs. DLLR is therefore currently unable to report data from divisions, like DORS and FIA, which report outside of the Maryland Workforce Exchange (MWE) system. As shown, the MWE currently houses WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Wagner-Peyser, JVSG, and Trade program participants; however, TANF, Vocational Rehabilitation, and Adult Education are not currently in MWE. The WIOA Partners intend to replace the existing multiple systems with a new system that will include imaging and workflow management, and a robust business rules engine to aid in eligibility determination and creating and managing benefit plans, as well as report performance accountability measures. Refer to pages 91-93 for additional information on WIOA program data and system alignment.

As previously noted, Maryland's WIOA Partners are dedicated to placing customers at the heart of the WIOA system. This will often require a customer to receive additional services and training to ensure that they are placed on a sustainable career pathway. This dedication places less emphasis on a performance goal and more emphasis on the individual behind the goal.

Maryland continues to recognize the importance of performance accountability metrics to accurately assess the WIOA system's overall effectiveness. Therefore, Maryland's WIOA Partners are committed to exploring the establishment of cross cutting measures that focus on the quality of customer service for jobseekers and businesses, which could potentially supplement or replace the WIOA measures specified by law. GWIB is dedicated to forming a task force to examine additional performance accountability measures to ensure that Maryland's focus remains squarely on its business and jobseeker customers. Maryland is interested in securing a third party evaluator to focus on overall WIOA system effectiveness in relation to the WIOA performance measures prescribed by law. Maryland's WIOA Partners are further committed to conducting ongoing evaluations of workforce activities carried out in the State in order to promote, establish, implement, and utilize methods for continuously improving core program activities. This will allow the WIOA system to achieve high-level performance within, and high-level outcomes from the workforce development system. Core WIOA Programs WIOA standardizes performance requirements across core programs.

For the WIOA Title I Adult & Dislocated Worker Programs, Title II Adult Education and Literacy programs, Title III Wagner-Peyser employment services, and Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation, the primary indicators of performance are, as follows:

- Employment during 2nd quarter after exit • Employment during 4th quarter after exit • Median earnings • Credential attainment rate • Measurable skills gain • Effectiveness in serving employers

For the WIOA Title I Youth program, the primary indicators of performance are, as follows:

- Employment, education, or training during 2nd quarter after exit • Employment, education, or training during 4th quarter after exit • Median earnings • Credential attainment rate • Measurable skills gain • Effectiveness in serving employers

WIOA explains that each state shall identify within the State Plan its expected levels of performance for each primary indicator, for each program, for the first 2 program years covered by the State Plan. The law subsequently explains that the levels agreed to by the State, the Secretary of Labor, and the Secretary of Education, shall be considered to be the State adjusted performance and shall be incorporated into the State Plan prior to its approval.

Maryland anticipates that USDOL will soon provide further guidance on the WIOA performance measures via Training and Employment Guidance Letters (TEGLs) and Training and Employment Notices (TENs). Therefore, pending federal guidance, Maryland has not yet identified expected performance levels. Maryland's WIOA Partners are committed to continuing to work closely with USDOL in anticipation of additional information.

## **B. Assessment of One-Stop Partner Programs**

Describe how other one-stop delivery system partner program services and Combined State Plan partner programs included in the plan will be assessed each year. Such state assessments should take into account local and regional planning goals.

**Temporary Assistance for Needy Families** The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services assesses state TANF performance based on the Work Participation Rate (WPR) performance indicator. Under the WPR, states must engage TANF work eligible individuals in federally approved, countable work activities for a specific number of hours per week. By statute, the target WPR is 50 percent. Below is Maryland's WPR Federal indicator:

- WPR – The total number of work eligible TANF recipients that have met their work requirement, averaging 30 hours per week (20 hours a week for single parents with one or more children under 6 years old), in the month.

In addition to the Federal WPR, Maryland assesses performance based on the following indicators:

- Job Placements – The total number of TANF recipients that were placed in a subsidized public employment, subsidized private employment, unsubsidized employment, or on the job training activity
- Ten Dollar per Hour Job Placements – The total number of TANF recipients that were placed in a subsidized public employment, subsidized private employment, unsubsidized employment, or on the job training activity and scheduled for 30 hours per week or more
- Job Retention – Achieve a job retention rate of 75 percent

Maryland DHR will continue to focus on the primary federal TANF performance measure of 50 percent for WPR. In addition to WPR, DHR will begin to provide and report out data on TANF outcomes for the first three proposed Common Measures: Employment, Retention, and Median Wages. Maryland would like to baseline these TANF Common Measures data for two years to evaluate the effectiveness of the WIOA/TANF mandated partnership, analyze alignment with other WIOA Partners' data, and consider adoption of some or all of the Common Measures over time. Trade Program USDOL assessed Maryland's Trade performance through the Trade Act Participant Report (TAPR). The TAPR features a data extract capturing the full universe of Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) applicants, including TAA participants who receive benefits and services across programs. A standardized set of data elements that includes information on participant demographics, types of services received, and performance outcomes is a key component of this reporting structure. As the TAPR is intended to track information on TAA activity on a "real time" basis for individuals, from the point

of TAA eligibility determination through post-participation outcomes, the data are used to respond quickly and effectively to the management information needs of Congress, the Executive Branch agencies of the federal government, and a variety of stakeholders who develop and implement TAA program design.

In addition, Trade assessment data are made available to the public based on industry, state, and national aggregates through a queryable search feature on the TAA website located at [www.doleta.gov/tradeact](http://www.doleta.gov/tradeact), which provides an unprecedented level of transparency on TAA participation.

Jobs for Veterans State Grant Program Annually, the State and USDOL negotiate Maryland's targets for performance measures for employment services for Veterans. Performance during previous periods guides the performance negotiation process to ensure that performance levels are both realistic and challenging. States are expected to develop strategies and policies that demonstrate continuous improvement.

USDOL measures the effectiveness of a State's employment services by reviewing:

- The Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) Program; and
- All other USDOL administered programs that are offered to Veterans through the American Job Center delivery system.

Should the State fall short of its negotiated targets, USDOL's Veterans Employment Training Services (VETS) provides technical assistance to help the State achieve success in providing Veterans with employment services that lead to viable opportunities for employment.

The following measures seek to address the outcomes experienced by eligible Veterans and spouses with significant barriers to employment, who are served by Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) specialists.

The State's JVSG Program is evaluated on the following measures:

- Intensive Services provided by DVOP specialists
- Total Veterans and eligible persons served by DVOP specialists in Maryland
- Veterans' entered employment rate
- Veterans' employment retention rate
- Veterans' average earnings (six months)
- Disabled Veterans' entered employment rate
- Disabled Veterans' employment retention rate
- Disabled Veterans' average earnings (six months)

The State's American Job Center delivery system is also evaluated on the following measures:

- Veterans' entered employment rate
- Veterans' employment retention rate
- Veterans' average earnings (six months)
- Disabled Veterans' entered employment rate
- Disabled Veterans' employment retention rate
- Disabled Veterans' average earnings (six months)

## C. Previous Assessment Results

Beginning with the state plan modification in 2018 and for subsequent state plans and state plan modifications, provide the results of an assessment of the effectiveness of the core programs and other one-stop partner programs and Combined State Plan partner programs included in the Unified or Combined State plan during the preceding 2-year period (i.e. the 2-year period of the plan modification cycle). Describe how the State is adapting its strategies based on these assessments.

### PRECEDING PERFORMANCE

Maryland's previous assessment results are, as follows: WIOA Titles I & III: Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth & Wagner-Peyser

WIOA Title I & III Performance for PY 2013 Performance Measure Standard State Performance Entered Employment Rate Adult 82% 80.3% Dislocated Worker 87% 85% Wagner-Peyser 55% 51.5%

Retention Rate Adult 87% 88.4% Dislocated Worker 91% 91.4% Wagner-Peyser 81% 82.4%

Average Earnings Adult \$15,800 \$16,329 Dislocated Worker \$18,500 \$20,127 Wagner-Peyser \$15,000 \$15,041

Attainment of Degree or Certificate Youth 70% 80.1%

Placement in Employment or Education Youth 67% 77.2% Literacy/Numeracy Youth 69% 78.7%

WIOA Title I & III Performance for PY 2014 Performance Measure Standard State Performance Entered Employment Rate Adult 82% 78.6% Dislocated Worker 87% 82.2% Wagner-Peyser 55%

Retention Rate Adult 89% 90.8% Dislocated Worker 91% 92.2% Wagner-Peyser 81% 82.9%

Average Earnings Adult \$16,500 \$17,289 Dislocated Worker \$19,500 \$21,204 Wagner-Peyser \$15,000 \$15,062

Attainment of Degree or Certificate Youth 76% 77.6%

Placement in Employment or Education Youth 73% 78.3% Literacy/Numeracy Youth 70% 74.1%

WIOA Title II Adult Education Adult Education Core Follow-Up Outcome Achievement July 1, 2013 – June 30, 2014 Participants in Cohort Participants Responding to Survey or Available for Data Matching Response Rate or % Available for Match of Participants Achieving Outcomes (Unweighted) of Participants Achieving Outcome (Weighted) Achieving Outcome (Weighted) Entered Employment 8,431 6,512 77% 1,982 2,566 30% Retained Employment 9,906 6,176 62% 3,903 6,260 63% Obtained a Secondary School Credential or its Equivalent 3,205 3,187 99% 1,828 1,838 57% Entered Post-secondary Education or Training – current program year 4,342 4,342 100% 304 304 7% Entered Post-secondary Education or Training – prior program year 3,211 3,211 100% 317 317 10%

Adult Education Educational Gains & Attendance for Pre- & Post-Tested Participants July 1, 2013 – June 30, 2014 Entering EFL Total Enrolled Pre- and Post-tested Total Attendance Hours Completed Level Who Completed a Level & Advanced 1 or more Levels Separated Before Completing Remaining within Level % Completing Level ABE Beginning Literacy 445 50,898 265 246 170 10 60% ABE Beginning Basic Literacy 1,285 171,919 941 867 325 19 73% ABE Intermediate Low 2,352 293,023 1467 1,382 759 126 62% ABE Intermediate High 3,577 470,101 1192 1,109 2,095 290 33% ASE Low 725 96,941 215 195 477 33 30% ASE High 355 38,591 166 0 175 14 47% ESL Beginning Literacy 760 71,020 657 606 79 24 86% ESL Beginning Low 1,243 114,141 1045 943 138 60 84% ESL Beginning High 2,602 231,571 1740 1,564 521 341 67% ESL Intermediate Low 3,079 271,160 1747 1,552 871 461 57% ESL Intermediate High 2,211 201,551 1118 1,013 762 331 51% ESL Advanced 1,090 96,643 167 0 718 205 15% TOTAL 19,724 2,107,559 10,720 9,477 7,090 1914 54%

EFL = Educational Functioning Level; ABE = Adult Basic Education; ASE = Adult Secondary Education; ESL = English as a Second Language

Adult Education Educational Gains & Attendance by Educational Functioning Level July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2015 Entering EFL Total Enrolled Total Attendance Hours Completed Level Who Completed a Level & Advanced 1 or more Levels Separated Before Completing Remaining within Level % Completing Level ABE Beginning Literacy 781 67,019 265 246 491 25 34% ABE Beginning Basic Literacy 2,065 212,454 941 867 1,066 58 46% ABE Intermediate Low 3,684 351,153 1,467 1,382 1,997 220 40% ABE Intermediate High 6,304 613,479 1,192 1,109 4,587 525 19% ASE Low 1,709 150,571 470 195 1,160 79 28% ASE High 893 71,573 365 0 475 53 41% ESL Beginning Literacy 1,062 80,208 657 606 337 68 62% ESL Beginning Low 1,665 126,511 1,045 943 450 170 63% ESL Beginning High 3,425 257,402 1,740 1,564 1,166 519 51% ESL Intermediate Low 4,038 301,885 1,747 1,552 1,623 668 43% ESL Intermediate High 2,943 228,277 1,118 1,013 1,363 462 38% ESL Advanced 1,485 110,919 167 0 1,067 251 11% TOTAL 30,054 2,571,451 11,174 9,477 15,782 3,098 37%

Adult Education Core Follow-Up Outcome Achievement July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2015 Participants in Cohort Participants Responding to Survey or Available for Data Matching Response Rate or % Available for Match of Participants Achieving Outcomes (Unweighted) of Participants Achieving Outcome (Weighted) Achieving Outcome (Weighted) Entered Employment 6,135 5,088 83% 1,587 1,914 31% Retained Employment 11,158 7,274 65% 5,009 7,684 69% Obtained a Secondary School Credential or its Equivalent 1,810 1,810 100% 985 985 54% Entered Post-secondary Education or Training – current program year 6,756 6,756 100% 251 251 4% Entered Post-secondary Education or Training – prior program year 4,342 4,342 100% 411 411 9%

Adult Education Educational Gains & Attendance for Pre- & Post-Tested Participants July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2015 Entering EFL Total Enrolled Pre- and Post-tested Total Attendance Hours Completed Level Who Completed a Level & Advanced 1 or more Levels Separated Before Completing Remaining within Level % Completing Level ABE Beginning Literacy 435 57,287 272 250 79 84 63% ABE Beginning Basic Literacy 901 108,227 641 567 213 47 71% ABE Intermediate Low 2,117 269,290 1,297 1,163 644 176 61% ABE Intermediate High 2,949 359,290 969 858 1,556 424 33% ASE Low 820 131,247 273 238 415 132 33% ASE High 456 78,790 149 0 214 93 33% ESL Beginning Literacy 867 70,058 734 668 124 9 85% ESL Beginning Low 957 84,238 732 686 200 25 76% ESL Beginning High 2,431 212,971 1,481 1,401 845 105 61% ESL Intermediate Low 2,528 227,220 1,282 1,240 1,120 126 51% ESL Intermediate High 2,014 177,876 849 807 1,059 106 42% ESL Advanced 1,058 92,712 299 0 700 59 28% TOTAL 17,533 1,869,780 8,978 7,878 7,169 1,386 51%

EFL = Educational Functioning Level; ABE = Adult Basic Education; ASE = Adult Secondary Education; ESL = English as a Second Language

Adult Education Educational Gains & Attendance by Educational Functioning Level July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2015 Entering EFL Total Enrolled Total Attendance Hours Completed Level Who Completed a Level & Advanced 1 or more Levels Separated Before Completing Remaining within Level % Completing Level ABE Beginning Literacy 766 83,851 272 250 360 134 36% ABE Beginning Basic Literacy 1,576 155,506 641 567 819 116 41% ABE Intermediate Low 3,508 349,603 1,297 1,163 1,912 299 37% ABE Intermediate High 5,468 476,314 969 858 3,793 706 18% ASE Low 1,734 200,056 395 238 1,081 258 23% ASE High 1,030 111,920 293 0 558 179 28% ESL Beginning Literacy 1,363 84,638 734 668 610 19 54% ESL Beginning Low 1,405 96,760 732 686 637 36 52% ESL Beginning High 3,442 243,901 1,481 1,401 1,828 133 43% ESL Intermediate Low 3,492 258,004 1,282 1,240 2,050 160 37% ESL Intermediate High 2,764 202,678 849 807 1,789 126 31% ESL Advanced 1,449 106,050 299 0 1,078 72 21% TOTAL 27,997 2,369,281 9,244 7,878 16,515 2,238 33%

WIOA Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation Division of Rehabilitation Services Federal Standards & Indicators Report Federal Fiscal Years 2014 & 2015 Standard Federal FY 2014 Federal FY 2015 Federal Standard Number of Closed Cases with an Employment Outcome 2,545 2,559 At least one more than the previous year.

Standards Federal Minimum Standard Of the Closed Cases that received services, the percentage with an Employment Outcome 59.08% 59.65% 55.80% Of the Closed Cases with an Employment Outcome, the percentage that have a wage greater than or equal to Minimum Wage. 95.09% 90.47% 72.60% Of the Closed Cases with an Employment Outcome, the percentage that have a wage greater than or equal to the Minimum Wage and have Significant Disabilities. 100.00% 100.00% 62.40% Ratio of Average State Wage to the average wage of Closed Cases with Employment Outcome that have wages greater than or equal to Minimum Wage. 0.42 0.44 0.52 Difference between the percentage of Closed Cases with Employment Outcomes that have a wage greater than or equal to the Minimum Wage that are Self Support at Application and the percentage of Closed Cases with Employment Outcomes that have a wage greater than or equal to the Minimum Wage that are Self Support at Closure. 67.645 68.596 53.000 Ratio of Minority Service Rate to Non-Minority Service Rate 0.841 0.894 0.800

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Federal Fiscal Year 2014 Aggregate Scores At-A-Glance Jurisdiction Work Participation Rate Total Job Placements Total Full-Time \$10/hr Job Placements Large Counties Baltimore City 52% 5030 1020 Baltimore County 55% 1713 514 Prince George's 65% 1099 281 Medium Counties Anne Arundel 56% 1232 375 Montgomery 56% 768 235 Wicomico 55% 322 47 Harford 55% 476 134 St. Mary's 55% 261 20 Howard 42% 262 65 Washington 62% 246 41 Cecil 50% 227 48 Small Counties Frederick 67% 360 137 Charles 54% 130 31 Allegany 58% 139 12 Dorchester 54% 90 8 Caroline 79% 117 14 Carroll 56% 106 36 Somerset 54% 128 19 Queen Anne's 67% 70 10 Calvert 68% 108 25 Worcester 73% 67 15 Garrett 55% 35 3 Talbot 33% 55 22 Kent 57% 74 14

MARYLAND 55% 13,115 3126

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Federal Fiscal Year 2015 Aggregate Scores At-A-Glance Jurisdiction Work Participation Rate Total Job Placements Total Full-Time \$10/hr Job Placements Large Counties Baltimore City 52% 5572 1301 Baltimore County 54% 1611 563 Prince George's 63% 1147 285 Medium Counties Anne Arundel 52% 1184 379 Montgomery 59% 748 265 Wicomico 53% 303 54 Harford 58% 471 135 St. Mary's 56% 277 28 Howard 67% 204 52 Washington 65% 246 67 Cecil 49% 237 66 Small Counties Frederick 67% 322 100 Charles 59% 149 45 Allegany 52% 146 11 Dorchester 57% 107 13 Caroline 71% 94 20 Carroll 54% 119 36 Somerset 53% 112 17 Queen Anne's 63% 43 7 Calvert 68% 98 18 Worcester 61% 66 24 Garrett 63% 29 7 Talbot 23% 73 20 Kent 59% 55 6

MARYLAND 55% 13,413 3,519

Trade Program Trade Program Assessment Results for FY 2014 Measure Goal FY 14 Q1 (as of 4/9/14) FY 14 Q2 (as of 6/6/14) FY 14 Q3 (as of 9/5/14) FY 14 Q4 (as of 12/9/14) Training Expenditures 85% - 115% 132.5% 166.8% 55.9% 65.7% TRA Expenditures 85% - 115% 49.1% 98.3% 98.0% 94.0% A/RTAA Expenditures 85% - 115% 93.2% 92.9% 97.3% 94.7% Job Srch / Reloc Exp 85% - 115% 0.0% 0.0% 100.0% 100.0% Tenure 100% 97.5% 98.7% 98.8% 98.9% ONET 100% 0.9% 0.8% 69.9% 79.1% ISP 100% 74.4% 69.8% 100.0% 100.0% NAICS 90% 100.0% 100.0% 96.8% 93.8% Credential 50% 25.9% 32.1% 37.8% 40.3% Rapid Response 50% 21.8% 16.7% 51.5% 74.3% Case Management 50% 73.8% 87.7% 83.2% 83.4% First TAA Date 90% 99.7% 100.0% 100.0% 100.0% Agent Liable 75% 89.4% 91.4% 94.9% 93.5% Employment After Exit 100% 100.0% 100.0% 100.0% 100.0% Wages Prior 100% 100.0% 100.0% 100.0% 100.0% Wages Following 100% 100.0% 100.0% 100.0% 100.0%

Trade Program Assessment Results for FY 15 Measure Goal FY 15 Q1 (as of 3/10/15) FY Q2 (as of 6/4/2015) FY 15 Q3 (as of 9/2/15) FY 15 Q4 (as of 12/10/15) Training Expenditures 85% - 115% Discrepancy Discrepancy Discrepancy Adjustment TRA Expenditures 85% - 115% Pass Pass Pass Pass A/RTAA Expenditures 85% - 115% Pass Pass Pass Pass Job Srch / Reloc Exp 85% - 115% Pass Discrepancy Discrepancy Pass Tenure 100% 100.0% 100.0% 99.0% 100.0% ONET 100% 82.1% 74.2% 78.7% 84.7% ISP 100% 100.0% 100.0% 100.0% 100.0% NAICS 90% 94.1% 96.5% 95.9% 97.4% Credential 50% 46.4% 50.9% 51.6% 55.9% Rapid Response 55% 64.4% 60.0% 65.3% 60.0% Case Management 50% 83.2% 80.4% 78.6% 78.9% First TAA Date 90% 100.0% 100.0% 100.0% 100.0% Agent Liable 75% 92.7% 88.8% 79.7% 78.1% Employment After Exit 100% 100.0% 100.0% 100.0% 100.0% Wages Prior 100% 100.0% 100.0% 100.0% 100.0% Wages Following 100% 100.0% 100.0% 100.0% 100.0% Jobs for Veterans State Grant PY 13 Veterans Program Assessment Results Performance Targets for JVSG Staff Negotiated Targets Q-4

Performance % of Standard Intensive Services Provided to Individuals by DVOP Specialists/Total Veterans and Eligible Persons Served by DVOP Specialists in the State 48% 59.2% 123% Veterans' Entered Employment Rate (weighted) 60% 56% 93% Veterans' Employment Retention Rate 84% 82% 98% Veterans' Average Earnings (Six-Months) \$20,400 \$19,223 94% Disabled Veterans' Entered Employment Rate 50% 48% 96% Disabled Veterans' Employment Retention Rate 83% 82% 99% Disabled Veterans' Average Earnings (Six Months) \$23,400 \$22,558 96%

Performance Targets for Labor Exchange Services for Veterans Negotiated Targets Q-4 Performance % of Standard Veterans' Entered Employment Rate 55% 51% 93% Veterans' Employment Retention Rate 84% 83% 99% Veterans' Average Earnings (Six-Months) \$20,300 \$19,627 97% Disabled Veterans' Entered Employment Rate 50% 47% 94% Disabled Veterans' Employment Retention Rate 85% 83% 98% Disabled Veterans' Average Earnings (Six Months) \$23,000 \$23,227 101%

PY 14 Veterans Program Assessment Results Performance Targets for JVSG Staff Negotiated Targets Q-4 Performance % of Standard Intensive Services Provided to Individuals by DVOP Specialists/Total Veterans and Eligible Persons Served by DVOP Specialists in the State 75% 81% 108% Veterans' Entered Employment Rate (weighted) 57% 65% 114% Veterans' Employment Retention Rate 83% 82% 99% Veterans' Average Earnings (Six-Months) \$19,400 \$18,264 94% Disabled Veterans' Entered Employment Rate 49% 49% 100% Disabled Veterans' Employment Retention Rate 83% 81% 98% Disabled Veterans' Average Earnings (Six Months) \$22,600 \$20,556 91%

Performance Targets for Labor Exchange Services for Veterans Negotiated Targets Q-4 Performance % of Standard Veterans' Entered Employment Rate 52% 54% 104% Veterans' Employment Retention Rate 84% 82% 98% Veterans' Average Earnings (Six-Months) \$19,700 \$19,290 98% Disabled Veterans' Entered Employment Rate 50% 48% 96% Disabled Veterans' Employment Retention Rate 84% 81% 96% Disabled Veterans' Average Earnings (Six Months) \$23,300 \$22,615 97%

## D. Evaluation

Describe how the state will conduct evaluations and research projects on activities under WIOA core programs; how such projects will be coordinated with, and designed in conjunction with, State and local boards and with State agencies responsible for the administration of all respective core programs; and, further, how the projects will be coordinated with the evaluations provided for by the Secretary of Labor and the Secretary of Education under WIOA.

Evaluation Recognizing that program evaluation and research are two key components of achieving overall system improvement, Maryland's WIOA Partners are committed to working with appropriate organizations to design and coordinate projects that inform sound WIOA policy making that is refined to appropriately meet shared customer needs. Evidence provided by research and evaluations can improve policy in two main ways: it can lead policymakers to adopt or scale-up programs or policies that are found to have net social benefits; or, it can lead policymakers to terminate existing programs that are found to have net social costs. The WIOA Partners, therefore, agree to explore how independent evaluation efforts, that have been historically contracted by each agency independently, can be coordinated to provide a comprehensive, deeper look at the overall WIOA system.

## 5. Distribution of Funds for Core Programs

Describe the methods and factors the State will use in distributing funds under the core programs in accordance with the provisions authorizing such distributions.

### A. For Title I programs

For Title I programs, provide a description of the written policies that establish the State's methods and factors used to distribute funds to local areas for—

#### 1. Youth activities in accordance with WIOA section 128(b)(2) or (b)(3),

Maryland will distribute WIOA Title I Youth funds in accordance with the formula allocation method cited in WIOA Section 128 (b)(2)(A). As such, 100% of funds will be distributed using the following three factors enumerated in Section 127(b)(1)(C) of WIOA:

- 33 1/3 percent shall be allotted on the basis of the relative number of unemployed individuals in areas of substantial

unemployment in each Local Area, compared to the total number of unemployed individuals in areas of substantial unemployment in all States;

- 33 1/3 percent shall be allotted on the basis of the relative excess number of unemployed individuals in each State, compared to the total excess number of unemployed individuals in all States; and
- 33 1/3 percent shall be allotted on the basis of the relative number of disadvantaged youth in each State, compared to the total number of disadvantaged youth in all States. In determining an allotment in relation to a local area's disadvantaged youth, the allotment shall be based on the higher of—

(1) the number of individuals who are age 16 through 21 in families with an income below the low-income level in such area; or

(2) the number of disadvantaged youth in such area.

The local area shall not receive an allocation percentage for a fiscal year that is less than 90 percent of the average allocation percentage of the local area for the 2 preceding fiscal years. Amounts necessary for increasing such allocations to local areas to comply with the preceding sentence shall be obtained by ratably reducing the allocations to be made to other local areas.

Maryland will continue to review its policy in this regard and update it accordingly.

## **2. Adult and training activities in accordance with WIOA section 133(b)(2) or (b)(3),**

Maryland will distribute WIOA Title I Adult funds in accordance with the formula allocation method cited in WIOA Section 133 (b)(2)(A). As such, 100% of funds will be distributed using the following three factors enumerated in Section 132(b)(1)(B) of WIOA:

33 1/3 percent shall be allotted on the basis of the relative number of unemployed individuals in areas of substantial unemployment in each local area, compared to the total number of unemployed individuals in areas of substantial unemployment in the State;

33 1/3 percent shall be allotted on the basis of the relative excess number of unemployed individuals in each local area, compared to the total excess number of unemployed individuals in the State; and

33 1/3 percent shall be allotted on the basis of the relative number of disadvantaged adults in each local area, compared to the total number of disadvantaged adults in the State. The allotment shall be based on the higher of—

(1) the number of adults in families with an income below the low-income level in such area; or

(2) the number of disadvantaged adults in such area.

The local area shall not receive an allocation percentage for a fiscal year that is less than 90 percent of the average allocation percentage of the local area for the 2 preceding fiscal years. Amounts necessary for increasing such allocations to local areas to comply with the preceding sentence shall be obtained by ratably reducing the allocations to be made to other local areas.

Maryland will continue to review its policy in this regard and update it accordingly.

## **3. Dislocated worker employment and training activities in accordance with WIOA section 133(b)(2) and based on data and weights assigned.**

The Maryland WIOA Fiscal Accountability Workgroup, comprised of Local Directors, local staff, and staff from the Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning, met multiple times to discuss the allocation formula for Dislocated Worker funds administered under Title I of WIOA.

The workgroup used as a guide Section 133 of WIOA and TEGL 29-14 and examined how the funds were administered previously. Specifically, WIOA Section 133 provides that information that can be used in the formulation of the Dislocated Worker allocation includes "insured unemployment data, unemployment concentrations, plant closing and mass layoff data, declining industries data, farmer-rancher economic hardship data, and long-term unemployment data."

Utilizing the data referenced above, which included unemployment statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages and other Bureau of Labor Statistics data, and other sources, the workgroup identified six factors to be used to determine the local Dislocated Worker formula.

- Unemployment Insurance Exhaustee
- Insured Unemployed
- Unemployed
- Declining Industries
- Mass Layoffs/Plant Closings
- Farmer/Rancher Data

The workgroup also recommended the priority of the factors. While recommendations were made, the workgroup deferred any final decision regarding the factors used, and the weighting of those factors. Consistent with the purpose of the dislocated worker program, the allocation method addresses current and future needs by focusing on unemployed individuals.

Maryland combines the Insured Unemployed and Unemployed into one factor with a high assigned weighting. This was done to ensure that all unemployed individuals, regardless of their status as receiving Unemployment Insurance benefits, can utilize dislocated worker funding within the existing constraints of the law. Based on that conversation and substantial research and data analysis, it was concluded that the final factors and weighting are:

<b>Dislocated Workers Formula Allocation Factors</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Weighting</b>
Unemployed	1	49%
Unemployment Insurance Exhaustee	2	29%
Declining Industries	3	8%
Mass Layoffs/Plant Closings (WARN and other data)	4	7%
Farmer/Rancher Data	5	7%

As this is a change in the way the formula was previously structured, Local Areas that will be receiving less than 90 percent of their relative share as compared to their last two years' funding level will be held at 90 percent. This is in accordance with guidance set forth in TEGL 3-15.

Again, it is noted that pursuant to Policy Issuance 2016-01: Transfer Authority for WIOA Title I Adult & Dislocated Worker Funds, as issued on January 12, 2016, and consistent with Section 133 of WIOA, a Local Area may transfer up to and including 100 percent of a Program Year (PY) and Fiscal Year (FY) allocation for Adult employment and training activities, and up to and including 100 percent of a PY and FY allocation for Dislocated Worker employment and training activities between the two programs. Transfers may only occur between Adult and Dislocated Worker funds within the same funding phase.

## **B. For Title II:**

### **1. Multi-year grants or contracts**

Describe how the eligible agency will award multi-year grants or contracts on a competitive basis to eligible providers in the State, including how eligible agencies will establish that eligible providers are organizations of demonstrated effectiveness.

#### **WIOA Title II - Adult Education & Literacy Services**

For the Title II Adult Education fund, Maryland will award grants to eligible providers through a competitive application process, to establish or operate programs that provide adult education and literacy activities. The application process will be open to eligible providers for seamless delivery of services, ensuring that services are available in every jurisdiction based on the level of need. The services provided will focus on the adult education goals described in WIOA Title II, including helping adults to become literate and obtain the knowledge and skills necessary for employment and self-sufficiency.

The office of Adult Education and Literacy Services (AELS) at DLLR will develop a competitive Request for Proposals (RFP) for Adult Education and Family Literacy Services in Maryland authorized and funded under WIOA Title II. The development process for this RFP will seek input from partner programs within the DLLR Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning as well as the external WIOA partners, however AELS will assume the lead on developing the process and ensuring that all Title II requirements are included in the RFP. The RFP will be posted on the DLLR website in January 2017, seeking local providers of services to commence operation on July 1, 2017, and continue providing local services for a 5 year period, pending compliance with

all requirements of the RFP. During the 5 year period, annual continuation applications will be required including planned activity and partnership updates, performance review and projections, annual class schedules, data quality reviews, budgets and assurances.

All applicants for WIOA Title II funding will be required to submit a proposal in response to this RFP. No other requests for funding under this Act will be considered, with the possible exception that a separate RFP would be developed for Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE) as required under Section 243 of WIOA, Title II. (Should there be a separate RFP for IELCE, it would follow the same process of development and dissemination as the RFP for Adult Education and Family Literacy Services, with the DLLR office of AELS assuming the lead and ensuring compliance with all aspects of the Act.)

Funding allocations by county will be determined by AELS, on the basis of need and demand. Need is established through U.S. Census data identifying the numbers of individuals residing in counties with less than a high education and with English language barriers. Demand is established from historical adult education enrollment data by county.

Proposals submitted in response to the competitive RFP will be reviewed by AELS along with an independent team of reviewers including individuals with knowledge and expertise in adult education, WIOA partner agency officials, and DWDAL personnel. Reviewers will score applications on the considerations set out in WIOA, Title II, Section 231. Demonstrated effectiveness will be determined by the applicant's submission of verifiable data that documents previous successful provision of services, specifically identifying that participants enrolled in the services have demonstrated success in achieving the performance measures required in WIOA, Title I, Section 116.

The following services will be funded:

Adult Basic Skills Education Programs - Maryland adult education programs will continue to provide instruction in adult basic skills for adults with low basic skills, or low educational attainment, and will helping the most vulnerable adults to gain access to the services they need

Adult Secondary Education Programs - Adult secondary education instruction will be provided for students functioning at the adult secondary education level in preparation for a high school diploma through GED® testing or the National External Diploma Program®

English Language Acquisition Programs -English language acquisition programs will continue to be provided especially in jurisdictions with a high population of English language learners. Instructional programs will be required to incorporate mathematics instruction as required in the new law.

Integrated English Literacy & Civics Education - The integrated English literacy and civics education will provide instruction that enables such adults to achieve competency in the English language and acquire the basic and more advanced skills needed to function effectively as parents, workers, and citizens. Such services will include instruction in literacy and English language acquisition and instruction on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation. This may also include workforce training (depending on which section of services they are provided through).

## **2. Ensure direct and equitable access**

Describe how the eligible agency will ensure direct and equitable access to all eligible providers to apply and compete for funds and how the eligible agency will ensure that it is using the same grant or contract announcement and application procedure for all eligible providers.

As the oversight and administrative agency for WIOA Title II adult education programs, DLLR will evaluate past performance in delivering adult education and family literacy activities in order to assess the effectiveness of applicants during the competitive process. Selected applicants must have documented success in providing adult education and literacy services. DLLR will convene one statewide application process for eligible providers. Title II providers in each jurisdiction will be selected on the basis of this competition.

The DLLR office of AELS will be responsible for developing and disseminating the RFP for services to be delivered by local providers as authorized and funded under WIOA Title II. The RFP will be posted publicly on the DLLR website.

Only providers who have responded to the RFP in a timely manner, adhering to all submission requirements and deadlines will be considered for funding under WIOA Title II. Funds will not be awarded to providers who have not applied for funds under this uniform competition.

DLLR will directly award grants to providers who have been deemed to have successfully responded to the RFP requirements and satisfactorily documented previous success in providing the services. Sub-contracts will not be considered for funding.

Proposals submitted in response to the competitive RFP will be reviewed by AELS along with an independent team of reviewers including individuals with knowledge and expertise in adult education, WIOA partner agency officials, and DWDAL personnel. Reviewers will score applications on the considerations set out in WIOA, Title II, Section 231.

## C. Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation

In the case of a State that, under section 101(a)(2)(A)(i) of the Rehabilitation Act designates a State agency to administer the part of the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan under which VR services are provided for individuals who are blind, describe the process and the factors used by the State to determine the distribution of funds among the two VR agencies in the State.

WIOA Title IV – Vocational Rehabilitation DORS is a Combined Agency that provides services for individuals who are blind. As such this provision is not applicable in Maryland.

## 6. Program Data

### A. Data Alignment and Integration

Describe the plans of the lead State agencies with responsibility for the administration of the core programs, along with the State Board, to align and integrate available workforce and education data systems for the core programs, unemployment insurance programs, and education through postsecondary education, and to the extent possible, the Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan. The description of the State's plan for integrating data systems should include the State's goals for achieving integration and any progress to date.

#### **1. Describe the State's plans to make the management information systems for the core programs interoperable to maximize the efficient exchange of common data elements to support assessment and evaluation.**

WIOA PROGRAM DATA & SYSTEM ALIGNMENT The following section details Maryland's plans on how it will ensure WIOA data systems become aligned and better integrated, all the while maintaining privacy and the highest ethical standards.

Under WIOA, states can report an integrated or non-integrated extract based on current federal register documents. Maryland is committed to moving towards an integrated system, but it has not reached that point yet.

The following chart documents the data systems used, by WIOA program and contract end date:

WIOA Program	System(s) Used	Year Contract Expires	Adult Program	Maryland Workforce Exchange	2019 Dislocated Worker Program	Maryland Workforce Exchange	2019 Youth Program	Maryland Workforce Exchange	2019 Wagner-Peyser Act Program	Maryland Workforce Exchange	2019 Adult Education & Family Literacy Act Program	Literacy and Community Education System	2019 Vocational Rehabilitation Program	AWARE	2020 Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program	WORKS	2017 Trade Adjustment Assistance for Workers Program	Maryland Workforce Exchange	2019 Jobs for Veterans State Grant Program	Maryland Workforce Exchange	2019 Reintegration for Ex-Offenders	N/A	N/A	

While DLLR, MSDE, and DHR are capable of reporting on each individual program to the respective federal oversight agency, Maryland does not currently have an integrated system with all partner programs. DLLR is therefore currently unable to report data from agencies, like MSDE-DORS and DHR-FIA, which report outside of the Maryland Workforce Exchange (MWE) system. As shown, the MWE currently houses WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Wagner-Peyser, JVSG, and Trade program participants, however, TANF, Vocational Rehabilitation, and Adult Education are not currently in MWE.

Due to contract end dates in 2019 and 2020, the WIOA leadership team recognizes that Maryland needs both short- and long-term solutions and goals to data sharing and alignment. To reach the long-term goal of system integration or alignment, the WIOA

leadership team will work to identify potential options for common platforms and data integration. The team will schedule demonstrations with vendors and will work together to weigh the advantages and disadvantages of the options available.

DHR is leading discussions with WIOA Partners on long-term solutions in the development of prototypes, using multiple technologies to evaluate which best suit the needs of the State. Overall requirements and features are to be defined based on the suggestions from various stakeholders. The WIOA Partners intend to replace the multiple, existing systems, shown above, with a new system that will include imaging and workflow management, and a robust business rules engine to aide in eligibility determination and creating and managing benefit plans. The key design principles of the modernized system will be to create a customer-centric view with the use of shared data sources and a common business operating model. This platform for this new system will be adaptable across multiple Maryland State agencies. All require a system with similar attributes: a flexible, robust case management platform with safeguarding of Personally Identifiable Information, and a comprehensive, adaptable rules engine. It is intended that the MWE will be integrated into this common infrastructure platform for use. Long term, the application solution for the consolidated WIOA management system is to be utilized across the WIOA System.

In the short-term, the WIOA leadership team is very committed to working together to address data alignment and information sharing concerns through the following methods:

- Creating an inventory of data that is collected, by WIOA program, to determine which data elements (SSN, demographic data, etc.) would be helpful to partner WIOA organizations for eligibility purposes, etc.;
- Establishing Memoranda of Understanding between WIOA agencies, when applicable;
- Developing one standard confidentiality/ethics form for use with all personnel within the WIOA system to ensure staff understand, and agree with signature, to their responsibilities related to safeguarding confidential WIOA records;
- Developing one standard waiver for use with customers at first touch within the WIOA system to ensure compliance with applicable State and federal laws (e.g.: Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act (FERPA); Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPPA); etc.);
- Granting “read-only” basic access, with the appropriate releases, to limited WIOA system staff; and,
- Recognizing that if a WIOA partner agency has verified eligibility documentation, then the same documentation does not need to be duplicated by another State agency for a common customer.

## **2. Describe the State’s plans to integrate data systems to facilitate streamlined intake and service delivery to track participation across all programs included in this plan.**

WIOA PROGRAM DATA & SYSTEM ALIGNMENT The following section details Maryland's plans on how it will ensure WIOA data systems become aligned and better integrated, all the while maintaining privacy and the highest ethical standards.

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- Developing one standard waiver for use with customers at first touch within the WIOA system to ensure compliance with applicable State and federal laws (e.g.: Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act (FERPA); Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPPA); etc.);
- Granting “read-only” basic access, with the appropriate releases, to limited WIOA system staff; and,
- Recognizing that if a WIOA partner agency has verified eligibility documentation, then the same documentation does not need to be duplicated by another State agency for a common customer.

### **3. Explain how the State board will assist the governor in aligning technology and data systems across required one-stop partner programs (including design and implementation of common intake, data collection, etc.) and how such alignment will improve service delivery to individuals, including unemployed individuals.**

In addition, the Governor’s Workforce Investment Board will establish a Data-Driven Technology Standing Committee to assist the Governor in aligning technology and data systems. The committee will report on high-level, cross-system indicators that are aligned with Maryland’s vision and connection to State data. The committee will analyze, develop, and advise on strategies that support the State workforce system.

### **4. Describe the State’s plans to develop and produce the reports required under section 116, performance accountability system. (WIOA section 116(d)(2)).**

**INTEROPERABILITY OF MARYLAND’S WIOA MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS** Performance Interoperability Once integrated, the WIOA Partners will be able to effectively use the WIOA management system to assess the progress of participants exiting from core programs and completing post-secondary education or entering into or retaining employment. The modernized WIOA management system will provide a common data infrastructure from which ad hoc and automatically generated reports may be produced. Once established, this system will provide the ability to flexibly analyze and visualize data across the WIOA system, either in a consolidated fashion or using system specific data. Analysts will have the ability to quickly explore data through easily customized visualization tools. This allows for a drag and drop type interface, which would eliminate the need for hard coding when generating a new report or changing an existing report.

Until then, in order to collect the participant level data that will be aggregated and displayed in USDOL quarterly reports, Maryland will use a standardized individual record file for program participants, called the WIOA Joint Participant Individual Record Layout (PIRL). The PIRL provides a standardized set of data elements, definitions, and reporting instructions that will be used to describe the characteristics, activities, and outcomes of WIOA participants. Maryland will be able to meet USDOL requirements to collect participant information that corresponds with the data elements and descriptions delineated within the PIRL. Once collected, this information will then be aggregated according to the conditions outlined in the WIOA Data Element Specifications, which detail the common data elements and technical specifications necessary for calculation of reporting elements under all the USDOL programs listed in the paragraph below.

Once aggregated, Maryland will submit the outcomes of the PIRL data to USDOL, which will be displayed according to the frameworks within the USDOL Performance Scorecard and the WIOA Pay-for-Performance Scorecard. Each program mentioned in the supporting statement will generate a program specific report that mirrors the construct of the USDOL Performance Scorecard. The Job Openings Report collects data on individuals who receive core employment and workforce information services through the

public labor exchange of the State's workforce delivery system under the Wagner-Peyser Program. This report is also included in the State's collection request. Additionally, to meet USDOL requirements, Maryland will certify and submit the USDOL Performance Scorecard to USDOL on a quarterly basis and will submit the Pay-for-Performance report(s) and Job Openings report quarterly, when applicable.

The accuracy, reliability, and comparability of program reports submitted by Maryland using Federal funds are fundamental elements of good public administration, and are necessary tools for maintaining and demonstrating system integrity. The use of a standard set of data elements, definitions, and specifications at all levels of the workforce system helps improve the quality of the performance information that Maryland reports on its WIOA programs.

The set of common performance measures represents the key results that Maryland strives to achieve for their customers, and that the WIOA federal oversight agencies, like USDOL are interested in measuring. Using this set of common indicators affords ETA the ability to describe, in a similar manner, the core purposes of the workforce system – through the program services received, how many people obtained jobs; their earnings; and what skill gains they achieved. They are an integral part of Maryland's WIOA performance accountability system, and through the Workforce Performance Accountability, Information, and Reporting System, Maryland will continue to collect and report data on program activities, participants, and outcomes that are necessary for program management and to convey complete and accurate information on the performance of workforce programs to policymakers and stakeholders.

Section 116(d)(1) of WIOA mandates that the United States Secretaries of Labor and Education develop a template for performance reports to be used by states, Local Boards, and eligible providers of training services for reporting on outcomes achieved by participants in the WIOA core programs. Required annual data for the core programs include those related to primary performance indicators, participant counts and costs, and barriers to employment. Once Maryland receives these templates from its federal agency partners, it will work to ensure data are collected and reported in a timely and accurate manner. The WIOA Partners are dedicated to provide their staff with additional training regarding performance reporting to ensure proficiency.

Sec. 506(b)(1) of WIOA states that section 116 of WIOA will go into effect at the start of the second full program year after the date WIOA was enacted. WIOA was enacted on July 22, 2014. Therefore, Section 116's performance accountability system is effective July 1, 2016. Approval of this information collection is required so that the states, grantees, and other entities can begin programming their management information systems in order to allow for collection of the necessary data to implement the data collection and reporting requirements of Section 116 in accordance with the WIOA statute.

DORS monitors performance on an ongoing basis. DORS staff have access to AWARE VR standardized performance reports on an ongoing basis through weekly, monthly, quarterly, and annual reports. Performance is monitored regularly to ensure progress toward the achievement of performance goals. Additionally, Alliance Enterprises has been working with Maryland DORS and other VR agencies to develop new data reporting elements in accordance with WIOA common performance measures. As Alliance Enterprises updates AWARE, DORS will ensure that staff are provided necessary training. Also, DORS staff will continue to work with its workforce partners toward implementing WIOA common performance measures.

*Planning Note: States should be aware that Section 116(i)(1) requires the core programs, local boards, and chief elected officials to establish and operate a fiscal and management accountability information system based on guidelines established by the Secretaries of Labor and Education. Separately, the Departments of Labor and Education anticipate working with States to inform future guidance and possible information collection(s) on these accountability systems. States should begin laying the groundwork for these fiscal and management accountability requirements, recognizing that adjustments to meet the elements above may provide opportunity or have impact on such a fiscal and management accountability system.*

## **B. Assessment of Participants' Post-Program Success**

Describe how lead State agencies will use the workforce development system to assess the progress of participants who are exiting from core programs in entering, persisting in, and completing postsecondary education, or entering or remaining in employment. States may choose to set additional indicators of performance.

Through WIOA and the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA), Congress requires states to track participants' post-program success using a series of measures. For the WIOA Title I Adult & Dislocated Worker Programs, Title II Adult Education and Literacy programs, Title III Wagner-Peyser employment services, and Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation, the primary indicators of performance are, as follows:

- Employment during 2nd quarter after exit
- Employment during 4th quarter after exit

- Median earnings
- Credential attainment rate
- Measurable skills gain
- Effectiveness in serving employers

For the WIOA Title I Youth program, the primary indicators of performance are, as follows:

- Employment, education, or training during 2nd quarter after exit
- Employment, education, or training during 4th quarter after exit
- Median earnings
- Credential attainment rate
- Measurable skills gain
- Effectiveness in serving employers

For the TANF Program, the primary indicator of performance, based on PRWORA requirements, is the Work Participation Rate. The Work Participation Rate is a measurement of families getting TANF cash assistance that include an adult “engaged in work”—that is, participating in a qualifying work-related activity for a sufficient number of hours per week.

Maryland is fully committed to tracking these mandated outcomes, but recognizes that the WIOA system’s mark of success goes beyond these measures. Utilizing the technical assistance provided to Maryland through its participation in the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services’ Systems to Family Stability National Policy Academy, the WIOA Partners have worked collaboratively to determine how best to measure success.

As Maryland seeks to strengthen and enhance its workforce system through implementation of the State Plan, success requires a commitment to innovation, collaboration, and a true systems approach among the State’s many workforce partners. In order to guide the WIOA Partners in this work, the Benchmarks of Success for Maryland’s Workforce System will set forth a clear vision, goals, and measureable achievements that help define success and lay the core foundation of this new system. In keeping with Maryland’s commitment to place “people before performance,” these goals and corresponding benchmarks will be focused around a central vision of increasing the earning capacity of Marylanders by maximizing access to employment, skills and credentialing, life management skills, and supportive services. These goals and benchmarks are not mere measures, but rather provide a way of thinking systematically about how we deliver services. They reflect Maryland’s dedication to focusing its efforts on people who need the system’s assistance the most. The strategic goals and coinciding benchmarks, which are currently undergoing a collaborative vetting process, will intentionally set a high bar and are meant to be used as a leadership tool, guiding strategic conversations and defining a set of achievements for the workforce system to commit to and strive toward in our collective work to improve the lives of Marylanders.

To be clear, the intention of these benchmarks is not to be punitive; but rather, to be forward thinking about what success really means in Maryland. The benchmarks will allow the WIOA Partners to collectively measure success, as defined by Maryland, beyond what Congress requires. The WIOA Partners are committed to using these goals and benchmarks as leadership tools to propel Maryland forward in its work to put “people before performance.” Further, the WIOA Partners are committed to driving resources, services, and collaboration towards strategies that will effectively and efficiently push the system to make progress in reaching its goals. The WIOA Alignment Group will work with the WIOA Work Groups to find ways to effectively measure and strategize how best to meet these benchmarks across the system. Additionally, the WIOA Alignment Group will continually revisit these benchmarks to gauge progress and to determine whether additional measures should be tracked.

### **C. Use of Unemployment Insurance (UI) Wage Record Data**

Explain how the State will meet the requirements to utilize quarterly UI wage records for performance accountability, evaluations, and as a source for workforce and labor market information, consistent with Federal and State law. (This Operational Planning element applies to core programs.)

Use of Unemployment Insurance Data Under WIOA, Unemployment Insurance wage records will continue to serve as the primary source for all employment related performance measures.

To guarantee that Maryland is seeing a full and accurate picture of the impact its WIOA programs have on participants' employment outcomes, the State plans to use supplemental wage record data to document participants' entry and retention in employment when wage records are unavailable. Although a majority of employment situations will be covered by wage records, certain other types of employment, particularly self-employment, are either excluded from UI wage records, or remain difficult to gain access to due to restrictions related to confidentiality.

WIOA Partners take the responsibilities of privacy and confidentiality very seriously. Therefore, the WIOA Partners are dedicated to ensuring that staff who access and review Unemployment Insurance wage records sign appropriate confidentiality and ethical disclosures every six (6) months.

## **D. Privacy Safeguards**

Describe the privacy safeguards incorporated in the State's workforce development system, including safeguards required by section 444 of the General Education Provisions Act (20 U.S.C. 1232g) and other applicable Federal laws.

**PRIVACY SAFEGUARDS** To protect Personally Identifiable Information (PII), Maryland adheres to USDOL guidance provided in Training and Employment Guidance Letter 39-11, "Guidance on the Handling and Protection of PII." Whenever possible, Maryland will continue to use unique identifiers for participant tracking instead of Social Security Numbers (SSNs). While SSNs may initially be required for performance tracking purposes, staff may use a unique identifier to link each individual record back to the SSN. Once the SSN is entered for performance tracking, the unique identifier may be used in place of the SSN for tracking purposes.

When SSNs are used for tracking purposes, Maryland requires its WIOA programs to store or display SSNs in a way that is not attributable to any particular individual. For Maryland's WIOA programs using the MWE, the State subsequently uses alternative identifiers, such as State IDs, after SSNs have initially been supplied. When SSNs are used, this information is truncated and encrypted within the MWE. Only WIOA staff with selective privileges can access SSNs.

To secure the System Internet communications within the MWE, a Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) is used to encrypt a session between the server and the web user. SSL is a program layer for managing the security of message transmissions in a network. The programming for maintaining data confidentiality is contained in a program layer between an application such as the System and the Internet's Transmission Control Protocol / Internet Protocol (TCP/IP) layers. The "sockets" part of the term refers to the socket method of passing data back and forth between a client and a server program in a network or between program layers in the same computer. SSL uses the public-and-private key encryption system from RSA.

A digital certificate is an electronic "credit card" that establishes credentials when carrying out transactions on the web, and is issued by a certification authority. It contains a copy of the certificate holder's public key, which is used for encrypting and decrypting messages and digital signatures, and the digital signature of the certificate-issuing authority. This is used so that a recipient can verify the certificate is real. The following data will always be encrypted when it is accessed by the MWE System:

- Social Security Number
- Federal Employer Identifier Number
- Wage Records
- Information relating to benefits and public assistance received
- User ID and Password

The MWE system includes a set of permissions that determine the resources in the system that a specific user can access and/or modify. For example, some staff will be able to only view certain data while others will be able to view and modify this data. When MWE's creator, Geographic Solutions, hosts the System, the data is secured behind our advanced firewall.

In addition, DLLR's current policy on PII recommends that SSNs are obtained for performance and reporting purposes, but it also states that SSNs are not required for services to be provided. Because SSNs are important for tracking outcomes, staff should seek SSNs, and in doing so, should communicate the following to customers:

- You are not required to provide us with your SSN. Your receipt of services will not be affected by disclosure or nondisclosure of your SSN or any other information that is voluntarily requested.
- SSNs are used to facilitate efficient recordkeeping, integrated service delivery, performance measurement, research, planning, and program evaluation.
- Your SSN will be kept confidential and is intended for use only by the program administrator and the federal government for reporting and evaluation.

Due to privacy concerns among local workforce areas and DLLR, Maryland recently formed a workgroup to assess current policy related to privacy and to work with the federal oversight agencies, like USDOL, to determine alternative methods of tracking that do not require staff to collect PII. The desired goal is to obtain accurate eligibility documentation while reducing paper case files.

Utilization of a module within the MWE will allow all eligibility information and supporting documentation to be scanned and uploaded to the MWE eliminating the need for a paper file. Though this option is still in the planning stages, with further discussion around partner access to MWE and data sharing to come, the DLLR workgroup believes that the adoption of a form in the style of an United States Citizenship and Immigration Services Form I-9 is preferable to the maintenance of a paper case file for each workforce participant. The form would require the attestation of the program participant and the applicable WIOA partner case worker that the information provided on the form is correct and complete. In such a case, the supporting documentation will no longer need to be secured by the partner agency. Thus, documents containing PII will be limited to the information that has been attested to by both the customer and the case worker. While such a form has been created by the DLLR work group, it has yet to be shared by the partners. Once a document is agreed to by the WIOA Partners, DLLR is committed to piloting a program that integrates the I-9 type form into the intake process. The pilot will allow agencies and WIOA Partners to establish a baseline in determination of an acceptable error rate. Upon successful completion of the pilot, and upon agreement among the WIOA Partners, an I-9 based form will be integrated as a part of the intake process until information can be securely uploaded onto the MWE and/or partner systems and information can be successfully shared between the partners.

## 7. Priority of Service for Veterans

Describe how the State will implement and monitor the priority of service provisions for veterans in accordance with the requirements of the Jobs for Veterans Act, codified at section 4215 of 38 U.S.C., which applies to all employment and training programs funded in whole or in part by the Department of Labor. States should also describe the referral process for veterans determined to have a significant barrier to employment to receive services from the Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG) program's Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist.

Maryland's WIOA system can be a pathway to the middle class and a means to maintain and build the skills necessary to remain in the middle class. Maryland is committed to ensuring its target populations are able to access the WIOA system on a priority basis. For the WIOA Title I Adult Program, this means that local workforce areas must provide priority for training activities to individuals in the target populations. Under WIA, priority was required to be given to public assistance recipients and low-income individuals only when it was determined that allocated funds were limited. Now, under WIOA, priority must be provided regardless of the level of available funds. Priority must be provided in the following order: Priority of Service for the WIOA Title I Adult Program

First Priority: Veterans and eligible spouses who are also low-income, recipients of public assistance and/or basic skills deficient

Second Priority: Individuals who are not veterans or eligible spouses, but meet criteria to be considered a target population

Third Priority: Veterans and eligible spouses who did not meet "first priority" conditions

Fourth Priority: Individuals who are not veterans and do not meet criteria to be considered a target population Local Areas must adhere to these priority provisions and, within their local plans, provide details on how priority shall be given in the Local Area within these parameters. In accordance with the Jobs for Veterans Act of 2002 and the Veterans' Benefits, Health Care, and Information Technology Act of 2006, DLLR offers covered Veterans and eligible spouses "Priority of Service." The purpose of Priority of Service is to give first consideration for program participation to covered Veterans and eligible spouses who also meet the eligibility criteria of a USDOL training, employment, or placement service in any workforce preparation program. To receive Veterans Priority of Service for a specific program, a Veteran or eligible spouse must meet the statutory definition of a "covered person" and also must meet any other statutory eligibility requirement applicable to the program. Depending on the type of service or resource being provided, Priority of Service may mean:

- Covered person gains access to services or resources earlier than the non-covered persons;
- Covered person receives service or resources instead of a non-covered person when resources are limited.

Veterans Priority of Service should take precedence before applying WIOA Priority of Service for recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient. For universal access programs, such as Wagner-Peyser, covered persons must receive Priority of Service over all other program participants. However, for programs with specific eligibility criteria, such as the WIOA Title I Adult program, covered persons must first meet all statutory eligibility requirements for the program in order to receive Priority of Service. For programs that target specific populations without statutory mandate, covered persons must receive the highest priority for enrollment, similarly to the Priority of Service applied to universal access programs. State and local program operators understand that Priority of Service must be followed. As established by statute, State and local operators do not have the discretion to establish further priorities within the overall Priority of Service; this right is reserved for the United States Secretary of Labor only. Local workforce area directors must ensure that local plans incorporate a Veterans Priority of Service policy that is consistent with the requirements of State policy and the law.

**IDENTIFYING VETERAN STATUS** Each American Job Center, or other relevant point of entry, should inform covered persons, that by identifying as a Veteran or covered spouse, they are entitled to Priority of Service. One of the responsibilities of the Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVERs) is to ensure that signage and detailed sign-in sheets exist at both the physical service delivery point and through the Internet service delivery point. The workforce system and affiliate program operators must

enable Veterans and eligible spouses to identify themselves as Veterans at the point of entry to the system or program, so that covered persons can take full advantage of Priority of Service. American Job Center and affiliate program operators must ensure that covered Veterans and eligible spouses are made aware of: • Priority of Service entitlement • The full array of employment training and placement services available • Applicable eligibility requirements for programs and services

**VERIFYING VETERAN STATUS** Any individual self-identifying as a covered person should be provided immediate priority in the delivery of employment and training services. No covered person should be denied access on a priority basis to any services provided by program staff in order to verify covered person status. The only services that require eligibility verification are those that involve the use of outside resources, such as classroom training. For example, to receive training services under WIOA Title I programs, veteran status must be verified. In cases such as these, verification is only necessary where a decision is made to commit outside resources to a covered person over another individual. For all other purposes, covered persons should be enrolled and provided immediate priority before providing verification as a covered person. It is neither necessary nor appropriate for any staff to require verification of the status of a Veteran or eligible spouse at the point of entry, unless the individual who self-identifies as a covered Veteran or eligible spouse: 1. Is to immediately undergo eligibility determination and must be registered or enrolled in a program; or, 2. The applicable federal program rules require verification of covered Veteran or eligible spouse status at that time. To receive Priority of Service for career services, covered persons may self-attest their Veteran or eligible spouse status. To receive training services under WIOA, however, Veteran status must be verified.

**IMPLEMENTING PRIORITY OF SERVICE** The regulations provide that priority of service means the right of eligible covered persons to take precedence over eligible non-covered persons in obtaining services. They further specify that taking precedence may mean: • The covered person receives access to the service or resource earlier in time than the non-covered person; or • If the service or resource is limited, the covered person receives access to the service or resource instead of or before the non-covered person. The regulations specify how priority of service is to be applied across three different types of qualified job training programs: • Universal access programs that do not target specific groups; • Discretionary targeting programs that focus on certain groups but are not mandated to serve target group members before other eligible individuals; and, • Statutory targeting programs that are mandated by federal law to provide priority or preference to certain groups.

**MONITORING COMPLIANCE WITH PRIORITY OF SERVICE** DOL will monitor recipients of funds for qualified job training programs to ensure that covered persons are made aware of and provided priority of service. Monitoring will be performed jointly by the Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS), the DOL agency responsible for administering the program, and the Regional Local Veterans Employment Representative (RLVER). The following will be used to measure compliance: • The ratio of veterans referred to employment and WIOA services versus non-veteran clients • The ratio of veterans referred and accepted to WIOA training versus non-veterans • Are veterans priority of service signage easily seen near entrance • Are front desk personnel fully versed on veteran priority of service

If monitoring identifies non-compliance with priority of service, the results of the monitoring: 1. Will be handled in accord with each program's compliance review procedures; and, 2. May lead to imposition of a corrective action plan.

**REFERRAL PROCESS FOR VETERANS DETERMINED TO HAVE SIGNIFICANT BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT** This guidance is meant to limit the number of eligible veterans and eligible spouses who DVOP specialists serve. Limiting DVOP specialists to serving only the veterans and eligible spouses who meet the criteria below will ensure that the DVOP specialists are serving the specific population of eligible veterans and eligible spouses prioritized by 38 U.S.C. 4103A. It will also ensure that DVOP specialists are better able to fulfill their primary responsibility of providing intensive services to all the people they serve. While the DVOP specialists' provision of intensive services to these veterans and eligible spouses may include some core services, serving a more limited population will allow DVOP specialists enough time to devote a majority of their time to providing intensive services.

The veterans who do not fall into one of the categories that are served by DVOP specialists are eligible to be served by other AJC Staff, including WIOA, WP, and other AJC program staff, and are eligible for priority of service as is discussed in section 8 below. The SBE categories were developed to implement the priority and maximum emphasis requirements of 38 U.S.C. 4103A(a).

As required by that subsection, "special disabled veterans" and "disabled veterans" (as those terms are defined in 38 U.S.C. 4211(1) and (3)) are included in the group of veterans who are given priority because they have a SBE. In addition, the SBE categories give priority to the other categories of veterans and eligible spouses identified by the Secretary and gives maximum emphasis to serving veterans and eligible spouses who are educationally or economically disadvantaged, such as certain groups of veterans and spouses who have been removed from the workforce for significant periods of time.

Additionally, under 38 U.S.C. 4103A(a)(1)(C), the Secretary may choose to prioritize additional categories of veterans and eligible spouses who may receive intensive services from DVOP specialists. Any additional priorities will be set forth in separate guidance. The Secretary will regularly reassess the definition to ensure it reflects the best available data and trends associated with veteran employment and continues to identify those veterans who are to be given priority and maximum emphasis for DVOP services under 38 U.S.C. 4103A(a).

An eligible veteran or eligible spouse who is identified as having a SBE must be immediately referred to a DVOP specialist or, in instances where a DVOP specialist is not available, another AJC provider of intensive services. For planning purposes, ETA and VETS anticipate that approximately 30 percent of veterans seeking AJC services nationwide will be identified as having a SBE.

In accordance with 38 U.S.C. 4103A(a), DVOP specialists must provide intensive services to eligible veterans and eligible spouses to meet their employment needs, prioritizing service to special disabled and other disabled veterans, as defined by 38 U.S.C. 4211, and to other eligible veterans in accordance with priorities determined by the Secretary.

The statute also requires that DVOP specialists place maximum emphasis on assisting veterans who are economically or educationally disadvantaged. To ensure that DVOP specialists are able to fulfill their statutory responsibilities to provide intensive services to these categories of veterans, DOL has developed the following guidance to identify the veterans prioritized and emphasized by the DVOP statute.

In order to realign DVOP specialists' roles, DOL is directing that DVOP specialists must limit their activities to providing services to eligible veterans and eligible spouses who: a. meet the definition of an individual with a Significant Barrier to Employment (SBE), specifically defined in bold, below paragraph (b), or b. are members of a veteran population identified by the Secretary under 38 U.S.C. 4103A(a)(1)(C) as eligible for DVOP services, as explained in separate guidance from DOL.

An eligible veteran or eligible spouse is determined to have a SBE if he or she attests to belonging to at least one of the six criteria below: 1. A special disabled or disabled veteran, as those terms are defined in 38 U.S.C § 4211(1) and (3); Special disabled and disabled veterans are those: o who are entitled to compensation (or who but for the receipt of military retired pay would be entitled to compensation) under laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans' Affairs; or, o were discharged or released from active duty because of a service connected disability; 2. Homeless, as defined in Section 103(a) of the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11302(a)); 3. A recently-separated service member, as defined in 38 U.S.C § 4211(6), who at any point in the previous 12 months has been unemployed for 27 or more consecutive weeks; 4. An offender, as defined by WIA Section 101(27), who has been released from incarceration within the last 12 months; 5. Lacking a high school diploma or equivalent certificate; or 6. Low-income (as defined by WIA at Sec. 101(25)(B)).

## **8. Addressing the Accessibility of the One-Stop Delivery System for Individuals with Disabilities**

Describe how the one-stop delivery system (including one-stop center operators and the one-stop delivery system partners), will comply with section 188 of WIOA (if applicable) and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.) with regard to the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs, services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities. This also must include a description of compliance through providing staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities. Describe the State's one-stop center certification policy, particularly the accessibility criteria.

### **WIOA SYSTEM ACCESSIBILITY FOR ALL MARYLANDERS**

Maryland's WIOA oversight entities are committed to ensuring that individuals with disabilities have equal access to all WIOA covered programs and activities. The State of Maryland will ensure that sub-recipients establish and implement appropriate procedures and processes under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Rehabilitation Act -Title IV.

The State of Maryland has taken necessary steps to identify compliance under Section 188 of WIOA which contains provisions identical to those in Section 188 of WIA. Additionally, the State will ensure that all local workforce areas comply with provisions that prohibit discrimination against individuals who apply to, participate in, work for, or come into contact with programs and activities that receive financial assistance from USDOL, United States Department of Education, and the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services.

Section 188 of WIOA prohibits discrimination on the grounds of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, or political affiliation or belief, among other bases. Section 188 also requires that reasonable accommodations be provided to qualified individuals with disabilities in certain circumstances. American Job Center are expected to meet the needs of their customers by ensuring universal access to their programs and activities for all eligible individuals. Universal access includes performance of the following functions:

- Understanding local needs
- Marketing and outreach
- Involving community groups and schools
- Effecting collaboration, including partnerships and linkages
- Staff training
- Intake, registration and orientation
- Assessments and screening
- Service delivery

Maryland's American Job Centers are required to provide reasonable accommodation for individuals with disabilities to ensure equal

access and opportunity. The term “reasonable accommodation” is defined as “modifications or adjustments to an application/registration process that enables a qualified applicant/registrant with a disability to be considered for the aid, benefits, services, training or employment that the qualified applicant/registrant desires;” or “modifications or adjustments that enable a qualified individual with a disability to perform the essential functions of a job, or receive aid, benefits, services, or training equal to that provided to qualified individuals without disabilities,” or “modifications or adjustments that enable a qualified individual with a disability to enjoy the same benefits and privileges of the aid.” American Job Center will make visible to participants that:

- Section 188 implements the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions of WIOA, which are contained in Section 188 of the statute.
- Section 188 prohibits discrimination on the grounds of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, political affiliation or belief, among other bases.
- Section 188 also requires that reasonable accommodations be provided to qualified individuals with disabilities in certain circumstances.

The State expects local providers to acknowledge in local plans and/or policies that they understand that, while Section 188 regulations ensure equal opportunity for individuals with disabilities, sub-recipients may also be subject to the requirements of:

- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, which prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities by recipients of Federal financial assistance
- Title I of the ADA, which prohibits discrimination in employment based on disability
- Title II of the ADA, which prohibits State and local governments from discriminating on the basis of disability
- Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act
- Maryland Anti-Discrimination laws

## MONITORING OF SITES

For WIOA programs under DLLR's oversight, in order to confirm compliance under Section 188, DWDAL State Regional Program Monitors will conduct an onsite review. Prior to the commencement of the visit, the Monitor will confirm with the Program Manager or Director that notification of the visit was received, staff are aware, and requested information prior to the visit is unchanged. The Program Monitor will observe the site's triage system, confirm that appropriate federal signs are visible to participants, and examine the kiosk to confirm that appropriate WIOA, Veteran, ITA, OJT information is available. A site walk-through will determine whether:

- EO Law Posters are in plain sight, centrally located, in needed languages; provide State and local EO Officer contact information
- WIOA, Veteran, ITA, OJT Literature is present
- EO tagline (inserted and correct); TTY/TDD or Relay Service number when phone number is listed
- Accessibility
- Disability entrance signage; entrance; parking lot
- Accessible stations; Assistive Technology

The Monitor will perform a case file review analyzing documentation, intake processes, eligibility determination and access to services based on the laws under WIOA Title I, and Title IV from randomly selected files for the Program year. Tests will be performed using the monitoring tools created by the Monitoring Unit along with instruments provided by DLLR Office of Fair Practices. A report will be developed highlighting any discrepancies, findings or concerns that will be forwarded to the Office of Fair Practice, and the Office of the Assistant Secretary for further review. The WIOA Partners are dedicated to ensuring that subject matter experts in relevant areas, such as disabilities and accessibility, are included in monitoring best practice training and discussions to ensure that WIOA programming is delivered thoroughly and effectively. DORS self-monitors compliance with the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act to ensure that all offices, programs, services, technology, and materials are fully accessible to staff with disabilities and consumers with significant disabilities. On a daily basis, staff with disabilities and participants in the Vocational Rehabilitation program monitor DORS for accessibility. Monitoring activities are also conducted by the United States Department of Education, Rehabilitation Services Administration, as well as by state and federal auditors. DHR provides assistance to individuals and families with disabilities applying for or receiving TANF by ensuring equal access to people with disabilities; ensuring that policies, practices, and procedures are modified for people with disabilities where necessary; and ensuring that methods of administration do not discriminate on the basis of disability. Applicants and recipients are provided special accommodations and auxiliary aids such as interpreters for individuals with hearing impairments, large type reading materials for individuals with visual impairments and telephone interviews for those customers who unable to visit a LDSS. Further, specifically with TANF workforce development programs, DHR requires Local Department of Social Services (LDSS) to complete an annual Plan for Achieving Self-Sufficiency. Included in the annual plan are project descriptions for all work program activities. LDSS are required to describe in the plan their assessment, reasonable accommodation and monitoring processes which will include a communication strategy with vendors that provide workforce development services, if applicable. Additionally, DHR conducts monthly technical assistance/monitoring calls and annual on-site monitoring visits with each LDSS, which includes evaluation of ADA compliance. Compliance will be measured, among other things, by the promulgation of policies, tracking of requests for reasonable accommodations and participation in DHR ADA trainings. Finally, monitoring is also conducted by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services as well as state and federal auditors.

## 9. Addressing the Accessibility of the One-Stop Delivery System for English Language Learners

Describe how the one-stop delivery system (including one-stop center operators and the one-stop delivery system partners) will ensure that each one-stop center is able to meet the needs of English language learners, such as through established procedures,

staff training, resources, and other materials.

English language learners represent a large subset, approximately 49 percent, of the adult education population. Immigrant populations make up approximately 17 percent of Maryland's workforce system. They provide substantial contributions to Maryland's economy every day. In turn, Maryland's workforce system must strive to tailor services for this population as they obtain literacy and high school equivalency, training, and employment services.

DLLR raises awareness of available services at the State's American Job Centers through oral communication and the distribution of bilingual brochures specifically designed for this community. Recognizing that English language learners may have difficulty communicating their needs, available brochures provide pictorial representations to ensure the message is effectively received.

Furthermore, the Department's New Americans Program provides much needed outreach and technical assistance for American Job Center staff. To ensure high quality services to both jobseekers and businesses, professional development opportunities are currently available and advertised through regular communications from Central Office administration. Under WIOA, through leveraging partnerships, new professional development and training opportunities on topics relevant to all WIOA Partners will be available to staff.

Providing accessibility to the workforce system for all of Maryland's jobseekers is central to Maryland's approach under the WIOA. On June 15, 2016, Maryland provided an updated Methods of Administration document to Ms. Naomi Barry-Perez. While the State acknowledges that new requirements under WIOA require the filing of a nondiscrimination plan after the issuance of final regulations promulgated pursuant to Section 188 of WIOA, the State wanted to provide an update noting the State's transition from WIA to WIOA.

According to an August 2016 report by the organization New American Economy, one in seven Marylanders was born in another country. Therefore, Maryland's workforce system must meet the needs of English language learners.

Currently, the Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation's Office of Fair Practices is responsible for all overall compliance in regard to equal opportunity and nondiscrimination matters. The Office provides technical assistance and professional development opportunities. All Local Workforce Development Areas have designated an Equal Opportunity Officer to ensure accessibility of the Local Areas' American Job Centers.

In addition to the equal opportunity and accommodations training conducted by that office, Maryland is dedicated to ensuring that frontline staff is trained to meet the needs of Maryland's English language learners. Recently, Maryland was one of 18 communities to participate in the White House National Skills and Credential Institute's Skilled Immigrant and Refugee Workgroup. Since meeting in Washington, D.C., Maryland has formed workgroups that include thought leaders, nonprofit organizations, and state and local workforce entities. Representatives from nationally recognized programs such as Upwardly Global and the International Rescue Committee have joined the discussion to specifically target areas to provide professional development to Local Areas in developing a culturally sensitive approach to this population. Through policy issuances and monitoring, the State workforce system will ensure that the needs of English language learners will be met.

## **IV. Coordination with State Plan Programs**

Describe the methods used for joint planning and coordination among the core programs, and with the required one-stop partner programs and other programs and activities included in the Unified or Combined State Plan.

Maryland's WIOA State Plan is Governor Hogan's blueprint for the creation of an effective and efficient workforce system. Governor Hogan has directed the Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation (DLLR), the Department of Human Resources (DHR), and the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to work collaboratively to develop a strategic and operational plan to include the following programs:

WIOA State Plan Program Core WIOA Program as determined by law Additional WIOA Program as determined by Governor MD State Agency Responsible for Oversight Adult Program • DLLR Dislocated Workforce Program • DLLR Youth Program • DLLR Wagner–Peyser Act Program • DLLR Adult Education & Family Literacy Act Program • DLLR Vocational Rehabilitation Program • MSDE Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program • DHR Trade Adjustment Assistance for Workers Program • DLLR Jobs for Veterans State Grant Program • DLLR Reintegration of Ex–Offenders Program • N/A

The inclusion of these key programs, in combination, will ensure that Maryland effectively leverages its existing resources to deliver outstanding customer service to workers and businesses that are vital to Maryland's economic growth and prosperity. Key partners from these state agencies as well as representatives from the Governor's Workforce Investment Board (GWIB) and local workforce development areas (collectively referred to as the "WIOA Partners"), pursuant to the Governor's charge, worked together to ensure that Maryland is poised to develop a WIOA compliant workforce system.

Overview of Maryland's Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Transition The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) was signed into law on July 22, 2014, and went into effect July 1, 2015. WIOA supersedes the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, and amends the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, the Wagner–Peyser Act, and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. WIOA is designed to help both jobseekers and businesses. WIOA addresses the needs of jobseekers through establishing a workforce system that helps them access, education, training, and support services to gain employment and succeed in the labor market. WIOA addresses employer needs by matching them to the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy.

In order to ensure Maryland's effective implementation of the requirements of the new federal law, the WIOA Partners agreed on the development and implementation of proven best practices and strategies towards system improvement. As a part of the transition, DLLR convened nine WIOA workgroups comprised of subject matter experts and advocates from a variety of State and local agencies, community colleges, businesses, and key advocacy groups. By design, all workgroups are chaired by DLLR leadership staff and co-chaired by local leadership staff in an effort to ensure collaborative decision making.

Maryland's 9 WIOA Workgroups Governance Policy Fiscal Accountability American Job Center Operations & Partnerships Youth Services & Partnerships Business & Industry Partnerships Performance Accountability Labor Market Information & Sector Strategies Adult Education & Career Pathways

The following chart lists the key goals and organizations represented for each of the 9 WIOA Work Groups:

#### WIOA Workgroup

##### Key Goals Organizations Represented

Governance • Review statewide policies and programs to develop recommendations on actions Maryland should take to align core and other partner programs • Develop guidance for the implementation and continuous improvement of the workforce system • Revise and implement Local Workforce Development Board certification requirements • Anne Arundel Workforce Development Corporation • Baltimore City Mayor's Office of Employment Development • Governor's Workforce Investment Board • Maryland Department of Aging • Maryland Department of Disabilities • Maryland Department of Human Resources – Family Investment Administration • Maryland Department of Juvenile Services • Maryland DLLR– Division of Workforce Development & Adult Learning • Maryland State Department of Education – Division of Career and College Readiness • Maryland State Department of Education – Division of Rehabilitation Services • Montgomery County Division of Workforce Services • Upper Shore Workforce Investment Board

Policy • Assess and evaluate Workforce Investment Act policies to determine and improve overall processes, policies, and procedures in light of WIOA • Coordinate policy development with core partners at State and local levels • Identify policy and regulatory changes for State and Local Workforce Development Areas • Anne Arundel Workforce Development Corporation • Baltimore City Mayor's Office of Employment Development • Baltimore City Department of Social Services • Baltimore County Department of Social Services • Goodwill Industries of the Chesapeake • Governor's Office for Children • Governor's Workforce Investment Board • Howard Community College • Maryland Association of Adult Community and Continuing Education • Maryland Department of Human Resources—Family Investment Administration • Maryland Department of Disabilities • Maryland DLLR—Division of Workforce Development & Adult Learning • Maryland DLLR—Division of Unemployment Insurance • Maryland DLLR—Office of the Secretary • Maryland State Department of Education—Division of Rehabilitation Services • Mid Maryland Workforce Investment Area • Susquehanna Workforce Network, Inc.

Fiscal Accountability • Determine needed and required fiscal and monitoring policies • Update grant agreements to align with WIOA and OMB Uniform Guidance • Review resource sharing and infrastructure costs • Anne Arundel Workforce Development Corporation • Baltimore City Mayor's Office of Employment Development • Baltimore County Department of Economic & Workforce Development • Carroll County Government • Frederick County Workforce Services • Harford County Department of Social Services • Maryland Department of Human Resources – Budget Office • Maryland Department of Human Resources – Family Investment Administration • Maryland DLLR – Division of Workforce Development & Adult Learning • Maryland State Department of Education – Division of Rehabilitation Services • Montgomery County Division of Workforce Investment Services • Prince George's County Economic Development Corporation • Susquehanna Workforce Network, Inc. • Tri-County Council for the Lower Eastern Shore of Maryland • Upper Shore Workforce Investment Board • Western Maryland Consortium

American Job Center Operations & Partnerships • Engage partners and improve customer flow within career services, including how to better serve Unemployment Insurance claimants and hardest-to-serve customers • Improve the use of technology in the American Job Centers • Develop templates for Memorandums of Understanding and Resource Sharing Agreements, including the sharing of infrastructure expenses • Determine staff training needs and opportunities during WIOA transition, including developing relevant board member fact sheets • Review training provider list • Anne Arundel County Department of Social Services • Anne Arundel Workforce Development Corporation • Baltimore City Mayor's Office of Employment Development • Baltimore County Department of Economic & Workforce Development • Baltimore City Community College • Carroll County Government • Enoch Pratt Free Library • Frederick County Workforce Services • Goodwill Industries of the Chesapeake • Lower Shore Workforce Alliance •

Maryland Department of Human Resources—Family Investment Administration • Maryland Department of Human Resources—Office for Refugees and Asylees • Maryland DLLR—Division of Workforce Development & Adult Learning • Maryland DLLR—Division of Unemployment Insurance • Maryland DLLR—Office of Administration • Maryland DLLR—Office of General Services • Maryland Higher Education Commission • Maryland State Department of Education—Division of Rehabilitation Services • Mid-Maryland Workforce Investment Area • Montgomery County Division of Workforce Investment Services • Prince George's County Economic Development Corporation • Susquehanna Workforce Network, Inc. • Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland • Upper Shore Workforce Investment Board • Western Maryland Consortium

Youth Services & Partnerships • Ensure that 75% of youth funds are properly allocated to serve Out-of-School Youth • Expand system capacity • Improve work-based youth activities • Enhance services for youth with disabilities • Anne Arundel Workforce Development Corporation • Baltimore City Mayor's Office of Employment Development • Baltimore County Department of Economic & Workforce Development • Caroline County Department of Social Services • Governor's Office for Children • Governor's Workforce Investment Board • Humanim • Kent County Department of Social Services • Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene • Maryland Department of Juvenile Services • Maryland Department of Human Resources—Social Services Administration • Maryland DLLR— Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning • Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council • Maryland State Department of Education—Division of College and Career Readiness • Maryland State Department of Education—Division of Rehabilitation Services • Maryland State Department of Education—Division of Special Education • Mid-Maryland Workforce Investment Area • Montgomery County Division of Workforce Investment Services • Somerset County Department of Social Services • Talbot County Department of Social Services • Woodlands Job Corps • Wor-Wic Community College

Business & Industry Partnerships • Involve existing Local Area business engagement plan teams • Collect input from Local Areas then share ideas with the work group • Allow for input and data at local, regional, and state levels • Develop common measures and platforms • Anne Arundel Workforce Development Corporation • Baltimore City Mayor's Office of Employment Development • Frederick County Workforce Services • Governor's Workforce Investment Board • Hagerstown Community College • Maryland Department of Commerce • Maryland Department of Human Resources—Family Investment Administration • Maryland DLLR— Division of Workforce Development & Adult Learning • Maryland DLLR—Division of Unemployment Insurance • Maryland State Department of Education—Division of Rehabilitation Services • Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland • Wicomico County Department of Social Services

Performance Accountability • Implement new performance accountability measures • Determine best presentation of WIOA performance reports for state and Local Areas • Develop recommendations for potential additional State measures • Negotiate levels of performance/adjustment factors • Anne Arundel Workforce Development Corporation • Baltimore City Mayor's Office of Employment Development • Baltimore County Department of Social Services • Baltimore County Department of Workforce & Economic Development • Carroll County Government • Dorchester County Department of Social Services • Frederick County Workforce Services • Maryland Department of Human Resources—Family Investment Administration • Maryland DLLR— Division of Workforce Development & Adult Learning • Maryland Higher Education Commission • Maryland State Department of Education— Division of Rehabilitation Services • Maryland State Department of Education—Division of College and Career Readiness • Montgomery County Division of Workforce Investment Services • Prince George's County Economic Development Corporation • Susquehanna Workforce Network, Inc. • Tri-County Council for the Lower Eastern Shore of Maryland • Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland • Upper Shore Workforce Investment Board • Western Maryland Consortium

Labor Market Information & Sector Strategies • Inform sector strategies of Labor Market Information (LMI) • Shape state and local plans with LMI • Use LMI in the regional delineation of economic activity • Evaluate current LMI tools and resources • Baltimore Development Corporation • Lower Shore Workforce Alliance • Maryland Department of Commerce • Maryland Department of Human Resources—Family Investment Administration • Maryland DLLR—Division of Workforce Development & Adult Learning • Maryland State Department of Education—Division of Rehabilitation Services • Towson University • Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland DLLR • University of Baltimore—Jacob France Institute • Upper Shore Workforce Investment Board

Adult Education & Career Pathways • Identify best practices for integration and alignment of adult education with other WIOA core and partner programs via a career pathways systems approach • Suggest strategies addressing any challenges to the integration and alignment of activities, including but not limited to the funding gaps • Address the assurance of non-duplication of services for eligible populations • Annie E. Casey Foundation • Baltimore City Mayor's Office of Employment Development • Baltimore Strive • Carroll Community College • Cecil College • Charles County Public Schools • Enoch Pratt Free Library • Frederick Community College • Goodwill Industries of the Chesapeake • Job Opportunities Task Force • Maryland Association of Adult Community and Continuing Education • Maryland Cash Campaign • Maryland Department of Human Resources – Family Investment Administration • Maryland DLLR – Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning • Maryland State Department of Education – Division of College and Career Readiness • Maryland State Department of Education – Division of Rehabilitation Services • Montgomery County Department of Social Services • Prince George's Community college • Prince George's County Department of Social Services • Susquehanna Workforce Network, Inc. • Worcester County Department of Social Services

Alignment Group and Refocusing of the Maryland WIOA Workgroups

In order for the Plan to succeed, leadership from the WIOA Partners must ensure that the programs they administer adapt and integrate to ensure seamless delivery of services for the workforce system's collective customers. This requires a greater level of communication between the WIOA Partners, as well as a communication throughout the system. The constituent programs within Maryland's workforce system must be aligned to provide businesses and jobseekers with the best possible service. To ensure that the transition into WIOA implementation is as smooth as possible, the WIOA Partners will establish an Alignment Group. The Alignment Group will be a forum for the WIOA Partners to continue to collaboratively approach the challenges of WIOA implementation.

The group will include key leadership in all of the core and combined programs represented in the Maryland State Plan. Specifically, the Alignment Group will be comprised of representatives from:

- The Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation's Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning;
- The Maryland Department of Human Resources' Family Investment Administration;
- The Maryland State Department of Education's Division of Rehabilitative Services;
- The Governor's Workforce Investment Board;
- Local Workforce Development Areas and local WIOA Partner programs; and,
- Representatives from the Community College System of Maryland.

The Alignment Group will provide key oversight to the WIOA workgroups, as Maryland continues to implement the provisions of the federal act. In the months following the initial submission and approval of the State Plan, the Alignment Group will work to repurpose the previously established WIOA workgroups. While the workgroups will continue to provide valuable input into the development of Maryland's WIOA system, their focus will be on implementation of the provisions of the Plan.

The Alignment Group will further focus on:

- Ensuring that Maryland continues to develop a baseline of performance for serving customers;
- Ensuring that the message set forth in this Plan is carried out throughout the system;
- Developing customer flow strategies that are formalized;
- Ensuring that system efficiencies are maximized;
- Ensuring the integration of resources connected to all employment and training-related funding;
- Ensuring seamless access to information for businesses and jobseekers alike;
- Developing shared assessment tools that emphasize customer service;
- Ensuring new technologies are harnessed for ease of access for the consumer; and,
- Developing common branding to effectively promote Maryland's workforce system.

To that end, the WIOA Partners are committed to convening on a monthly basis for at least the first two years of implementation. Additionally, local workforce areas are encouraged to find ways to collaboratively engage their local partners during both the formulation and implementation of local plans and the implementation of the same. For instance, all local partners can establish a monthly event for their joint customers. Information for the event can be posted in local libraries, food pantries, and other public spaces to provide inclusiveness to the public who may not regularly be aware that these resources exist.

#### Jobseeker Advisory Focus Groups

Maryland's customer-centric approach requires that the WIOA Partners continue to meet the needs of jobseekers and businesses who utilize the services of the WIOA system. As GWIB continues to ensure that businesses are proactively engaged and that the voice of business is represented, the WIOA Partners are also dedicated to establishing a Jobseeker Advisory Focus Groups. To ensure that Maryland's workforce system continually focuses on placing people before performance, this effort will engage jobseekers throughout the State in an effort to better understand the barriers they face in securing employment.

The focus groups will advise the workforce system by giving a voice to the jobseekers it serves. As Maryland's system continues to

dedicate its efforts to those with barriers to employment, the focus groups will ensure that the WIOA Partners are continually aware of the barriers faced by jobseekers and workers in securing and maintaining stable employment, and earning a family-supporting wage.

Engagement of focus groups will allow the WIOA Partners to further develop an understanding of how processes could be streamlined from a customer's point of view. Members of these focus groups could also help improve the reemployment efforts, Rapid Response, and other programs provided at the American Job Centers throughout the State by providing first-hand information on how these programs can help jobseekers overcome the barriers they face in order to become re-employed quickly.

The WIOA Partners will develop a process upon which customers are selected to participate in the focus groups without interrupting their lives. Local Areas are also encouraged to include in their local plans how they intend to engage jobseekers who use their services.

#### Maryland State WIOA Convening

The WIOA Partners recognize that continuous communication is necessary to ensure that Maryland's customer-centric workforce model is not just words on a page. During the summer of 2016, the WIOA Partners will hold a WIOA convening. The convening will include the cabinet secretaries representing the WIOA Partners, key management from the WIOA Partners, GWIB representatives, and key local operational representation.

The vision for an integrated system, as set forth in this Plan, will be communicated at this convening. Additionally, best practices will be discussed, and partners from all levels must be afforded the opportunity to discuss issues as this combined Plan is implemented. The goal of the convening is to ensure that the provisions set forth in the Maryland State Combined Plan will be implemented in the most effective and efficient way to better serve Maryland's jobseekers and businesses.

The convening should include:

- A communication of a shared vision for Maryland's customer-centric workforce approach
- Breakout sessions regarding ways to integrate vocational rehabilitation and TANF customers into the American Job Center system
- Sessions on barriers to employment and best practices on barrier removal
- Sessions on leveraging funding for supportive services
- Sessions on best practices such as ACE and MI-BEST, as well as sector-based training programs and sector partnerships, including EARN, should be discussed
- Sessions on integrating apprenticeships into the workforce system

In all, Maryland is dedicated to ensuring that communication regarding the State's implementation efforts is not a singular event. The WIOA Partners are committed to incorporating mass communication systems, such as GovDelivery, to ensure that important messages regarding implementation are continually provided to frontline staff and local providers. Furthermore, Maryland is dedicated to utilizing WIOA implementation funding to ensure that local and State staff are provided professional development and other training opportunities.

## **V. Common Assurances (for all core programs)**

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include assurances that—

1. The State has established a policy identifying circumstances that may present a conflict of interest for a State Board or local board member, or the entity or class of officials that the member represents, and procedures to resolve such conflicts; Yes
2. The State has established a policy to provide to the public (including individuals with disabilities) access to meetings of State Boards and local boards, and information regarding activities of State boards and local boards, such as data on board membership and minutes; Yes
3. The lead State agencies with optimal policy-making authority and responsibility for the administration of core programs reviewed and commented on the appropriate operational planning elements of the Unified or Combined State Plan, and approved the elements as serving the needs of the populations served by such programs; Yes

4. (a) The State obtained input into the development of the Unified or Combined State Plan and provided an opportunity for comment on the plan by representatives of local boards and chief elected officials, businesses, labor organizations, institutions of higher education, the entities responsible for planning or administering the core programs, required one-stop partners and the other Combined Plan programs (if included in the State Plan), other primary stakeholders, including other organizations that provide services to individuals with barriers to employment, and the general public, and that the Unified or Combined State Plan is available and accessible to the general public; (b) The State provided an opportunity for review and comment on the plan by the State Board, including State agency official(s) for the Unemployment Insurance Agency if such official(s) is a member of the State Board; Yes
5. The State has established, in accordance with WIOA section 116(i), fiscal control and fund accounting procedures that may be necessary to ensure the proper disbursement of, and accounting for, funds paid to the State through allotments made for the core programs to carry out workforce development activities; Yes
6. The State has taken appropriate action to secure compliance with uniform administrative requirements in this Act, including that the State will annually monitor local areas to ensure compliance and otherwise take appropriate action to secure compliance with the uniform administrative requirements under WIOA section 184(a)(3); Yes
7. The State has taken the appropriate action to be in compliance with WIOA section 188, Nondiscrimination, as applicable; Yes
8. The Federal funds received to carry out a core program will not be expended for any purpose other than for activities authorized with respect to such funds under that core program; Yes
9. The State will pay an appropriate share (as defined by the State board) of the costs of carrying out section 116, from funds made available through each of the core programs; Yes
10. The State has a One-Stop certification policy that ensures the physical and programmatic accessibility of all One-Stop centers with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA); Yes
11. Service providers have a referral process in place for directing Veterans with Significant Barriers to Employment (SBE) to DVOP services, when appropriate; and Yes
12. Priority of service for veterans and eligible spouses is provided in accordance with 38 USC 4215 in all workforce preparation, development or delivery of programs or services funded directly, in whole or in part, by the Department of Labor. Yes

## **VI. Program-Specific Requirements for Core Programs**

The State must address all program-specific requirements in this section for the WIOA core programs regardless of whether the State submits either a Unified or Combined State Plan.

### **Program-Specific Requirements for Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Activities under Title I-B**

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include the following with respect to activities carried out under subtitle B--

#### **a. General Requirements**

##### **1. Regions and Local Workforce Development Areas**

###### **A. Identify the regions and the local workforce development areas designated in the State.**

Maryland's Planning Regions

Regional planning is a new requirement under Section 106 of WIOA. The Act requires the State to identify planning regions as a part of the process for developing the State plan. Maryland's twelve (12) Local Areas have historically entered into agreements wherein

they developed regions and produced plans to regionally target various industry sectors. However, in the development of Maryland's planning regions pursuant to the Act, the local workforce directors and Chief Elected Officials were concerned with implications surrounding the creation of WIOA regions. According to the law, Local Areas, "must establish administrative cost arrangements, including the pooling of funds for administrative costs, as appropriate, for the region" as well as "coordinat[e]...transportation and other supportive services, as appropriate, for the region." Outside of the specific references in Section 106 of WIOA, there has been no additional guidance from USDOL regarding these important provisions.

Therefore, when the State's Combined Workforce Plan was submitted on April 1, 2016, Maryland noted that the State needed additional time to discuss this new requirement under WIOA with its local partners. To be compliant with the requirements issued by USDOL and the federal workforce entities, the State temporarily designated all of Maryland's twelve (12) Local Areas as separate and independent regions. The State further dedicated to designating regions on or before July 1, 2016.

Since its April submission, the State has designated five regions. They are as follows:

**Western** - The Western region is comprised of the Western Maryland Local Area. This Local Area is comprised of Maryland's three most western counties: Garrett, Allegany, and Washington.

**Capital** - The Capital region includes three Local Areas: Prince George's, Montgomery and Frederick. All three are located along the Washington, D.C. corridor.

**Central** - The Central region is comprised of five Local Areas: Anne Arundel, Mid-Maryland, Baltimore County, Baltimore City, and Susquehanna.

**Southern** - The Southern region is comprised of the Southern Maryland Local Area. That Local Area is comprised of Calvert, Saint Mary's, and Charles Counties.

**Eastern Shore** - The Eastern Shore region is comprised of two Local Areas: Upper Shore and Lower Shore.

**B. Describe the process used for designating local areas, including procedures for determining whether the local area met the criteria for "performed successfully" and "sustained fiscal integrity" in accordance with 106(b)(2) and (3) of WIOA. Describe the process used for identifying regions and planning regions under section 106(a) of WIOA. This must include a description of how the State consulted with the local boards and chief elected officials in identifying the regions.**

**Process for Determining Regions**The State of Maryland convened a group of stakeholders as a part of its nine (9) WIOA workgroups to examine proposed methodology in delineating regions pursuant to Section 106 of WIOA. That group, consisting of the DLLR, economists, and local workforce development directors collaboratively reviewed the list of variables that could be used to delineate regions of economic activity pursuant to Section 679.210 of the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking issued by USDOL on April 16, 2015. The Executive Director of the Governor's Workforce Development Board contacted Maryland's chief elected officials explaining the statutory requirements regarding regional planning in July 2015.

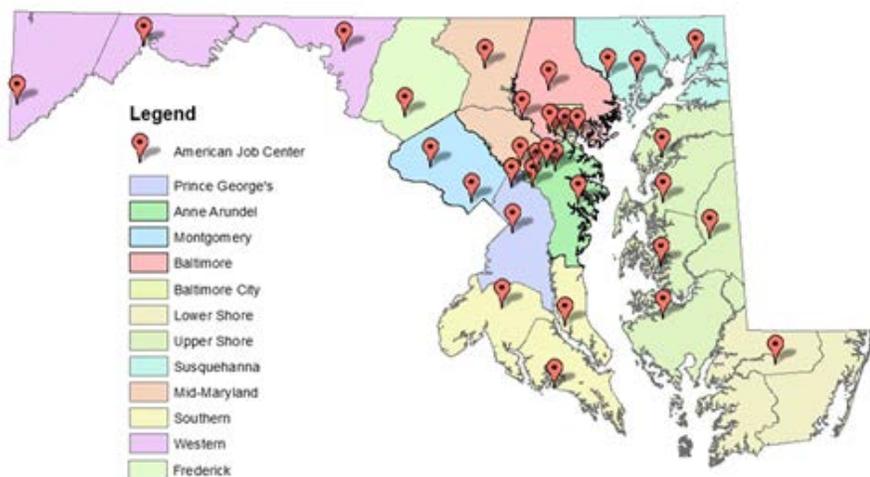
In October 2015, the WIOA workgroup on Labor Market Information distributed, for public review, a list of draft variables that the State proposed to use for delineating regions. The DLLR led workgroup proposed the use of a similarity index that would include Local Areas with similar or shared labor markets, shared common economic development areas, and adequate possession of federal and non-federal resources to ensure that a proposed region would have appropriate education and training institutions. The State considered the following additional variables: • Population centers• Commuting patterns• Land ownership• Industrial composition• Location quotients• Labor force conditions• Geographic boundariesAfter allowing for adequate public comment, three (3) draft maps incorporating the variables were circulated for public inspection, review, and comment. After consultation with the Maryland's twelve (12) local workforce directors, the department issued a fourth map for review and comment.

The Workforce Investment Network of Maryland (WIN), comprised of the State's twelve Local Area executive directors, ultimately agreed to the designation of areas listed above. That designation was consistent with commuting patterns, industrial composition and previous collaborations that the Local Areas engaged in in the past.

**Functions of the Planning Regions**Pursuant to Section 106 of WIOA, Local Boards and chief elected officials must engage in a regional planning process. That process must result in the preparation of regional plan. The regional plan must incorporate the local plans for each of the Local Areas in the planning region and must be aligned with Maryland's State Plan. Maryland, pursuant to Section 106 of WIOA, will provide technical assistance and labor market information upon the request of a Local Area to assist with regional planning. Pursuant to Section 106 of WIOA, each regional plan shall collaboratively engage in a process that results in: •

The establishment of regional service strategies, including use of cooperative service delivery agreements • The development and implementation of sector initiatives for in-demand industry sectors or occupations for the region • The collection and analysis of regional labor market data, in conjunction with the State • The establishment of administrative cost arrangements, including the pooling of funds for administrative costs, as appropriate, for the region • The coordination of transportation and other supportive services, as appropriate, for the region • The coordination of services with regional economic development services and providers • The establishment of an agreement regarding collective negotiation with the State on local levels of performance, and report on performance accountability measures for Local Areas or the planning region as set forth in Section 116(c) of WIOA.

Subsequent Designation of Regions Upon request of the chief elected officials from the Local Areas affected, or every two years beginning July 1, 2016, the State will review the current configuration of regions. Should it be determined that the regions no longer meet the needs of the State's workforce system, the State will undertake a reconfiguration of the regions in coordination with Maryland's Local Boards and chief elected officials. Designation and Re-Designation of Local Areas



Upon request of a chief elected official(s) of a Local Area, the Governor shall approve the re-designation of a Local Area that has performed successfully and sustained fiscal integrity. For the purposes of these measures, Maryland adopts the following definitions: Performed Successfully -- The term "performance successfully" means the Local Area met or exceeded the adjusted levels of performance for primary indicators of performance described in Section 116(b)(2)(A) (or, if applicable, core indicators of performance described in Section 136(b)(2)(A) of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998) for each of the last 2 consecutive years for which data are available preceding the determination of performance under this paragraph.

Sustained Fiscal Integrity -- The term "sustained fiscal integrity" means that the Secretary has not made a formal determination, during either of the last 2 consecutive years preceding the determination regarding such integrity, that the administrative entity of the area misspent funds provided under Subtitle B of WIOA (or, if applicable, Title I of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998) due to willful disregard of the requirements of the provision involved, gross negligence, or failure to comply with accepted standards of administration. Upon receipt of a request from a chief elected official for a particular Local Area to re-designate the Local Area, the Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation will conduct a review of the Local Area's performance and fiscal integrity to ensure that it both performed successfully and sustained fiscal integrity. Upon conclusion of the same, the Secretary of the Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation will recommend to the Governor whether Local Area should be re-designated.

By December 2017, Maryland is dedicated to issuing a Policy from the Governor's Workforce Development Board clearly setting forth the criteria for how a Local Area will be determined as performing successfully and sustaining fiscal integrity. This will ensure that the State will have adequate time to receive guidance from USDOL regarding these important measures.

### **C. Provide the appeals process referred to in section 106(b)(5) of WIOA relating to designation of local areas.**

In the event that a unit of general local government (including a combination of such units) is not granted re-designation, or an area is not re-designated as a planning region, the Local Area or region may appeal the decision, pursuant to Section 106(a)(5) of WIOA to the Governor's Workforce Development Board. In the decision not to re-designate a Local Area or region, the Governor shall temporarily designate the successor for the previously designated Local Area or region. Should the previously designated area or region wish to appeal, such an appeal must be made in writing within 30 days of the Governor's decision not to re-designate either the Local Area or region. If the appeal does not result in a designation of the Local Area or a region, the United States Secretary of Labor, after receiving a request for review from the unit and on determining that the unit was not accorded procedural rights as specified under Section 102(b)(2)(D)(i)(III) of WIOA, or that the area meets the requirements as set forth above, may require the area be designated as a Local Area or region.

The appeal process upon which a Local Area can appeal a designation will be set forth in the Policy from the Governor's Workforce Development Board on the criteria for how a Local Area will be determined as performing successfully and sustaining fiscal integrity. Again, Maryland is dedicated to developing and issuing that report no later than By December 2017. This will ensure that the State will have adequate time to receive guidance from USDOL regarding these important measures.

#### **D. Provide the appeals process referred to in section 121(h)(2)(E) of WIOA relating to determinations for infrastructure funding.**

On September 14, 2016, the Governor's Workforce Development Board approved Policy Issuance 2016-09, entitled *WIOA Memorandum of Understanding & Resource Sharing Agreements*. The Policy outlines the requirements of a WIOA compliant MOU/RSA, and further outlines the process in which disputes regarding funding are resolved. For purposes of an appeal of a determination regarding the state formula of infrastructure funding, the impasse process outlined in the Policy should be used to resolve the appeal. The impasse process is as follows:

##### **Impasse Step 1: Governor's Workforce Development Board Proposes Resolution**

The GWDB Executive Director is responsible for notifying the GWDB Chair that an impasse has been declared. At this point, the GWDB Executive Director and the DLLR-DWDAL Assistant Secretary must provide the GWDB Chair with relevant materials for review, including but not limited to:

1. The completed Dispute Resolution Form; and,
2. DLLR-DWDAL Assistant Secretary's proposed resolution.

In turn, the GWDB Chair is responsible for selecting three (3) GWDB members to serve as members of an Impasse Review Team. The Impasse Review Team must investigate the dispute to obtain additional information or to clarify the facts presented.

Within fourteen (14) business days of the declaration of impasse, the Impasse Review Team must meet to discuss the dispute with all appropriate State and local Partners.

After meeting, within seven (7) business days, the Impasse Review Team must provide a written response and dated summary of the proposed resolution to all appropriate Parties. The Local Board Chair (or designee) then must contact the petitioner, the appropriate State and local Partners (when a local Partner is not the petitioner) and the Local Board (when the Board is not the petitioner) to verify that all appropriate Parties are in agreement with the proposed resolution. The State will consider the dispute to be settled when all Partners are in agreement.

If the dispute is not resolved within ten (10) business days of receipt of the GWDB Impasse Review Team's written response, then Step 2 of the impasse procedure must be followed.

##### **Impasse Step 2: Governor Resolves Dispute**

After an impasse has gone through Step 1 and remains unresolved, then it is the responsibility of the GWDB Chair to inform the Governor of the impasse. The Chair must provide the Governor with relevant materials for review, including but not limited to:

1. The completed Dispute Resolution Form;
2. DLLR-DWDAL Assistant Secretary's proposed resolution; and,
3. The GWDB Impasse Review Team's proposed resolution.

Upon review, the Governor will determine how the impasse shall be resolved. The Local Board Chair will ensure that all Partners are aware of the Governor's decision. In accordance with WIOA, the impasse decision made by the Governor shall be applicable to the Local Area for that program year and for each subsequent program year for which Partners fail to reach such agreement.

WIOA Final Rules specify that if the State cannot assist the Local Workforce Board in resolving the impasse, the Governor or the Governor's Workforce Development Board must report the failure to the U.S. Secretary of Labor and to the head of any other Federal agency with responsibility for oversight of a partner's program.

## **2. Statewide Activities**

### **A. Provide State policies or guidance for the statewide workforce development system and for use of State funds for workforce investment activities.**

The Governor's Workforce Development Board sets forth public policy guidance for the workforce system. This includes, but is not limited to, the promotion of sector strategies and the development and growth of industry-led partnerships for workforce training delivery. The GWDB plays the critical role of finding ways to promote Maryland's workforce system to businesses and jobseekers alike. GWDB also provides needed insight into the needs of Maryland's businesses and will be apprised of operational policy needs.

Maryland is committed to a collaborative approach to operational policy making and will continue to encourage participation from State and local partners across the WIOA spectrum. The WIOA Partners will develop WIOA policies using DLLR's 8 step process for policy development (<http://www.dllr.state.md.us/employment/mpi/>): Maryland's 8 Step Process for WIOA Policy Development

1. Determine policy need
2. Policy Session with Subject Matter Experts
3. Policy drafting
4. Review & Comment Period
5. Updates to draft
6. Final approvals
7. Policy dissemination
8. Policy modification (when applicable)

The WIOA Partners have a robust and collaborative operational policy plan in place to guide the state's workforce system. Maryland is committed to implementing WIOA with a true systems approach, and therefore, DLLR, DORS, and DHR are committed to jointly issuing policies, memos, and guidance documents for the WIOA system, in line with the direction of the Governor's Workforce Development Board, and as appropriate. Jointly issuing operational policies is Maryland's way of ensuring all staff and system partners, regardless of which agency or organization they represent, will have the same expectations, training, and understanding of how to interact with customers and each other. By taking a collaborative, thoughtful approach, which allows for subject matter experts across the system to weigh in, the WIOA Policy Work Group, in coordination with the WIOA Alignment Group and the Governor's Workforce Development Board, successfully works to provide policy guidance on a variety of topics that are key to WIOA implementation. The U.S. Department of Labor has touted Maryland's approach to policymaking as a national best practice and Maryland often provides technical assistance on the development of policies to other states via webinars and other means.

All of Maryland's policy guidance is provided on DLLR's website (<http://www.dllr.state.md.us/employment/mpi/>) to ensure ease of access for staff and the general public, alike. To help identify specific WIOA policy needs, the WIOA Policy Work Group began by soliciting feedback in Spring 2015 from the State's other WIOA Workgroups to ensure policy needs were documented and subject matter experts from relevant State and local organizations were appropriately identified and engaged. Additionally, DLLR reviewed its existing policies and identified areas that could benefit from improvement and/or alignment with other WIOA programs. The WIOA Policy Work Group, in consultation with the other WIOA Work Groups, have thus identified a variety of policy needs and work is underway to fully develop strong policies that align with the State Plan's vision. The Policy Work Group group has strategically solicited the expertise of a wide-range of subject matter experts, ranging from directors to front-line staff, who represent many different organizations and will continue to work systematically to issue policy guidance as necessary for effective and efficient

system operations.

**B. Describe how the State intends to use Governor's set aside funding. Describe how the State will utilize Rapid Response funds to respond to layoffs and plant closings and coordinate services to quickly aid companies and their affected workers. States also should describe any layoff aversion strategies they have implemented to address at risk companies and workers**

Governor Hogan's WIOA Set Aside Funding As required in Section 134 of WIOA, DWDAL has set aside funding for both required (section 134.2) and allowable (section 134.3) Statewide activities. The final determination of the use of available funding for allowable activities is made by the Governor or his designee. DLLR is committed to providing funding opportunities for workforce delivery systems that are innovative and industry-driven. DLLR is particularly interested in providing funding to workforce training opportunities in the industries identified in Governor Hogan's strategic plan. Additionally, in an effort to further align workforce development and apprenticeship opportunities, DLLR is committed to providing funding for apprenticeship opportunities in non-traditional apprenticeship fields.

#### Rapid Response & Layoff Aversion in Maryland

In Maryland, Rapid Response is a collaborative effort that involves locally defined partnerships with staff from DLLR DWDAL's Dislocation Services Unit, the local workforce areas, the State's Business Services Team, and the DLLR Division of Unemployment Insurance. Rapid Response teams work with both Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) and non-WARN businesses and employees to quickly maximize public and private resources that will minimize the disruptions on companies, affected workers, and communities associated with job loss. Generally, Rapid Response Teams provide customized services onsite at an affected company, accommodate work schedules, and assist companies and workers through the challenging transitions associated with job loss.

All Rapid Responses—irrespective of the size of the dislocation event and whether it is a WARN or non-WARN situation—involve: (1) an initial business consultation, which is employer-focused, and (2) an information session, which is employee focused. DLLR works collaboratively with the local workforce areas, the Division of Unemployment Insurance, and other relevant stakeholders to ensure effective, customer-centric Rapid Response provision. WARN Protocols To ensure quality coordination, DLLR DWDAL's Rapid Response Coordinator (or designee) is responsible for sharing WARN information with relevant staff from DWDAL, the affected local workforce area(s), the DLLR Division of Unemployment Insurance, other DLLR staff, and other relevant stakeholders in a timely manner. The local DSU field representative is then responsible for keeping the local workforce area well-informed of its anticipated actions, and for contacting the business in a timely manner to explain the importance of Rapid Response services and to determine the business' level of interest. The local DSU field representative(s) also manages and coordinates the specific Rapid Response effort with relevant team members, including those from the affected local workforce area(s) to decide:

- What approach should be taken for the initial business consultation?; and,
- Who specifically should participate in the initial business consultation from the local Rapid Response Team and in what capacity?

#### Non-WARN Protocols

In the absence of a WARN, a business may contact any member of the Rapid Response team. For example, the business may contact the Local Area directly if it has an existing relationship or it may contact the Division of Unemployment Insurance to ask specific Unemployment Insurance questions. It is the responsibility of the individual who has been contacted to ensure coordination and information sharing between the Rapid Response team occurs timely. In the same way that DWDAL must coordinate with the Local Area(s), Division of Unemployment Insurance, and other stakeholders in WARN situations, the Local Area(s) must coordinate with DWDAL and keep DWDAL well-informed of its anticipated actions in non-WARN situations, as it will be included in reporting to the United States Department of Labor.

#### Initial Business Consultation (Employer Focused)

The Initial Business Consultation is an opportunity for members of the Rapid Response team to meet with the business to discuss employer needs and the benefits of moving forward with offering an employee-focused Rapid Response Information Session. Participants may include: the employer representative, local Rapid Response Coordinator, Dislocation Services Unit staff, State of local economic development staff, union representation, and/or private outplacement consultants hired by the employer.

The primary goal of the consultation is to secure the employer's commitment to offer an Information Session. Staff shall arrange for Initial Business Consultations on company time at the work site when appropriate. To gain employer buy-in, the Rapid Response team shall describe the benefits of holding an Information Sessions, which include:

- Advising the affected dislocated workers on the transition services that are available via the American Job Centers and workforce system
- Explaining the UI benefit system
- Offering question and answer sessions to help reduce worker anxiety, and to minimize negative impact on the business

The Business Services Team shall be a part of the consultation whenever possible. Prior to a Rapid Response event, the Business Services Team should encourage the business to solicit resumes from relevant employees. Staff will gather information regarding the skills and abilities of impacted workers to be used for outreach with local businesses. Business Services Team staff will use the information learned during the consultation to inform future outreach opportunities and to provide information on business needs. Information Session (Employee Focused) The information session is an opportunity for members of the Rapid Response team to meet, for about one hour, with the affected workers to provide important information on available transition services, unemployment insurance, and other relevant workforce development activities.

The following two sections offer guidance that is specific to dislocation events affecting:

- Closures and mass layoffs of 100+ employees
- Closures and substantial layoffs of less than 100 employees

#### CLOSURES AND MASS LAYOFFS OF 100+ EMPLOYEES

At a minimum, Rapid Response Information Sessions for closures and mass layoff of 100+ employees involve representatives from the Dislocation Services Unit, the affected local workforce area(s), and the Division of Unemployment Insurance. Other staff or stakeholders may also be involved.

The Dislocation Services Unit is responsible for coordinating the team's efforts. This must include outreach to the Director of Benefits, Division of Unemployment Insurance to inform him or her of the dislocation event. The Director of Benefits shall determine who will attend the information session to provide Unemployment Insurance information and to answer questions.

#### CLOSURES AND SUBSTANTIAL LAYOFFS OF LESS THAN 100 EMPLOYEES

At a minimum, Rapid Response information sessions for closures and mass layoff of less than 100 employees shall involve representatives from the Dislocation Services Unit and the affected local workforce area(s). Other staff or stakeholders, such as Division of Unemployment Insurance staff, may also be involved.

Although the Division of Unemployment Insurance may not actively participate in a smaller dislocation event, the DLLR DSU staff must always inform the Director of Benefits of the Division of Unemployment Insurance of the occurrence and subsequent information session. The Director of Benefits shall then determine whether Unemployment Insurance staff can be present. If Unemployment Insurance staff cannot be present, then the Dislocation Services Unit field representative is responsible for providing the Unemployment Insurance information prescribed by the Division of Unemployment Insurance. When Unemployment Insurance staff is not present, affected workers must be directed to the website and appropriate contact for additional information.

#### LAYOFF AVERSION & RAPID RESPONSE

Business Service Team members assist eligible businesses with layoff aversion and/or Rapid Response along any given point of a business' lifecycle. The following picture depicts the general lifecycle of a business. The Business Services Team offers an array of initiatives and strategies that work towards job creation and layoff aversion. As defined by USDOL, layoff aversion is:

- When a worker's job is saved with an existing employer that is at risk of downsizing or closing; or,
- When a worker at risk of dislocation transitions to a new job, with the same employer or a different employer, and experiences no or a minimal break in employment.

Through on going engagement with businesses, field representatives will establish relationships with employers and obtain basic knowledge regarding the company, their needs and processes as well as their well-being. If an employer contacts a field representative and advises them they are struggling, or if the representative suspects difficulties or obtains information suggesting trouble via news articles, current labor market information or other sources, arrangements can be made to work with the employer to take a pro-active approach. Field representatives can assist employers with strategies such as: providing assistance with incumbent worker training or other worker upskilling requirements; funding feasibility studies; connecting companies to business loan programs or other resources; establishing links to economic development activities and assistance; succession planning; proactively identifying opportunities for potential economic transition into other growing industry sectors; cost reduction; process improvement; and connecting businesses to qualified workers.

**C. In addition, describe the State policies and procedures to provide Rapid Responses in cases of natural disasters including coordination with FEMA and other entities.**

For Disaster Planning, USDOL recommends that states use Rapid Response funds to plan for disaster response before a disaster strikes. In keeping with that recommendation, DLLR has developed a plan and taken initial preparation and coordination steps in an effort to strive for strong disaster preparedness.

In the event of a disaster, Maryland will use Rapid Response funds to support the following activities:

- Devise prospective strategies to provide assistance to Local Areas experiencing disasters
- Identify strategies for aversion of layoffs
- Ensure mechanisms for regular exchange of information relating to potential dislocations are in place
- Collect and analyze data and information for a number of purposes
- Hold disaster drills.

In the event of a natural disaster, mass layoff, or other emergency, DLLR's Secretary will work closely with the Governor and other cabinet-level staff to execute the appropriate actions in a timely manner through the Department's position on the Maryland Emergency Management Agency Board. The Secretary, in turn, will communicate with appropriate staff, including the Rapid Response team, to ensure the State fulfills its obligation to deliver the appropriate services and transitions workers to new employment as quickly as possible. The Director of the Department's Office of General Services serves as the point person for the Maryland Emergency Management Agency (MEMA). The Director takes part in daily conference calls throughout the immediate aftermath of the emergency, and interfaces with FEMA, MEMA and other state agencies to coordinate the appropriate response. That information, in turn, is provided to senior staff of the Department.

In July 2016, in response to the Ellicott City flood, Governor Hogan requested that all cabinet secretaries work to find ways to provide services to those affected. In turn, the Secretary worked with all senior leaders to determine the services that could be offered by the Department. The Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning and the Division of Unemployment Insurance worked closely together to ensure that those businesses and employees affected have access to technology and dedicated staff to ensure that unemployment benefits were filed and that reemployment efforts occurred immediately. The Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning, in turn, worked closely with staff from the Local Area to ensure that job fairs and listings were widely distributed utilizing social media and agency listservs.

Rapid Response teams are expected to be flexible and responsive. Therefore, it is appropriate that that Rapid Response teams play a key role in disaster response in partnership with other internal and external government, non-profit, and private agencies. If necessary, Maryland will be able to access these funds for the following activities:

- Purchase and deployment of mobile units for service delivery in disaster areas
- Support for organizing physical locations for disaster relief centers
- Assist individuals with applying for unemployment insurance (and Disaster Unemployment Assistance)
- Support sharing information on services available, including temporary jobs through National Dislocated Worker Grants
- Hiring staff to support range of needs of impacted individuals, including counselors
- Job search assistance

The Dislocation Services Unit, in partnership with Business Services Team, will work to ensure that Maryland businesses consider the importance of having an emergency plan within their own organization as a part of the Maryland Business Services Team's outreach efforts. Staff will offer assistance in the development of their personal disaster plan, according to their projected needs.

**D. Describe how the State provides early intervention (e.g., Rapid Response) to worker groups on whose behalf a Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) petition has been filed. (Section 134(a)(2)(A).) This description must include how the State disseminates benefit information to provide trade-affected workers in the groups identified in the TAA petitions with an accurate understanding of the provision of TAA benefits and services in such a way that they are transparent to the trade-affected dislocated worker applying for them (Trade Act Sec. 221(a)(2)(A) and Sec. 225; Governor-Secretary Agreement). Describe how the State will use funds that have been reserved for Rapid Response to provide services for every worker group that files a TAA petition.**

## Rapid Response & Trade Adjustment Assistance

The federal government provides additional services to workers whose jobs are lost due to foreign trade or shifts in production out of the United States. The Trade Act program is administered, staffed, and implemented by DWDAL and the Division of Unemployment Insurance, alongside the State's local workforce areas. While not all job loss due to foreign competition meets the requirements of the Trade Act, the Rapid Response team will work with businesses to provide information on Trade Adjustment Assistance and the benefits workers can receive if a business is certified as trade-affected. A business, the Rapid Response team, or the workers themselves can file a trade petition with the USDOL. Trade Adjustment Assistance, offered at no cost to employers, allows impacted workers to access an even wider array of services for which they would not otherwise be eligible.

Once the adversely affected workers become certified under the Trade program, the Division of Unemployment is notified and mails out letters to each of the impacted workers of the Trade certified company. The Dislocation Services Unit also places an ad in the local paper and/or via online publication announcing that the company has been Trade Certified and includes related instructions. A Trade informational session (or multiple sessions) will be held for those workers by the Dislocation Services Unit Field Representative in coordination with the Trade Readjustment Allowance Coordinator from the Division of Unemployment Insurance and Trade Program case managers local to the impacted workers, to discuss all services and benefits that they may be eligible for depending upon their approved petition identifier.

Oftentimes it is several months before an investigation is concluded by USDOL regarding a Trade Determination. In any event, an initial Rapid Response is always offered and arranged whenever possible for the affected workers, regardless of the size of the dislocation, and whether or not a WARN was received. Maryland strives to ensure all workers receive the same services and information consistently and effectively. All impacted workers may still receive services in any one of our American Job Centers. Once the notice of Trade Certification is received, they may transition over to the Trade Adjustment Assistance Program if they choose to take advantage of the additional services provided to them under their corresponding certification number.

The Trade Adjustment Assistance Program enables adversely affected workers to prepare for reemployment as quickly as possible by allowing Trade-impacted participants to work individually with a case manager located in one of the statewide American Job Centers. The case manager will work with the Dislocation Services Unit to enroll eligible participants into the Trade Program. Participants will be co-enrolled whenever possible. Co-enrollment allows the individual to receive career services, reemployment services, training, and support services. Funding for both programs is available at each of the American Job Centers. Individuals eligible for Dislocated Worker Services and Trade Adjustment Assistance Services are provided career services with the same case manager, allowing the individual a seamless approach to the development of an Individualized Employment Plan. Case management begins with an initial assessment of the individual's skills, interests, abilities, and goals. Marketable and transferrable skills are identified during this assessment process, as well as matching existing skills to available, suitable employment with local employers.

Many times the trade petition is certified well after the assessment process, and because DLLR has a co-enrollment process, the individual can continue working with the same case manager while being provided services and benefits under both the WIOA Title I Dislocated Worker program and the Trade program. After the assessment is completed and it is determined that the individual requires retraining in order to become reemployed in suitable employment, the case manager will continue working with the individual in developing his or her retraining plan. The participants will do research on training programs and requirements using statewide labor market information. Training will be approved as long as it meets the six criteria for approval of training under the Trade Act, and federal Trade funds are available. The Trade Adjustment Assistance State Merit staff review and make the final determination on the retraining plan, ensuring it meets the federal requirements under the Trade Act. Co-enrollment continues through the end of the retraining program ensuring the needs of the individual are met.

When assisting trade-impacted individuals, all partners must work together to provide accurate and consistent information. When developing Individualized Employment Plans under the Trade Act, both DLLR divisions and the case manager, who is working closely with the individual, must work together on behalf of the impacted worker. The case manager must gather accurate information during the entire training program to provide progress updates and report on benchmarks, and ensure that the Trade Readjustment Allowance deadlines are met. This is of paramount importance, as the individual must be able to enter and complete the retraining program in the required amount of time with the financial support provided. The Dislocation Services Unit and the Division of Unemployment Insurance Special Programs Unit work hand in hand in an effort to provide TAA training and financial support (TRA) without interruption and in compliance with Program rules and guidance for the duration of their services. Maryland strives to provide the best services possible to meet the needs of our customers in a seamless manner. With partners working together in a cohesive manner, we will be able to achieve our goals with the trade act program.

Rapid Response activities are offered to all worker groups notified of a layoff when the DSU receives a WARN or when notified of potential layoffs. The DSU works with businesses to schedule Rapid Response information sessions for impacted workers. During these sessions workers are informed of the various services offered by the local American Job Center (AJC) and the unemployment insurance program. When it is determined that a potential Trade impact exists, workers are informed of the Trade program benefits

and options available. These individuals may receive services through their local AJC, as appropriate, prior to their certification of eligibility to apply for benefits and services under the Trade Act programs. Rapid Response funds will be utilized to provide layoff aversion activities. These activities include recruitment events to create business connections, to support local area initiatives to re-train and to provide supportive services. The DSU will review WARN notices and work with businesses to determine if a petition can be filed as early as possible to speed the process for Trade approval. If a worker has been dislocated and is waiting for TAA eligibility determination, that person can receive career services at the local center. Once a petition is approved, DSU staff will notify impacted workers of the additional benefits available under Trade and how to apply. Rapid Response funds will be utilized to provide assistance to local workforce areas in situations where the layoff event results and a need beyond the availability of local resources, including TAA assistance. Local workforce boards may request additional Rapid Response funds as needed to supplement other funding to serve impacted workers that may not seek assistance under Trade.

## **b. Adult and Dislocated Workers Program Requirements**

### **1. If the State is utilizing work-based training models (e.g. On-the-job training, Incumbent Worker training, Transitional Jobs, and Customized Training) as part of its training strategy and these strategies are not already discussed in other sections of the plan, describe the State's strategies for how these models ensure high quality training for both the participant and the employer.**

Employment Advancement Right Now (EARN) Maryland is a state-funded, competitive workforce program that is industry-led and regional in focus. It is flexible and innovative, designed to ensure that Maryland's businesses have the talent they need to compete and grow, while providing targeted education and skills training to Maryland jobseekers. EARN Maryland is comprised of 40 Strategic Industry Partnerships (SIPs) that represent a variety of industries, including healthcare, manufacturing, construction, and biotechnology. Recognized as a national leader for industry-led and sector-based partnerships, over 500 employer and industry partners have been involved in the design and implementation of the training programs. Many EARN grantees emphasize the need for participants who do not otherwise have their high school diploma to obtain this certification through GED® preparation and literacy advancement. While traditional workforce programs often look to training entities or higher education to determine training needs and develop curriculum, EARN Maryland's innovative model tasks business and industry partners with designing the program. Employer partners who participate in EARN are tasked with looking both within their individual company and across industry as a whole to identify skills gaps and workforce training needs. Employers are encouraged to look at the evolving needs within their industry, including increasing technological skill needs, and estimated retirements so that training curriculum meets the true skill and hiring needs of industry.

Additionally, employer and industry partners must identify effective strategies and techniques to train for the skillsets they identify. For instance, some employers indicate that in order to truly master certain skills, on-the-job learning experiences, rather than classroom training, or a combination of both, are ideal. Because employers are the experts on what makes a competent employee, they are experienced in identifying the correct training techniques to ensure success of skill formation. Finally, employers and industry partners participate in training. This occurs in a variety of ways, including teaching certain courses, observing training, and mentoring trainees. This level of participation not only allows employers to ensure the training meets their vision, but also gives employers exposure to potential employment candidates.

Because EARN employers are involved in training throughout the entire process, they also play the role of "quality control". Employers are encouraged to provide feedback on training curriculum and implementation through their participation in quarterly partnership meetings. Because the EARN program is flexible, partnerships are able to making changes to curriculum and/or implementation of their training based upon employer feedback. This ensures that training remains industry-led at all times and is deemed high quality for the employers who participate. Additionally, upon the completion of entry-level training, employers will ideally interview successful candidates who have gone through training designed according to their standards. The comprehensive involvement of employers guarantees that training is high quality and meets industry needs.

Many of the EARN Maryland SIPs are targeting specific underserved populations, including returning citizens, low-skilled workers, and the long-term unemployed. Oftentimes, underserved populations need comprehensive soft skills training in order to be successful in employment. Also known as essential skills, these are an important component of job-readiness training. Examples of soft skills include, but are not limited to, skills related to professionalism, problem-solving, timeliness, interpersonal communication and customer service.

EARN Maryland partnerships are implementing soft skills training in the classroom, as well as modeling on-the-job work experiences. For instance, some partnerships utilize a simulated work environment throughout training. This includes clocking in and out of

training and practicing leadership techniques on newer trainees. This model requires trainees to prove that they are able to meet employer standards and ensures adequate preparedness for the workforce. Many employers who participate in the EARN Maryland program have stated that soft skills are equally as important as the hard skills, or technical skills, that are necessary to be proficient in a career. Employers play a role in identifying which soft skills are critical to success in the industry.

EARN trainees often have significant barriers to employment, including criminal backgrounds, low levels of literacy, lack of transportation, and disadvantaged backgrounds. Each SIP must be comprised of at least two "diverse partners," which often include a non-profit organization or a local workforce board, who have extensive experience in barrier removal. Partnerships targeting underserved groups must focus on the whole person when developing a training plan. For instance, a trainee can have a wide array of technical skills and strong soft skills, but without transportation to get to work on time, retention will not be high. Therefore, partners work individually with trainees to ensure all barriers to employment are removed before entering the workforce, therefore maximizing the odds for success. Examples of barrier removal include record expungement, bus tokens or a vehicle, providing bridge instruction in math and reading, GED courses and stipends for training.

The EARN program places around 80% of its participants into employment. This success is rooted in the comprehensiveness of its program design. Employers, the experts in what makes a competent workforce, participate in every aspect of technical skills training. This ensures candidates complete training with relevant skills. Non-profit organizations and local workforce boards deliver soft skills training and barrier removal for all participants, which further promotes a job-ready candidate. These components make up the EARN model and guarantees high quality training for its participants.

The WIOA partners are committed to integrating the EARN Maryland model in on-going efforts to create an industry-lead workforce system that incorporates coordination among many unique partners. The WIOA partners agree that building on the success of this industry-driven model will ensure that the needs of businesses and jobseekers are met and will use the model to increase focus on businesses and jobseekers as customers of the system. The industry-led, employer-driven model utilized in the EARN Maryland program is a proven strategy for meeting business and workforce needs, while strengthening the business climate across the State. Employer and industry partners are deeply involved with program design as they identify workforce needs and develop corresponding curriculum to train for those needs. This involvement breeds confidence from employers that program participants are proficient in relevant skills that will allow them to be contributing employees who will help improve their business. As such, the industry-led model will more effectively serve job-seekers, as they will be better prepared to meet the demands of the industry. Through the implementation of EARN Maryland, DLLR has learned that strategic industry partnerships, no matter what form they take, must:

- Be targeted for locally identified industries
- Be industry-led and employer-driven
- Be built upon labor market information (LMI). Sector and employer partners, including EARN grantees, will update partners on LMI and training needs, which will guide the development of programs.
- Include soft skills training. Time management, customer service, personal appearance, appropriate conduct and personal responsibility are all essential skills identified by DLLR's Youth Apprenticeship Advisory Committee as important skills needed for the development of a youth apprenticeship talent pipeline. This Committee, formed to evaluate the effectiveness of existing high school youth apprenticeship programs in the State, other states, and other countries, concluded in its initial report outlining the steps the State needs to take in order to establish apprenticeship opportunities in both traditional and non-traditional apprenticeable fields.
- Allow participants to obtain industry-recognized credentials. In placing an emphasis on both industry-led partnership opportunities and industry-recognized credentials, Maryland is ensuring that its talent pipeline is responsive to the needs of in-demand careers and industry sectors. To that end, local workforce partners must also identify in their local plan submissions how they will promote and cultivate industry-led partnerships in the delivery of workforce training opportunities.
- Incorporate career pathways, in order to establish a bridge to participation for low-skilled individuals and others with barriers to employment.
- Be incorporated into new business services strategies, including a business-focused delivery system for workforce needs. Maryland's workforce and economic agencies must coordinate efforts to provide consulting services in order to service business needs, which include not only business retention and expansion efforts, but the development of basic skill levels in occupations with growing demand. This is a primary focus of Maryland's EARN program. By supporting company efforts to update skills for new processes and equipment, there is an opportunity for business services to educate businesses not currently involved with EARN on both entry-level and incumbent worker training efforts, where appropriate. Both DLLR and Commerce have previously invested in matching grant programs directed to businesses. These investments in Maryland's businesses provided customized training solutions for individual companies with unique or proprietary technical skill requirements. While much has been learned through the implementation of an industry-led model, there are new ideas to explore and further develop to better serve businesses and jobseekers. This includes:

1. Developing an approach for industry-lead programs to target special populations such as those served by DORS, TANF, etc. - The interplay between industry-led partnerships and provision of services to targeted populations is one that some grantees have undertaken. We look forward to learning from their experiences.
2. Bringing programs such as EARN to scale - EARN has been successful and has involved more than 500 business and industry partners. However, Maryland has approximately 10,000 businesses. The effort to involve a larger number of businesses in industry-led partnerships, leading to training, and the creation and use of career pathways, is a challenge that EARN can help to address by providing lessons learned.
3. Outline strategies to increase work-based learning experiences such as paid internships and registered apprenticeships that provide jobseekers with the skills and credentials necessary to secure employment and advance in their jobs with family sustaining wages and benefits by building new sector partnerships and strengthening existing partnerships - EARN will serve as the starting point for this, as some SIPs are providing work-based learning experiences. We look forward to building on lessons learned.
4. Tying

business services with EARN - Maryland is committed to creating a business-focused delivery system for workforce needs. In a business-focused system, customized training can be used to meet the special requirements of an employer or group of employers, conducted with a commitment by the employer to employ all individuals upon successful completion of training. Some EARN Partnerships are providing incumbent worker training that meet an employer's specialized needs. Under WIOA, incumbent worker training is an allowable cost, so the partners will review best practices from these training initiatives. The WIOA Partners collaborate with the business to identify eligible program participants and potential sources of training funds. 5. Identification and delivery of industry recognized credentials through industry-led partnerships.6. Incorporation of and increase in work-based learning opportunities in EARN and throughout the business-focused delivery system with the Job Driven National Emergency Grant Program - Under this system, dislocated worker services will focus on industry-driven partnerships with the business community. Utilizing this renewed focus, employer partnerships create job opportunities for dislocated workers through work based learning, on-the-job training, and customized and occupational skills training. Some EARN Maryland Partnerships are leveraging JDNEG funding, but the WIOA partners will explore ways to more effectively take advantage of this opportunity. Maryland will continue to utilize models like EARN Maryland and those established under the Job Driven National Emergency Grant program in advancing this business focused system. Under this system, dislocated worker services will focus on industry-driven partnerships with the business community. Utilizing this renewed focus, employer partnerships create job opportunities for dislocated workers through work based learning, on-the-job training, and customized and occupational skills training. Whenever possible, the use of these strategies will be considered as leverage opportunities for future discretionary grant opportunities. Industry-based training will be the priority for any available competitively procured and state discretionary funding. The State's industry cluster approach will be the focus of WIOA statewide activities. Individual Training Accounts will become increasingly more important in a business focused workforce development system. Local Areas are encouraged to maintain a balance between cohort class-size training and Individual Training Accounts (for example, Industry Academies and career pathway systems) to ensure an effective business focused workforce system. Local workforce partners also play a key role in the development of a business-focused workforce system. State and local entities must work together to develop work-based training opportunities, including on-the-job training, apprenticeships and internships for youth and adults. Utilizing limited funding sources for industry-lead partnerships is key, particularly in light of the limited available support for the continued influx of participant training in degree or certificate programs. Therefore, local partners must develop a practice of issuing Individual Training Accounts based on high-demand, difficult to fill positions identified within local industry clusters. Maryland will further ensure that at least 20 percent of youth formula funds at the local level are used on work-based training activities such as summer jobs, on-the-job training (OJT), and apprenticeship for in school and out of school youth. Local Workforce Development Boards must further utilize WIOA funds in support of the business focused system. Locally defined priority industries must be identified by local Workforce Development Boards and appropriate services developed and provided based upon input received from employers and other key partners. Apprenticeships, on-the-job training, incumbent worker training, and individual training accounts can be used to provide business-driven training.

## **2. Describe how the State will incorporate Registered Apprenticeship into its strategy and services.**

Apprenticeships combine supervised, structured, on-the-job training and related technical instruction to teach apprentices the skills necessary to succeed in a specific occupation. Registered apprenticeships are voluntary, industry-driven programs sponsored by employers, employer associations, and jointly by management and labor. A program sponsor can be an individual employer, groups of employers, or combinations of employers and unions. Each sponsor develops an apprenticeship program based on the needs of their specific occupation.

Apprenticeships offer benefits to both the jobseeker and the sponsor. For the jobseeker, apprenticeships provide jobs where the apprentice receives one-on-one job training, as well as related classroom education, while he or she learns the necessary skills to become fully integrated into the workforce. Apprenticeships provide full-time positions that are in-depth and certified with the minimum length of an apprenticeship of one year with at least 2,000 hours of on-the-job training and 144 hours of related classroom instruction per year. Apprenticeship career pathways are diverse. In Maryland, there are over 230 registered occupations and nearly 9,000 registered apprentices. Apprenticeships offer career progression and advancement with incremental salary increases throughout duration of the apprenticeship. Additionally, apprenticeships offer healthcare, retirement and fringe benefits. After all program requirements are met, apprentices receive a certificate of completion and are nationally recognized journeypersons.

Jobseekers who wish to become an apprentice are encouraged to first research a trade to determine an occupation he/she would like to pursue. A complete list of all apprenticeship occupations can be found on the Maryland Apprenticeship and Training Program page at the following link: <https://www.dlir.state.md.us/labor/appr/>. Once a potential apprentice has decided on a trade, he/she should contact program sponsors directly to inquire about their individual application requirements and hiring schedule. Individuals should research the programs carefully as each sponsor has individual application requirements. Once the individual decides on the program, he/she submits an application to that program. Once the individual has been hired as an apprentice, an Apprentice Agreement will be completed by both the apprentice and the sponsor and filed with the Maryland Apprenticeship and Training Council. This Apprenticeship Agreement classifies the individual as a registered apprentice.

For sponsors, apprenticeships offer many benefits as well. Apprenticeships are designed to meet the existing workforce needs. Due to the necessity for highly skilled workers, many sponsors use apprenticeship as a method to train employees in the knowledge necessary to become a skilled worker. Apprenticeships reduce employee turnover and the structured training fosters quality output, increased productivity and teamwork. Apprentices are among the most technically up-to-date workers, as the training programs produce a pool of highly-skilled and motivated workers from which to select future managers. Apprenticeships can help to increase revenue with no cost to begin the program.

Once a potential sponsor has developed an apprenticeship program and has applied for registration, the Maryland Apprenticeship and Training Council review the “Standards of Apprenticeship” which include:

- An organized, written training plan
- The terms and conditions of employment
- Attendance at related instruction
- An equal employment opportunity pledge
- Proper supervision of the apprentice(s)

To educate, promote and facilitate the apprenticeship program, the Maryland Apprenticeship and Training Program utilizes “Apprentice Navigators.” The Apprentice Navigator participates in career and job fairs, public events, as well as, conducts public outreach efforts to promote the Maryland State Apprenticeship and Training Program. The Apprenticeship Navigator also attends internal and external stakeholder meetings, including those with current and future sponsors and employers, to help develop and coordinate new apprenticeship programs. The Apprenticeship Navigator helps both jobseekers and sponsors understand the program and the process to ensure successful apprenticeships. The Apprenticeship Navigator serves as a liaison between the sponsors and the State to ensure all requirements are met and any questions answered in a timely fashion.

The Maryland Apprenticeship and Training Council is responsible for registering and regulating the State approved apprenticeship programs in Maryland. In Maryland, there are over 230 registered occupations and nearly 9,000 registered apprentices. Most apprenticeships are within the building trades and construction industries.

The State of Maryland is committed to providing opportunities for individuals with disabilities, and the apprenticeship program is no exception. Apprenticeships offer young adults, including those with disabilities, a career pathway that provides employment as the individual learns on the job. Focused attention will be given to developing relationships with apprenticeship employers to encourage increased participation of individuals with disabilities in apprenticeship programs. Outreach efforts will be made to identify and educate individuals with disabilities on the value and opportunities in apprenticeship programs. These would include, but are not limited to, working with State vocational rehabilitation (VR) agencies, the Veterans’ Employment and Training Service (VETS), convening a roundtable of employers who hire people with disabilities to introduce the concept of developing apprenticeable occupations, showcasing an apprenticeship model among disability-friendly businesses, and establishing public-private partnerships to develop outreach strategies for those individuals with disabilities.

DLLR is dedicated to aligning apprenticeship opportunities with the workforce system. Aligning apprenticeships with workforce development resources will ensure that Maryland creates a pipeline of skilled and qualified labor for years to come. In establishing a robust apprenticeship system, Maryland is dedicated to exploring new and innovative approaches to create apprenticeship opportunities within the workforce system. One way Maryland has demonstrated this commitment is through the work of the Youth Apprenticeship Advisory Committee. Created by a 2014 act of the Maryland General Assembly, the committee issued its first report to the Maryland General Assembly on December 1, 2015. In it, the Committee outlined eight recommendations in furtherance of the creation of a robust apprenticeship system dedicated to serving the needs of Maryland’s youth. Those recommendations are as follows:

RECOMMENDATION 1: The Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation, in consultation with the Department of Commerce, should identify and convene key industry partners to establish an employer engagement campaign for youth apprenticeship.

RECOMMENDATION 2: The Committee should identify and evaluate current and needed resources for the State to establish the role of business intermediaries for youth apprenticeship.

RECOMMENDATION 3: The Committee should establish targets for implementing youth apprenticeships after reviewing and assessing available data. The Committee should also establish performance matrixes to gauge the success of youth apprenticeship programming.

RECOMMENDATION 4: The Committee should review and establish best practices for mentorship.

RECOMMENDATION 5: The Committee should identify policies and suggest changes to regulations that prohibit employers from establishing a youth apprenticeship program.

RECOMMENDATION 6: The Committee should identify and suggest solutions to additional barriers that would inhibit youth from participating in a youth apprenticeship program. These barriers include, but are not limited to, transportation needs.

RECOMMENDATION 7: In consultation with the MSDE and other stakeholders, the Committee should review Maryland’s existing models and recommend ways to integrate soft skills training into the training plans for the Youth Apprenticeship program.

RECOMMENDATION 8: The Committee should convene a one-day conference with leading experts to discuss the necessary components of high quality training plans to ensure strong mentorships and the integration of academic, technical, and the essential skills.

In addition, the State’s first youth apprenticeship pilot program, Apprenticeship Maryland, awarded two grants to Frederick and Washington Counties in November 2015 to create opportunities for students to enter STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) disciplines, or manufacturing industries. The pilot program was the creation of a partnership between DLLR, the MSDE, and Commerce.

During the 2016 Legislative Session of the Maryland General Assembly, the Department sponsored legislation that transferred the responsibilities for the State’s apprenticeship programming to the Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning. The bill

was unanimously approved by both chambers and signed into law by Governor Hogan. The transfer of apprenticeship programming, which takes effect October 1, 2016, allows the State to align apprenticeships with workforce development programming.

Since the passage of the legislation, the Department has been looking at opportunities to invest in the expansion of apprenticeships, both traditional and non-tradition, in Maryland. The Department has proposed updates of its regulations to USDOL. Those proposed regulations, which would allow for competency based apprenticeships in Maryland, will allow Maryland's apprenticeship sponsors to create registered apprenticeship opportunities to meet their workforce needs. As the State's apprenticeships are overwhelmingly trades based, the Department has received technical assistance from USDOL.

The State utilized this technical assistance opportunity to convene all of the business services professionals from the WIOA Partners and community colleges to understand Registered Apprenticeships and how to market them to businesses.

The Department also received \$200,000 in funds to accelerate apprenticeships. These funds will allow for greater outreach efforts, to provide travel funds for USDOL sponsored convenings, and to assist in branding apprenticeship opportunities in Maryland. DLLR has also applied for \$3.2 million in funding with USDOL for the ApprenticeshipUSA Expansion grant. Funds will allow the State to fund critical infrastructure needs, provide staffing, and invest in innovation. The State also applied for both cap breakers, in which the State proposes to pilot innovative apprenticeship opportunities for skilled immigrants in Maryland and to pilot apprenticeships in State government.

DLLR will continue to work with Registered Apprenticeship programs to encourage and assist with participation as a provider on the State's Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) to access WIOA funding for training and create pipelines for apprenticeship programs across Maryland. The WIOA Partners will continue to explore opportunities to leverage existing and future discretionary grant opportunities to create and enhance pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs across Maryland. Current models exist with partnerships formed under federal and state grants in which adult, dislocated workers, youth, veterans, ex-offenders and other at risk populations are targeted as a pipeline for pre-apprenticeship programs and connected to apprenticeship opportunities after successful completion. Business Service staff will also receive training on how apprenticeships can serve as a tool for businesses to develop a pipeline of talent.

### **3. Provide the procedure, eligibility criteria, and information requirements for determining training provider initial and continued eligibility, including Registered Apprenticeship programs (WIOA Section 122).**

In July 2015, Maryland identified processes for determining initial and continued eligibility for its training providers. The following section details Maryland's current process and it is worth noting that Maryland has a dedicated policy work group identifying ways that the State could improve processes, applications, and procedures related to the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL). The State is currently convening a group of subject matter experts, which includes members representing community colleges, the EARN Program, the Maryland Higher Education Commission, and State and local entities, to identify and address specific areas in need of system improvement.

The State is relying on its process for policy development to strengthen the ETPL procedures, eligibility criteria, and information requirements for determining training provider initial and continued eligibility, including for Registered Apprenticeship. The State expects to conclude its collaborative work related to the operations and policies for ETPL in January 2016.

In the interim, Maryland relies on the following approach.

For initial eligibility for in-State providers, effective July 22, 2015, under WIOA, training providers seeking initial Eligible Training Provider (ETP) designation must submit certain information to be considered for initial eligibility. When granted, initial ETP designation shall remain in effect for one year. To remain on the ETPL after the first year, providers must apply annually for continued eligibility via the submission of program performance data. DLLR DWDAL, in partnership with the Local Boards, will work to identify programs for inclusion on the ETPL to ensure there are sufficient numbers and types of programs serving each local workforce area in a manner that maximizes customer choice. DLLR DWDAL is dedicated to providing a robust list of eligible training providers that is both locally focused, and industry-driven. Registered Apprenticeship programs are not subject to the same eligibility procedures as other ETPL training providers, because they go through a detailed application and vetting procedure with the Maryland Apprenticeship and Training Council (MATC). For inclusion on the ETPL, Registered Apprenticeship program sponsors must submit a completed Program Description and Nomination Form to DLLR. DLLR shall include a verified Registered Apprenticeship program on the Maryland ETPL for as long as the program is registered, or until the Registered Apprenticeship program sponsor notifies DLLR in writing that it no longer wants to be included on the ETPL.

As part of the annual application renewal process, DLLR shall verify Registered Apprenticeship program status, in coordination with

MATC. Registered Apprenticeship programs that are voluntarily or involuntarily de-registered shall be removed from the ETPL. Consistent with the State's policy under WIA, the State's primary indicators of performance under WIOA, is at least 61 percent of 1) all students in a training program, and of 2) the subset of WIOA-funded students must be in unsubsidized employment during the second and fourth quarters after program exit or completion in order for initial and continued ETP eligibility. Maryland may enter into agreements, on a reciprocal basis, to permit eligible providers of training services to accept individual training accounts provided in another state. Such states must have verifiable initial and continuing performance standards that either meet or exceed those of Maryland.

#### **4. Describe how the State will implement and monitor the priority for public assistance recipients, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient in accordance with the requirements of WIOA sec. 134(c)(3)(E), which applies to individualized career services and training services funding by the Adult Formula program.**

Maryland's WIOA system can be a pathway to the middle class and a means to maintain and build the skills necessary to remain in the middle class. Maryland is committed to ensuring its target populations are able to access the WIOA system on a priority basis. For the WIOA Title I Adult Program, this means that local workforce areas must provide priority for training activities to individuals in the target populations. Under WIA, priority was required to be given to public assistance recipients and low-income individuals only when it was determined that allocated funds were limited. Now, under WIOA, priority must be provided regardless of the level of available funds. Priority must be provided in the following order: Priority of Service for the WIOA Title I Adult Program

First Priority - Veterans and eligible spouses who are also low-income, recipients of public assistance and/or basic skills deficient

Second Priority - Individuals who are not veterans or eligible spouses, but meet criteria to be considered a target population

Third Priority - Veterans and eligible spouses who did not meet "first priority" conditions

Fourth Priority - Individuals who are not veterans and do not meet criteria to be considered a target population

The State will ensure priority of service provisions are appropriately followed and monitored through several means.

First, the Local Areas must adhere to these priority provisions and, within their local plans, provide details on how priority shall be given in the Local Area within these parameters. Specifically, Maryland asked its 12 local workforce areas to provide "a description of how the Local Board will provide priority of service that conforms with the State Plan. This should include a description of additional local requirements or discretionary priorities, including data to support the need and how the local requirement and/or priority will be documented and implemented for the Adult program."

Second, Maryland is in the process of re-tooling its WIOA Work Groups for implementation. One new WIOA Work Group will concentrate its efforts on monitoring to share best practices on monitoring across the system and ensure the local systems are complying with WIOA provisions, including priority of service for the WIOA Title I adult program.

Finally, another key way that Maryland will ensure priority of service is effectively offered is through local WIOA Memoranda of Understandings (MOU). The State is in the final stages of policy development for the WIOA MOU policy, which will be jointly issued in September by the Governor's Workforce Development Board, DLLR, DHR and DORS. This policy requires that WIOA MOUs contain provisions regarding a number of key components, including priority of service. The policy states that "all partners must certify within the local WIOA MOU that they will adhere to all statutes, regulations, policies, and plans regarding priority of service, including, but not limited to, priority of service for the WIOA Title I Adult Program and for veterans and their eligible spouses."

#### **5. Describe the State's criteria regarding local area transfer of funds between the adult and dislocated worker programs.**

On behalf of the Governor, DLLR annually allocates funds for both the WIOA Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker programs. Allocations are made to Local Workforce Development Boards for Local Workforce Development Areas in consultation with the chief local elected officials. As explained in WIOA Section 133, when approved by DLLR, a Local Board may transfer up to and including 100 percent of a Program Year (PY) and Fiscal Year (FY) allocation for Adult employment and training activities, and up to and including 100 percent of a PY and FY allocation for Dislocated Worker employment and training activities between the two programs. Transfers may only occur between Adult and Dislocated Worker funds within the same funding phase. For example, PY 2016 expenditures cannot be transferred to PY 2015 funding. Local Boards may not transfer funds to or from the Youth program. A Local

Board may delegate its authority under WIOA Section 133 to the director of local workforce area or other designated signatory of the local workforce area. A delegation can only be accomplished through a resolution of the Local Board, or by a process that is identified in the area's approved Local Plan. When a Local Board elects to exercise its transfer authority, DLLR will require that State policy guidance on requesting a transfer, approving a transfer, and reporting a transfer is adhered to. DLLR has additionally established an appeal process for circumstances where a Local Board wishes to appeal a denial of its transfer request.

When approved by OFA, a Local Board may transfer up to and including 100 percent of a Program Year (PY) and Fiscal Year (FY) allocation for Adult employment and training activities, and up to and including 100 percent of a PY and FY allocation for Dislocated Worker employment and training activities between the two programs. Transfers may only occur between Adult and Dislocated Worker funds within the same funding phase. For example, PY 2015 expenditures cannot be transferred to PY 2014 funding. Local Boards may not transfer funds to or from the Youth program. A Local Board may delegate its authority under WIOA Section 133 to the Director of LWDA or other designated signatory of the LWDA. A delegation can only be accomplished through a resolution of the Local Board, or by a process that is identified in the LWDA's Local Plan. When a Local Board elects to exercise its transfer authority, it is important to adhere to the following policy guidelines.

**Requesting a Transfer** Before making a transfer, a Local Board must obtain OFA's written approval. A Local Board shall request a transfer by completing the Funding Transfer Request form that includes the following information:

- The number for the grant that expenditures would be transferred from;
- The number for the grant that expenditures would be transferred to;
- The amount of the transfer;
- A justification for the transfer;
- The requested effective date of the transfer;
- An assurance that there are sufficient funds in the budget for required activities for the remainder of the PY and FY; and,
- The Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number, which is assigned by the federal funding agency and is listed on the Notice of Obligation.

Transfer requests must be received at least 45 calendar days prior to the end of the grant. If a Local Board has an unforeseen circumstance that may require an exception, the Local Board must contact OFA immediately for further discussion and direction. If the transfer exceeds 50 percent, the Local Board must provide justification for the transfer and assurance that services will be provided to the targeted population of the transferred funding source, with details on what funding sources will be used. The effective date cannot be retroactive past the current reporting period. In other words, the transfer would not change/affect the financial reports previously submitted. Local Boards must submit completed request forms, signed by the Local Board Chair (or the Director of the LWDA or other designated signatory of the LWDA, designated by resolution or identified in the Local Plan, as set forth above), by email to the DWDAL. In the event that the request is made by the LWDA Director, the Local Board Chair must timely affirm that he or she has been apprised of the requested transfer. No request will be reviewed by OFA until written affirmation is received. Written affirmation should be sent via email to Dorothee Schlotterbeck.

**Approving a Transfer** When determining whether a transfer request is approved or denied, OFA must consult the DWDAL Director of the Office of Workforce Development and review the LWDA's WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker funding expenditures, obligations, and balances to ensure these are in support of the Local Board's request. OFA should request additional information or clarification from the Local Board, as needed.

As set forth in the State's Policy on the authority to transfer between WIOA Title I funds, an LWDA must provide to DWDAL an assurance that there are sufficient funds in the budget for required activities for the remainder of the PY and FY. Also, should the transfer exceed 50%, the LWDA must provide justification for the transfer and assurance that services will be provided to the targeted population of the transferred funding source, with details on what funding sources will be used.

After reviewing the request, OFA shall email an official determination to the Local Board Chair, the LWDA Director and the LWDA Fiscal Manager, signed by the DWDAL Assistant Secretary, with the determination to approve or deny within 10 business days. OFA shall file documentation in the LWDA's WIOA grant file and, when approved, the transfer amount shall be posted on the grant tracking worksheet/system. A Local Board may appeal a denial of its transfer request to the DWDAL Assistant Secretary within 10 calendar days from the received date of the denial notice. The appeal must be in writing and state the grounds for the appeal.

**Reporting a Transfer** When approved, LWDA's shall report the transfer to OFA on the Adult and Dislocated Worker Quarterly Status Reports (QSRs). On the Adult QSR, LWDA's shall report the transfer as "the amount of Adult funds expended on the Dislocated Worker Program." On the Dislocated Worker QSR, LWDA's shall report the transfer as "the amount of Dislocated Worker funds expended on the Adult Program." In turn, OFA shall report the transfer to the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) on the Quarterly Financial Report for both "Local Adult" and "Local Dislocated Worker."

## **c. Youth Program Requirements**

With respect to youth workforce investment activities authorized in section 129 of WIOA,—

### **1. Identify the state-developed criteria to be used by local boards in awarding grants for youth**

**workforce investment activities and describe how the local boards will take into consideration the ability of the providers to meet performance accountability measures based on primary indicators of performance for the youth program as described in section 116(b)(2)(A)(ii) of WIOA in awarding such grants.\***

\* Sec. 102(b)(2)(D)(i)(V)

Maryland's WIOA Title I Youth Program WIOA outlines a broader youth vision that is grounded in evidence-based strategies to support a service delivery system that is dedicated to achieving high-levels of performance, accountability and quality in preparing young people for the workforce.

Through the WIOA Title I Youth Program, WIOA places a greater emphasis on supporting the educational and career successes of out-of-school youth. A minimum of 75 percent of WIOA Title I Youth Program funds is required to be spent on out-of-school, which is an increase from the minimum of 30 percent under WIA. The law also expands the Youth Program's key elements to include dropout recovery strategies and services, education offered concurrently with workforce activities and training, financial literacy education, entrepreneurship, post-secondary transitional support, and labor market information. Local workforce areas now must spend at least 20 percent of WIOA Title I Youth Program funds on work experiences that incorporate academic and occupational education.

The WIOA Youth Program is designed to support eligible youth in reaching their educational and career goals. To meet this aim, local workforce areas and local provider that are awarded competitive contracts, must:

- Conduct an objective assessment of the participant's skills;
- Develop an Individual Service Strategy (ISS) with the participant; and,
- Utilize WIOA's 14 Youth Program elements to support the participant in reaching his or her career and academic goals.

SELECTING SERVICE PROVIDERS DLLR encourages Local Boards to develop formal partnerships, through a competitive process, to select WIOA Youth Program service providers that will allow multiple agencies and organizations to fund different aspects of the WIOA Youth Program. Each local system of services can be coordinated through a combination of contracts and Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) between the participating entities. As a result of this strategy, funds from federal agencies like the Department of Justice (under programs for incarcerated youth on probation) or the Department of Health and Human Services (under programs for homeless or foster youth), or other USDOL programs (WIOA Title II Adult Education programs) could be leveraged to provide certain services for WIOA Youth Program participants to help them reach their educational and career goals.

In granting or contracting WIOA Youth Program services, Local Boards must award grants or contracts on a competitive basis to providers of youth workforce investment activities identified based on the criteria identified in the State Plan and taking into consideration the ability of the providers to meet performance accountability measures. In an effort to foster WIOA partnerships, DLLR has a preference for the Title II Adult Education service providers for instruction to help youth participants prepare for the GED® and National External Diploma Program® (NEDP®) programs.

A Local Board may award grants or contracts on a sole-source basis only if it determines there is an insufficient number of eligible providers of youth workforce investment activities in the Local Area (such as a rural area) for grants and contracts to be awarded on a competitive basis.

It is important to incorporate the major changes in WIOA into Requests for Proposals and youth provider contracts immediately. For example, if a Local Area issues separate Requests for Proposals for in-school youth and out-of-school youth, they should be structured in a way to ensure LWDAs are moving toward implementation of the 75 percent OSY expenditure minimum. Local Areas should similarly incorporate the 20 percent work experience expenditure minimum into RFPs and new service provider contracts.

For DLLR's records, Local Areas must provide DLLR with timely copies of the selected service providers' contracts or grant agreements. DLLR encourages Local Areas that grant or contract out Youth Program services to include DLLR's Youth & Disability Coordinator in the Requests for Proposal evaluation and selection process. OPTION-YEAR CONTRACTS LWDAs must incorporate WIOA requirements by amending or modifying the option years of current contracts, provided that such changes are permissible under the contract (i.e., if the contract includes legislation, regulation, or requirements). In competing new contracts, USDOL and DLLR encourage Local Areas to employ one-year contracts which may contain additional option years, rather than multi-year contracts, at the beginning of WIOA implementation. Given how resource-intensive the Requests for Proposal process may be, option year contracts are a strategy to ensure maximum flexibility while final regulations are published and program guidance is issued. They also provide added flexibility to Local Areas during a time of transition when regulations and guidance will be issued that could provide information necessary for future service provider contracts.

## **2. Describe the strategies the State will use to achieve improved outcomes for out-of-school youth as described in 129(a)(1)(B), including how it will leverage and align the core programs, and Combined State Plan partner programs included in this Plan, required and optional one-stop partner programs, and any other resources available.**

Maryland's WIOA Title I Youth Program WIOA outlines a broader youth vision that is grounded in evidence-based strategies to support a service delivery system that is dedicated to achieving high-levels of performance, accountability and quality in preparing young people for the workforce.

Through the WIOA Title I Youth Program, WIOA places a greater emphasis on supporting the educational and career successes of out-of-school youth. A minimum of 75 percent of WIOA Title I Youth Program funds is required to be spent on out-of-school, which is an increase from the minimum of 30 percent under WIA. The law also expands the Youth Program's key elements to include dropout recovery strategies and services, education offered concurrently with workforce activities and training, financial literacy education, entrepreneurship, post-secondary transitional support, and labor market information. Local workforce areas now must spend at least 20 percent of WIOA Title I Youth Program funds on work experiences that incorporate academic and occupational education.

The WIOA Youth Program is designed to support eligible youth in reaching their educational and career goals. To meet this aim, local workforce areas and local provider that are awarded competitive contracts, must:

- Conduct an objective assessment of the participant's skills;
- Develop an Individual Service Strategy (ISS) with the participant; and,
- Utilize WIOA's 14 Youth Program elements to support the participant in reaching his or her career and academic goals.

### Co-Enrollment

Given WIOA's focus on providing an integrated service delivery system that leverages resources across the State, DLLR encourages Local Areas to co-enroll youth participants in both the WIOA Youth Program and other related programs when appropriate. The following list provides examples of programs where co-enrollment may make sense for the youth participant:

- DLLR's WIOA Title I Adult Program;
- DLLR's WIOA Title I Dislocated Worker Program
- DLLR's WIOA Title II Adult Education Program
- DHR's Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program
- DHR's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE)'s Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) Program
- DLLR's Jobs for Veterans State Grant Program
- DLLR's Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) Program
- DHR's John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program.

Youth participants must meet eligibility criteria for participation within each program before co-enrollment occurs.

Maryland recognizes that the WIOA system's mark of success goes beyond the measures required by our federal partners. Utilizing the technical assistance provided to Maryland through its participation in the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services' Systems to Family Stability National Policy Academy, the WIOA Partners have worked collaboratively to determine how best to measure success.

As Maryland seeks to strengthen and enhance its workforce system through implementation of the State Plan, success requires a commitment to innovation, collaboration, and a true systems approach among the State's many workforce partners. In order to guide the WIOA Partners in this work, the Benchmarks of Success for Maryland's Workforce System will set forth a clear vision, goals, and

measurable achievements that help define success and lay the core foundation of this new system. These goals and benchmarks are not mere measures, but rather provide a way of thinking systematically about how we deliver services. They reflect Maryland's dedication to focusing its efforts on people who need the system's assistance the most. To be clear, the intention of these benchmarks is not to be punitive; but rather, to be forward thinking about what success really means in Maryland.

Utilizing these benchmarks, Maryland will work to create greater opportunities for Maryland's out-of-school youth through the alignment of the State's core partner programs.

### **3. Describe how the State will ensure that all 14 program elements described in WIOA section 129(c)(2) are made available and effectively implemented.\***

\* Sec. 102(b)(2)(D)(i)(I)

Local Areas must ensure that each WIOA Youth Program provider consistently conducts an objective assessment of each participant's academic levels, skill levels, and service needs to properly identify the appropriate services and career pathways. The assessment must include a review of: basic skills; occupational skills; prior work experience; employability; interests; aptitudes, including interests and aptitudes for nontraditional jobs; supportive service needs; and, developmental needs. If the participant has been assessed by a provider to pursue another education or training program within the last year, the WIOA Youth Program provider may use that existing assessment to fulfill program requirements. When used, the provider must retain copies of previous assessment(s) and/or assessment result(s) in the participant's case file.

The Individualized Service Strategy (ISS) serves as a guide for both the participant and staff by outlining the necessary and recommended next steps. Through the ISS, staff should aim to identify the appropriate combination and sequence of services to help the participant fulfill goals and program requirements. It is vital that staff interpret assessment results and incorporate those results into service planning and activities. This will help to ensure that youth achieve established goals and obtain desired career and educational outcomes. Taking into account individual needs, abilities and goals, the Individualized Service Strategy must map out anticipated progress. Local Areas must ensure that each WIOA Youth Program provider develops an Individualized Service Strategy with each youth participant after he or she has been objectively assessed. When developing the Individualized Service Strategy, the Youth Program career planner and participant must jointly take the objective assessment results into account. The career planner must also take the performance measures into account when developing goals for the Individualized Service Strategy. In the Individualized Service Strategy, career pathways must be identified and must, at a minimum, include an examination of short-term and long-term: education goals; employment goals; appropriate achievement objectives or benchmarks/milestones; and, appropriate services. Once completed, Local Areas must ensure that the ISS is signed by the Youth Program career planner and the participant. Local Areas must ensure that each participant receives a signed copy of his or her Individualized Service Strategy as record. If an Individualized Service Strategy has been developed for a participant to pursue another education or training program within the last quarter, then the WIOA Youth Program provider may use the existing Individualized Service Strategy to fulfill program requirements. The Youth Program career planner must review the Individualized Service Strategy with each youth participant every 90 days, at a minimum, to review progress and make necessary adjustments. As the Individualized Service Strategy is a living document that should be adjusted as the participant and case manager deem necessary, Youth Program career planners should update the document to reflect changes. Examples of updates include, but are not limited to: participant progress; completed activities or benchmarks, rewriting new goals once objectives have been met, outlining a clear direction or career pathway for the participant, changes to household status, legal name changes, address changes, and, other updates to contact information.

Based on assessment results and the Individualized Service Strategy, Local Areas must ensure that providers offer youth participants access to WIOA Youth Program elements that will support attainment of a secondary school diploma, entry into post-secondary education, and career readiness. All activities must be documented within the Maryland Workforce Exchange.

The WIOA Youth Program consists of 14 key program elements: 1. Tutoring, skills training, and dropout prevention; 2. Alternative secondary school services; 3. Paid and unpaid work experiences; 4. Occupational skills training; 5. Leadership development opportunities;

6. Supportive services; 7. Mentoring; 8. Follow-up services; 9. Counseling; 10. Concurrent education and workforce preparation activities; 11. Financial literacy education;

12. Entrepreneurial skills training; 13. Labor Market Information (LMI); 14. Preparing for Post-Secondary Education and training. Whereas program elements 1-9 were offered under WIA, elements 10-14 are new with WIOA. DLLR has provided policy guidance to local workforce areas on each program element and will continue to offer support to help Local Areas achieve related goals. DLLR's policy on the WIOA Title I Youth Program clearly states that local workforce areas must ensure that providers offer youth participants access to each of the 14 key program elements. If the WIOA Title I Youth Program provider does not directly offer

all program elements, it must ensure that strong partnerships and referral mechanisms are in place to provide access to each element, as necessary. Through ongoing monitoring and technical assistance, DLLR and the local workforce areas will ensure that access is effectively provided to youth participants.

**4. Provide the language contained in the State policy for “requiring additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program, or to secure and hold employment” criterion for out-of-school youth specified in WIOA section 129(a)(1)(B)(iii)(VIII) and for “requiring additional assistance to complete an education program, or to secure and hold employment” criterion for in-school youth specified in WIOA section 129(a)(1)(C)(iv)(VII).**

“REQUIRES ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE TO COMPLETE AN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM, OR TO SECURE AND HOLD EMPLOYMENT” WIOA sections 129(a)(1)(B)(iii)(VIII) and 129(a)(1)(C)(iv)(VII) define eligibility criteria for the WIOA Title I Youth Program. For in-school youth and out-of-school youth, one criterion is that an individual is low-income and requires additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment. Maryland’s local workforce areas will be required to define what it means to “require additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment.”

**5. Include the State definition, as defined in law, for not attending school and attending school as specified in WIOA Section 129(a)(1)(B)(i) and Section 129(a)(1)(C)(i). If state law does not define “not attending school” or “attending school” indicate that is the case.**

ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION At the federal level, an alternative school is defined as a public secondary school that addresses needs of students that typically cannot be met in a regular school, provides nontraditional education, serves as an adjunct to a regular school, or falls outside the categories of regular, special, or vocational education. As of September 2014, Maryland offers 89 alternative education programs in 22 of the State’s 24 local school systems. Of these programs, most target students with behavioral issues, students who were in contact with law enforcement, and/or students who were having academic difficulties, as evidenced by low grades or being behind grade level. Many also target students with attendance problems. Additional information on alternative education can be found in the following ICF International report dated September 2014:

[http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/midatlantic/pdf/REL\\_2014038.pdf](http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/midatlantic/pdf/REL_2014038.pdf) ATTENDING SCHOOL & NOT ATTENDING SCHOOL While Maryland law does not define “attending school” and “not attending school,” it does provide guidance on who is within the age of compulsory school attendance. Effective July 1, 2015, each child who resides in Maryland and is 5 years old or older and under 17 shall attend a public school regularly during the entire school year, unless the child is otherwise exempted due to attainment of a high school diploma or GED®; is receiving regular, thorough instruction during the school year in the studies usually taught in the public schools to children of the same age or has completed such instruction; is married; is active military; attends an alternate education program; or is within any other exemptions listed in Education Article, §7-301, Annotated Code of Maryland. Effective July 1, 2017, the age for compulsory public school attendance will change to ages 5-18.

**6. If not using the basic skills deficient definition contained in WIOA Section 3(5)(B), include the specific State definition.**

BASIC SKILLS DEFICIENT Scores below Low Adult Secondary Education are considered to be basic skills deficient. Per WIOA Section 3(5), an individual is to be considered “basic skills deficient” if he or she is an individual: (1) who is a youth, that has English reading, writing or computing skills at or below the 8th grade level on a generally accepted standardized test; or, (2) who is a youth or adult that is unable to compute or solve problems, or read, write, or speak English, at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual’s family, or in society. Like WIOA Title II adult education service providers, WIOA Title I Youth providers will be expected to follow all DLLR policy guidance on basic skills and English language assessments.

**d. Single-area State Requirements**

In States where there is only one local workforce investment area, the governor serves as both the State and local chief elected official. In such cases, the State must submit any information required in the local plan (WIOA section 106(d)(2)). States with a single workforce area must also include:

- 1. Any comments from the public comment period that represent disagreement with the Plan. (WIOA section 108(d)(3).)**
- 2. The entity responsible for the disbursement of grant funds, as determined by the governor, if different from that for the State. (WIOA section 108(b)(15).)**
- 3. The type and availability of WIOA Title I Youth Activities, including an identification of successful providers of such activities. (WIOA section 108(b)(9).)**

n/a

#### **e. Waiver Requests (optional)**

States wanting to request waivers as part of their Title I-B Operational Plan must include a waiver plan that includes the following information for each waiver requested:

- 1. Identifies the statutory or regulatory requirements for which a waiver is requested and the goals that the State or local area, as appropriate, intends to achieve as a result of the waiver and how those goals relate to the Unified or Combined State Plan;**
- 2. Describes the actions that the State or local area, as appropriate, has undertaken to remove State or local statutory or regulatory barriers;**
- 3. Describes the goals of the waiver and the expected programmatic outcomes if the request is granted;**
- 4. Describes how the waiver will align with the Department's policy priorities, such as:**
  - A. supporting employer engagement;**
  - B. connecting education and training strategies;**
  - C. supporting work-based learning;**
  - D. improving job and career results, and**
  - E. other guidance issued by the Department.**
- 5. Describes the individuals affected by the waiver, including how the waiver will impact services for disadvantaged populations or individuals with multiple barriers to employment; and**

## 6. Describes the process used to:

**A. Monitor the progress in implementing the waiver;**

**B. Provide notice to any local board affected by the waiver;**

**C. Provide any local board affected by the waiver an opportunity to comment on the request;**

**D. Ensure meaningful public comment, including comment by business and organized labor, on the waiver.**

**E. Collect and report information about waiver outcomes in the State's WIOA Annual Report**

The Secretary may require that States provide the most recent data available about the outcomes of the existing waiver in cases where the State seeks renewal of a previously approved waiver;

Waivers Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) 01–15, issued by USDOL on or about July 1, 2015, advises that the United States Secretary of Labor's waiver authority under the Workforce Investment Act and waivers approved under WIA do not extend to WIOA, which has its own waiver authority. The TEGL further stipulates that USDOL "does not envision a need for States to request waivers before the submission of the first WIOA State Plan in March of 2016." Rather, the Department, through TEGL 01–15, encouraged states to "work with, and test the flexibility of WIOA, particularly during PY 2015, the first year of implementation."

While the TEGL does not deny, outright, a state's ability to apply for a waiver, USDOL advises that a state must "demonstrate[] that a proposed waiver would lead to a true innovation or improve service delivery beyond the improvements provided for in WIOA." At this time, Maryland does not wish to submit a waiver. However, the state reserves its right to request a waiver from USDOL as it fully implements the requirements of WIOA.

## Title I-B Assurances

The State Plan must include assurances that:

1. The State has implemented a policy to ensure Adult program funds provide a priority in the delivery of training services and individualized career services to individuals who are low income, public assistance recipients and basic skills deficient; Yes
2. The state has implemented a policy to ensure local areas have a process in place for referring veterans with significant barriers to employment to career services provided by the JVSG program's Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist; Yes
3. The state established a written policy and procedure that set forth criteria to be used by chief elected officials for the appointment of local workforce investment board members. Yes
4. The state established written policy and procedures to ensure local workforce investment boards are certified by the governor every two years in accordance with WIOA section 107(c)(2). Yes
5. Where an alternative entity takes the place of a State Board, the State has written policy and procedures to ensure the alternative entity meets the definition under WIOA section 101(e) and the legal requirements for membership. Yes
6. The State established a written policy and procedure for how the individuals and entities represented on the State Workforce Development Board help to determine the methods and factors of distribution, and how the state consults with chief elected officials in local areas throughout the state in determining the distributions. Yes
7. The State will not use funds received under WIOA Title I to assist, promote, or deter union organizing in accordance with WIOA section 181(b)(7). Yes

8. The State distributes adult and youth funds received under WIOA equitably throughout the State, and no local area suffers significant shifts in funding from year-to-year during the period covered by this plan. Yes
9. If a State Workforce Development Board, department, or agency administers state laws for vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, that board, department, or agency cooperates with the agency that administers Wagner-Peyser services, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and Youth Programs under Title I. Yes
10. The State agrees to report on the impact and outcomes of its approved waivers in its WIOA Annual Report. Yes
11. The State has taken appropriate action to secure compliance with the Uniform Guidance at 2 CFR 200 and 2 CFR 2900, including that the State will annually monitor local areas to ensure compliance and otherwise take appropriate action to secure compliance with the Uniform Guidance under section WIOA 184(a)(3); Yes

## **Program-Specific Requirements for Wagner-Peyser Program (Employment Services)**

All program-specific requirements provided for the WIOA core programs in this section must be addressed for either a Unified or Combined State Plan.

### **A. Employment Service Professional Staff Development.**

#### **1. Describe how the State will utilize professional development activities for Employment Service staff to ensure staff is able to provide high quality services to both jobseekers and employers.**

The WIOA Staff Training Committee, comprised primarily of American Job Center field and supervisory staff along a cross-section of WIOA Partners, surveyed all American Job Center staff to identify where staff felt the greatest need for training existed.

Based upon that survey and independent knowledge, the Staff Training Committee recommended seven areas upon which to focus training, utilizing existing staff expertise as much as possible to provide training to all partners. In particular, the content of the first item below - customer service - was a common theme throughout the committees' deliberations.

The WIOA Staff Training Committee offered the following recommendations:

- Provide customer service training (internal and external), including common intake, utilizing creative methods on working with jobseekers, removing barriers, reasonable accommodations, understanding generational differences, understanding commonalities in hard-to-serve populations, and diversity and sensitivity training to work with the hard-to-serve customers
- Deliver training on effective case management strategies
- Provide industry and occupational demands training - how to effectively use Labor Market Information to assist customers
- Strengthen understanding of principles of continuous improvement through training
- Offer ongoing, evolving staff development (online and classroom), including certification training for staff who have yet to attain credentials, computer, and social media skills
- Provide ongoing partner cross-training
- Deliver business services training to better educate staff on competencies and skillsets desired by businesses; in turn, staff will be able to educate jobseekers

As the State is implementing WIOA, the focus of the State's workgroups has changed. The State is creating a Professional Development workgroup to assist the WIOA Alignment Group (which is described in previous sections) in identifying the professional development needs of the workforce system. Maryland's goal is to approach professional development systematically and not siloed by agency. For instance, through technical assistance provided by Maher and Maher in partnership with USDOL, the State convened all business services professionals from DLLR, DHR, Local Areas, DORS, and the community colleges. This day long training

focused on building a common understanding of registered apprenticeships and how to market that workforce solution to Maryland's businesses. The training was a success and the State is dedicated to identifying and utilizing this systems approach to professional development in the future.

DLLR is also in the process of creating new job classifications for its State Merit Staff to reflect WIOA needs. The intent is to create a career pathway for Wagner-Peyser staff that promotes professional development, allows flexibility for staff, and offers promotional opportunities consistent with skills and abilities. Staff will operate in a number of disciplines and will be flexible to move between functions, locations, and funding streams to provide seamless delivery of services. As part of each classification, certifications will be required to advance to each level. Staff will have access to professional development activities to support attainment of certifications as well as maintenance of certifications. In addition, we will work to identify staff needs through a training matrix we develop.

Outreach Workers & Professional Development: To ensure high quality services to both jobseekers and business, professional development opportunities are currently available and advertised through regular communications from Central Office administration. Under WIOA, through leveraging partnerships, new professional development and training opportunities on topics relevant to all WIOA Partners will be available to staff. To ensure a positive customer experience, when Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers are actively working in the State, DLLR's outreach workers provide monthly reports to the State Monitor Advocate that assist in identifying professional development needs. Maryland's State Monitor advocate is responsible for continuously reviewing statewide agricultural activities and the provision of labor exchange and training services to employers and employees within agricultural communities.

## **2. Describe strategies developed to support training and awareness across core programs and the Unemployment Insurance program, and the training provided for Employment Services and WIOA staff on identification of UI eligibility issues and referral to UI staff for adjudication.**

The Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning and the Division of Unemployment Insurance, both located within DLLR, have entered into conversation and trainings to outline the ways in which American Job Center staff will be educated on the correct information and services they can provide to unemployment insurance claimants. An Unemployment Insurance Liaison will attend joint meetings of American Job Center leadership to provide training. Ongoing information and training will also be provided to Wagner Peyser staff in the American Job Centers.

Under Title III of WIOA, the Wagner Peyser Act, a greater emphasis is placed on providing services to unemployment insurance claimants with referrals to additional American Job Center services. This is in an effort to ensure claimants remain eligible for unemployment insurance benefits and to provide meaningful assistance in their efforts to regain employment. Labor 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. Maryland is actively engaged in work with the Division of Unemployment Insurance and Office of Workforce Development staff to develop and deliver training to American Job Center staff. The Division of Unemployment Insurance, in conjunction with state workforce development staff, has developed a "train the trainer" method of delivery. State staff will be the primary point of contact for training. The Division of Unemployment Insurance has developed training for staff use on the provision of meaningful Unemployment Insurance information. In addition, staff working with profiled claimants will be provided additional training to address the identification and reporting of issues related to continued eligibility for unemployment benefits. Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment staff and Reemployment Opportunity Workshop staff will be provided specific training on providing an eligibility review and identifying available issues.

## **B. Explain how the state will provide information and meaningful assistance to individuals requesting assistance in filing a claim for unemployment compensation through One-Stop centers, as required by WIOA as a career service.**

DLLR staff in American Job Centers are interacting with Unemployment Insurance claimants on a more direct level as Maryland complies with WIOA-prescribed personal interviews and development of individual plans for claimants attending Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment. In collaboration with Office of Workforce Development program managers, Unemployment Insurance staff will continue to provide training and technical assistance as needed.

American Job Center offices have access to fact sheets developed by UI available that provide basic instruction on how to apply online or via telephone for an initial claim. For customers that need additional intensive assistance, staff will be trained by unemployment insurance to assist with online application and telephone claims. UI staff will be available by phone and email to answer specific questions American Job Center staff may not be able to provide. Claimants will be able to reach subject matter

experts at 410-767-3246 or wayne.cooper@maryland.gov. Wagner-Peyser, Reemployment Opportunity Workshop, and Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment staff have been provided training by unemployment insurance staff to answer most common questions posed. In addition a FAQ site will be available: <http://www.dllr.state.md.us/employment/unemployment.shtml>

## **C. Describe the state's strategy for providing reemployment assistance to Unemployment Insurance claimants and other unemployed individuals.**

DWDAL and the Division of Unemployment Insurance work collaboratively to provide workforce development opportunities to all non-job attached claimants in Maryland. This will be accomplished utilizing a variety of strategies including initial mailers from Unemployment Insurance describing the requirement for enrollment and call in of claimants for Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment or Reemployment Opportunity Workshop for Unemployment Insurance claimants. Under the Maryland Unemployment Insurance law, claimants must enroll in Maryland's American Job Center system within four weeks of receiving the Unemployment Insurance pamphlet. Claimants must enroll either in person by visiting their nearest one-stop career center; or via the internet at <https://mwejobs.maryland.gov/vosnet/Default.aspx>. A list Maryland's American Job Centers is included as part of the mailed pamphlet.

WIOA increases connections between the job training and employment services and the Unemployment Insurance system. Maryland will offer its full array of American Job Center Services as options for reemployment services to unemployment insurance customers including basic and individual career services and training services under WIOA. Unemployment Insurance claimants will benefit from the enhanced services, including the labor exchange services and career guidance that are included as career services under Title I, and activities that assist workers in identifying and obtaining jobs in in-demand industries and occupations.

Maryland utilizes permanent Wagner-Peyser staff to conduct Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment activities under Title III WIOA changes. From the Unemployment Insurance first pay list, the worker profiling system will profile claimants weekly, with those profiled as most likely to exhaust assigned to the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment program along with UCX claimants. The remaining claimants will be assigned to the Reemployment Opportunities Workshop. Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment claimants may be referred to Reemployment Opportunities Workshop as a result of the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment after the eligibility review and if determined it will assist in reducing the length of unemployment. Historically, Maryland's WPRS system profiles between 20,000-30,000 annually.

## **D. Describe how the State will use W-P funds to support UI claimants, and the communication between W-P and UI, as appropriate, including the following:**

### **1. Coordination of and provision of labor exchange services for UI claimants as required by the Wagner-Peyser Act;**

The goal of reemployment in Maryland is to ensure claimants are engaged with their local job center beyond the initial mandatory contact for continued eligibility. Labor Exchange staff are an important part of the strategy to keep claimants engaged in the centers. As part of this strategy, Labor Exchange staff provide reemployment services to claimants during the one on one assessment interviews for RESEA. Staff will make appropriate referrals to programs based on assessment of need during the meeting.

The elements which comprise Maryland's Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment are American Job Center Orientation, Labor Market Information Provision, Individual Reemployment Plan, Referral to Reemployment and Training Services, and Eligibility Review Interview. Claimants and trainers will mutually agree upon which of the array of American Job Center services are most beneficial to assist in a job search. Examples of American Job Center program referrals may include WIOA training, Professional Outplacement Assistance Center, and specific training for Ex-Offenders, GED® seekers, or seniors, and other targeted populations. The mutually agreed upon service is recorded in MWE, and on the claimant Individual Employment Plan, and is followed by the trainer to assure compliance with the agreement. If a claimant fails to follow through on agreed upon reemployment services within 30 days, they are referred to Unemployment Insurance for adjudication.

The Reemployment Opportunity Workshop provides reemployment assistance to Unemployment Insurance Claimants not served by the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment program. Reemployment Opportunity Workshop trainers provide services at American Job Centers. The goals of the program include shortening the duration of Unemployment Insurance and connecting Unemployment Insurance claimants to Employment Service programs. The delivery of reemployment services involves a coordinated approach, involving Unemployment Insurance, Wagner-Peyser, and WIOA funded staff. Reemployment Opportunity Workshop is open to all jobseekers whether a current unemployment insurance claimant or employed.

Each identified profiled candidate is contacted regarding participation in a job finding and career enhancing workshop for a 6 hour presentation that covers at a minimum the Job Acquisition Process – Self-Assessment, Career Transition, Employment Related Correspondence, and Interviewing. Additional topics and local programs are encouraged to provide a well-rounded program s for customers and partners.

Each workshop participant will know, at the end of the workshop, that successful employment is the ultimate goal, and that all American Job Center staffers are available to assist with their job search. Each workshop completer receives targeted and specific job search assistance, beginning in the workshop, with emphasis on appropriate and necessary labor market information. Self-assessment instruments, access to supportive services and partner agencies, and individual and group counseling (career guidance) are available. Referral to program staff to access training and additional services is made within the workshop along with the process to access the programs. In addition, local training staff can access lists of workshop completers to provide follow up inquiries to potential dislocated workers.

Job matching services, one-on-one conferences, follow-up activities, and meetings are used as tools to help customers obtain rapid reemployment. Each workshop participant is contacted for follow-up assistance and additional services. To further support the reemployment strategy, videos and concentrated mini workshops, delivered by partners or Wagner Peyser staff, are used to provide additional assistance in areas of identified need. Workshops are available that address interviewing skills, application preparation, résumé writing, social media, and job searches on the Internet. Participants access services and attend workshops at the American Job Center. They also receive referrals to upcoming job fairs and employer recruitment events and link with other American Job Center partners.

Partners participate in the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment program and Reemployment Opportunity Workshops, or provide information on-site or through their websites. Participants who need additional training to obtain employment are assisted through WIOA programs. With increasing numbers of individuals with limited English proficiency filing UI claims, Maryland is responding to the need for Spanish-language workshops. Workshop materials have been translated into Spanish, and Spanish-speaking workshop facilitators provide Spanish-language workshops in the areas with the largest numbers of English Language Learners claimants. Spanish-language services are available in the rest of the State as well.

DWDAL and the Division of Unemployment Insurance continue to work collaboratively to ensure that staff questions, concerns and challenges are quickly identified and addressed. There is great importance attributed to the fact that DWDAL and the Division of Unemployment Insurance's administration meet regularly, to orient themselves toward the highest standards for the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment program. Also, the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment Program Administrator and the Unemployment Insurance Administrator jointly host regular program staff meetings to allow for frequent training and technical assistance in such areas as Unemployment Insurance eligibility issues and fact finding processes, data system operations and reporting, site-specific issues from a more global perspective, and integration of the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment program into the American Job Center fabric. USDOL recently cited how impressed they were by the level of communication between Division of Unemployment Insurance and DWDAL as it relates to collaborative work with Unemployment Insurance claimants.

## **2. Registration of UI claimants with the State's employment service if required by State law;**

DWDAL and the Division of Unemployment Insurance work collaboratively to provide workforce development opportunities to all non-job attached claimants in Maryland. This is accomplished via a variety of strategies, including initial mailers from Unemployment Insurance describing the requirement for enrollment and call in of claimants for Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) or Reemployment Opportunity Workshop (ROW) for Unemployment Insurance claimants. Under the Maryland Unemployment Insurance law, claimants must enroll in Maryland's American Job Center system within four weeks of receiving the Unemployment Insurance pamphlet. They can enroll either in person or by visiting their nearest AJC; or via the Maryland Workforce Exchange Virtual One-Stop - <https://mwejobs.maryland.gov/vosnet/Default.aspx>. A list Maryland's American Job Centers is included as part of the mailed pamphlet. Using the Worker Profiling Reemployment System, Maryland profiles all non-job attached claimants who have filed an initial claim for unemployment insurance (versus only profiling those who have received initial payment). This is a change from prior policy and broadens the support that the workforce system provides to UI claimants. It further ensures that claimants who are ineligible for UI benefits due to lack of earnings, etc. are aware of the safety net provided by the workforce system for all jobseekers, whether receiving UI benefits or not. By profiling all claimants, OWD/UI can:

1. Engage claimants sooner;
2. Provide reemployment services to more claimants faster;
3. Ensure claimants are fulfilling work search requirements;
4. Refer claimants who may be non-compliant with Maryland UI law for adjudication.

Maryland is working with the U.S. Department of Labor to update its current profiling methodology. Once the methodology is fully updated, every two years it will be reviewed and adjusted to reflect current economic conditions. By having a current methodology, Maryland can provide a wide-reach of relevant reemployments services to meet customers' needs. Maryland will offer its RESEA

Program to claimants profiled as most likely to exhaust benefits. ROW will continue to be an available service for all other claimants as a path to reemployment. Soon after filing a claim, profiled claimants are sent a letter, which schedules them for one of the workshops immediately after selection. The letter will reinforce the requirement to register in the Maryland Workforce Exchange. Follow up emails will be utilized as reminders of required attendance. With all non-job attached claimants being profiled, DLLR can ensure claimants are fully engaged and registered within the workforce system. Trainers will verify that registration has been completed prior to the workshop. Claimants identified as failing to register will be directed to do so prior to completion of the workshop. Failure to register, prior to or on the day of the workshop, will result in a referral to the Division of Unemployment Insurance for adjudication. Claimants will be referred to UI for adjudication when identified that they failed to properly register. Upon receipt of a trainers' notification, UI will establish issues, as necessary, and will conduct a fact-finding interview to review and verify whether registration has occurred. If the claims specialist determines during the adjudication that registration was incomplete with no good cause, UI will impose a sanction until the claimant comes into compliance. WIOA increases connections between the job training and employment services and the Unemployment Insurance system. Maryland will offer its full array of American Job Center Services as options for reemployment services to unemployment insurance customers including basic and individual career services and training services under WIOA. Unemployment Insurance claimants will benefit from the enhanced services, including the labor exchange services and career guidance that are included as career services under Title I, and activities that assist workers in identifying and obtaining jobs in in-demand industries and occupations. Maryland utilizes permanent Wagner-Peyser staff to conduct RESEA activities under Title III WIOA changes. RESEA claimants may be referred to ROW as a result of the RESEA after the eligibility review, and if determined appropriate, it will assist in reducing the length of unemployment. Historically, Maryland's WPRS system profiles between 20,000-30,000 annually. The elements which comprise Maryland's RESEA Program are: American Job Center orientation; Labor Market Information provision; development of an Individual Employment Plan; referral to reemployment and training services; and an Eligibility Review Interview. Claimants and trainers will mutually agree upon which of the array of American Job Center services are most beneficial to assist in the particular customer's job search. Examples of American Job Center program referrals may include: WIOA training, Professional Outplacement Assistance Center, and specific training for Ex-Offenders, GED® seekers, or seniors, and other targeted populations. The mutually agreed upon service is recorded in MWE, and on the claimant Individual Employment Plan, and is followed by the trainer to assure compliance with the agreement. If a claimant fails to follow through on agreed upon reemployment services within 30 days, they are referred to Unemployment Insurance for adjudication. ROW provides reemployment assistance to Unemployment Insurance claimants who are not initially served by the RESEA program. ROW trainers provide services at American Job Centers. The goals of the program include: shortening the duration of Unemployment Insurance and connecting Unemployment Insurance claimants to Employment Service programs. The delivery of reemployment services is rooted in a coordinated approach and includes Unemployment Insurance, Wagner-Peyser, and WIOA Title I funded staff. ROW is open to all jobseekers, receiving UI benefits or employed. Each ROW participant is contacted regarding participation in a job finding and career enhancing workshop for a 6 hour presentation that covers at a minimum the Job Acquisition Process - Self-Assessment, Career Transition, Employment Related Correspondence, and Interviewing. Additional topics and local programs are encouraged to provide a well-rounded program for customers and partners. By the end of the workshop, each participant will know that successful employment is the ultimate goal, and that all American Job Center staffers are available to assist with their job search. Each workshop completer receives targeted and specific job search assistance, beginning in the workshop, with emphasis on appropriate and necessary labor market information. Self-assessment instruments, access to supportive services and partner agencies, and individual and group counseling (career guidance) are available. Referral to program staff to access training and additional services is made within the workshop along with the process to access the programs. In addition, local training staff can access lists of workshop completers to provide follow up inquiries to potential dislocated workers. Job matching services, one-on-one conferences, follow-up activities, and meetings are used as tools to help customers obtain rapid reemployment. Each workshop participant is contacted for follow-up assistance and additional services. To further support the reemployment strategy, videos and concentrated mini workshops are used to provide additional assistance in areas of identified need. Workshops are available to address interviewing skills, application preparation, résumé writing, and job searches on the Internet. Participants access services and attend workshops at the American Job Center. They also receive referrals to upcoming job fairs and employer recruitment events and link with other American Job Center partners. Partners participate in the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment program and Reemployment Opportunity Workshops, or provide information on-site or through their websites. Participants who need additional training to obtain employment are assisted through WIOA programs. With increasing numbers of individuals with limited English proficiency filing UI claims, Maryland is responding to the need for Spanish-language workshops. Workshop materials have been translated into Spanish, and Spanish-speaking workshop facilitators provide Spanish-language workshops in the areas with the largest numbers of English Language Learners claimants. Spanish-language services are available in the rest of the State as well. DWDAL and the Division of Unemployment Insurance continue to work collaboratively to ensure that staff questions, concerns and challenges are quickly identified and addressed. There is great importance attributed to the fact that DWDAL and the Division of Unemployment Insurance's administration meet regularly, to orient themselves toward the highest standards for reemployment efforts. Also, the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment Program Administrator and the Unemployment Insurance Administrator jointly host regular program staff meetings to allow for frequent training and technical assistance in such areas as Unemployment Insurance eligibility issues and fact finding processes, data system operations and reporting, site-specific issues from a more global perspective, and integration of the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment program into the American Job Center fabric. USDOL recently cited how impressed they were by the level of communication between Division of Unemployment Insurance and DWDAL as it relates to collaborative work with Unemployment Insurance claimants.

### **3. Administration of the work test for the State unemployment compensation system, including making eligibility assessments (for referral to UI adjudication, if needed), and providing job finding and placement services for UI claimants; and**

Maryland utilizes permanent Wagner–Peyser staff to conduct Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment activities under Title III WIOA changes. From the Unemployment Insurance first pay list, the worker profiling system will profile claimants weekly, with those profiled as most likely to exhaust assigned to the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment program along with UCX claimants. The remaining claimants will be assigned to the Reemployment Opportunities Workshop. Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment claimants may be referred to Reemployment Opportunities Workshop as a result of the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment after the eligibility review and if determined it will assist in reducing the length of unemployment. Historically, Maryland’s WPRS system profiles between 20,000–30,000 annually.

The elements which comprise Maryland’s Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment are American Job Center Orientation, Labor Market Information Provision, Individual Employment Plan, Referral to Reemployment and Training Services, and Eligibility Review Interview. Claimants and trainers will mutually agree upon which of the array of American Job Center services are most beneficial to assist in a job search. Examples of American Job Center program referrals may include WIOA training, Professional Outplacement Assistance Center, and specific training for Ex–Offenders, GED® seekers, or seniors, and other targeted populations. The mutually agreed upon service is recorded in MWE, and on the claimant Individual Employment Plan, and is followed by the trainer to assure compliance with the agreement. If a claimant fails to follow through on agreed upon reemployment services within 30 days, they are referred to Unemployment Insurance for adjudication.

The Reemployment Opportunity Workshop provides reemployment assistance to Unemployment Insurance Claimants not served by the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment program. Reemployment Opportunity Workshop trainers provide services at American Job Centers. The goals of the program include shortening the duration of Unemployment Insurance and connecting Unemployment Insurance claimants to Employment Service programs. The delivery of reemployment services involves a coordinated approach, involving Unemployment Insurance, Wagner–Peyser, and WIOA funded staff. Reemployment Opportunity Workshop is open to all jobseekers whether a current unemployment insurance claimant or employed.

Each identified profiled candidate is contacted regarding participation in a job finding and career enhancing workshop for a 6 hour presentation that covers at a minimum the Job Acquisition Process – Self-Assessment, Career Transition, Employment Related Correspondence, and Interviewing. Additional topics and local programs are encouraged to provide a well–rounded program s for customers and partners.

Each workshop participant will know, at the end of the workshop, that successful employment is the ultimate goal, and that all American Job Center staffers are available to assist with their job search. Each workshop completer receives targeted and specific job search assistance, beginning in the workshop, with emphasis on appropriate and necessary labor market information. Self–assessment instruments, access to supportive services and partner agencies, and individual and group counseling (career guidance) are available. Referral to program staff to access training and additional services is made within the workshop along with the process to access the programs. In addition, local training staff can access lists of workshop completes to provide follow up inquiries to potential dislocated workers.

Job matching services, one–on–one conferences, follow–up activities, and meetings are used as tools to help customers obtain rapid reemployment. Each workshop participant is contacted for follow–up assistance and additional services. To further support the reemployment strategy, videos and concentrated ?mini workshops are used to provide additional assistance in areas of identified need. Workshops are available that address interviewing skills, application preparation, résumé writing, and job searches on the Internet. Participants access services and attend workshops at the American Job Center. They also receive referrals to upcoming job fairs and employer recruitment events and link with other American Job Center partners.

Partners participate in the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment program and Reemployment Opportunity Workshops, or provide information on–site or through their websites. Participants who need additional training to obtain employment are assisted through WIOA programs. With increasing numbers of individuals with limited English proficiency filing UI claims, Maryland is responding to the need for Spanish–language workshops. Workshop materials have been translated into Spanish, and Spanish–speaking workshop facilitators provide Spanish–language workshops in the areas with the largest numbers of English Language Learners claimants. Spanish–language services are available in the rest of the State as well.

DWDAL and the Division of Unemployment Insurance continue to work collaboratively to ensure that staff questions, concerns and challenges are quickly identified and addressed. There is great importance attributed to the fact that DWDAL and the Division of Unemployment Insurance’s administration meet regularly, to orient themselves toward the highest standards for the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment program. Also, the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment Program Administrator

and the Unemployment Insurance Administrator jointly host regular program staff meetings to allow for frequent training and technical assistance in such areas as Unemployment Insurance eligibility issues and fact finding processes, data system operations and reporting, site-specific issues from a more global perspective, and integration of the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment program into the American Job Center fabric. USDOL recently cited how impressed they were by the level of communication between Division of Unemployment Insurance and DWDAL as it relates to collaborative work with Unemployment Insurance claimants.

Maryland profiles all non-job attached unemployment insurance claimants that file a claim certification for request for payment. This is a change from our previous method of calling in based on first payment of a claim. If a claimant does fails to report to a required job search activity a referral will be made to unemployment insurance for review. This allows labor exchange staff to have claimants engaged within 2 weeks of filing for unemployment insurance. Claimants that fail to report and register in the Maryland Workforce Exchange are referred to unemployment staff for fact-finding and adjudication for their continued eligibility for benefits.

#### **4. Provision of referrals to and application assistance for training and education programs and resources.**

DWDAL and the Division of Unemployment Insurance work collaboratively to provide workforce development opportunities to all non-job attached claimants in Maryland. This will be accomplished utilizing a variety of strategies including initial mailers from Unemployment Insurance describing the requirement for enrollment and call in of claimants for Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment or Reemployment Opportunity Workshop for Unemployment Insurance claimants. Under the Maryland Unemployment Insurance law, claimants must enroll in Maryland's American Job Center system within four weeks of receiving the Unemployment Insurance pamphlet. Claimants must enroll either in person by visiting their nearest one-stop career center; or via the internet. A list Maryland's American Job Centers is included as part of the mailed pamphlet.

WIOA increases connections between the job training and employment services and the Unemployment Insurance system. Maryland will offer its full array of American Job Center Services as options for reemployment services to unemployment insurance customers including basic and individual career services and training services under WIOA. Unemployment Insurance claimants will benefit from the enhanced services, including the labor exchange services and career guidance that are included as career services under Title I, and activities that assist workers in identifying and obtaining jobs in in-demand industries and occupations.

### **E. Agricultural Outreach Plan (AOP). Each State agency must develop an AOP every four years as part of the Unified or Combined State Plan required under sections 102 or 103 of WIOA. The AOP must include--**

#### **1. Assessment of Need**

Provide an assessment of the unique needs of farmworkers in the area based on past and projected agricultural and farmworker activity in the State. Such needs may include but are not limited to: employment, training, and housing.

AGRICULTURAL OUTREACH PLAN DLLR's Migrant and Seasonal Farm Worker Program ensures migrant and seasonal farm workers, who are a target population under WIOA, receive the same employment services where they live and work that non-migrant seasonal farm workers receive at the State's American Job Centers. ASSESSMENT OF NEED Consistent with historical trends, agriculture in Maryland continues to be a nearly \$2.3 billion enterprise. However, agricultural jobs do not rank within the top ten industries with advertised job openings in the Maryland Workforce Exchange (MWE). Although there are an estimated 12,300 farm operations in Maryland, only 3,536 of farms hired farm labor. It is important to note that although this is an increase of nearly 500 farms from 2007, the number of laborers hired decreased by more than 2000. It is estimated that more than 14,000 hired farm workers were employed in Maryland in 2012; however, only 133 farms hired migrant farm labor. This is a substantial decrease from the 236 farms that hired migrant farmers in Maryland during 2007. A little over half of the hired farm workers, 7,891 workers, worked less than 150 days indicating the periodicity of the farm work. A contributing factor to the limited hiring is that the majority of farms in Maryland are family operations. Crop production is projected to increase in employment from 2012 to 2022 by nearly five percent, while animal production is projected to decline by more than two percent.

According to United States Department of Agriculture, poultry and eggs are the top commodity in Maryland with a value in sales in 2012 of just shy of \$1 billion. Grains, oilseeds, dry beans, and dry peas were the second largest commodity in terms of value in sales with nearly three-quarters of a billion dollars in sales in 2012. Although these were the main crops in terms of sales in

Maryland, the following information will focus on those commodities with high numbers of migrant and seasonal farm workers.

**a. An assessment of the agricultural activity in the State means: 1) identifying the top five labor-intensive crops, the months of heavy activity, and the geographic area of prime activity; 2) Summarize the agricultural employers' needs in the State (i.e. are they predominantly hiring local or foreign workers, are they expressing that there is a scarcity in the agricultural workforce); and 3) Identifying any economic, natural, or other factors that are affecting agriculture in the State or any projected factors that will affect agriculture in the State.**

As shown below, the top five major crop activities across Maryland continue to employ a declining number of migrant and seasonal farm workers.

Top 5 Labor-Intensive Crops for Migrant & Seasonal Farm Workers

Crop Description	Nursery Stock	Employs workers across the state from March through November.
Nursery stock growing actually has a bifurcated annual time span which peaks in the spring and in the fall. A cool spring and late frost in the most recent growing season affected nursery production slightly. Diversified crops		
Many vegetables are grown in the central, more cosmopolitan regions of the state. These crops are available in local farm stands and grocery stores throughout the summer months. Tomatoes Maryland's largest single vegetable crop; tomatoes are picked and packed in places located on Maryland's Eastern Shore during the months of July and August. Cantaloupes & Melons Harvested predominantly on Maryland's Eastern Shore during the months of July and August. Fruit Orchards Maryland's fruit orchards typically include apples, peaches, and occasionally other fruit. These employ workers generally along Maryland's northern and western borders (i.e. the Mason-Dixon Line) from July through October, depending on the varieties of fruits grown at the particular orchard.		

Employers' Needs Anecdotal evidence suggests that Maryland's agricultural employers are challenged by the scarcity of workers interested in the agricultural field. Historically, most Maryland farms were family owned and operated, and passed down through generations. Current trends suggest that younger generations tend to leave for other employment because they do not want to continue the family farm business. When this occurs, anecdotes collected from farmers suggest that farms either go out of business or resort to hiring via the H2A Program.

According to online job postings, employers hiring in the Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting industry in Maryland need workers with landscaping, agricultural, and interpersonal skills (MWE, 2016). In terms of tools and technology, employers need employees skilled in the use of cell phones, forklifts, trucks, and fertilizer spreading equipment. Other Factors Affecting Need From 2010 to 2014, Maryland has experienced an increase in population of 3.5 percent. Maryland is very densely populated and is the sixth most densely populated state in the United States, which may be a contributing factor to the steady decline of crop farming across the State.

**b. An assessment of the unique needs of farmworkers means summarizing Migrant and Seasonal Farm Worker (MSFW) characteristics (including if they are predominantly from certain countries, what language(s) they speak, the approximate number of MSFWs in the State during peak season and during low season, and whether they tend to be migrant, seasonal, or year-round farmworkers). This information must take into account data supplied by WIOA Section 167 National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) grantees, other MSFW organizations, employer organizations, and State and/or Federal agency data sources such as the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) Employment and Training Administration.**

Migrant & Seasonal Farmworker Characteristics Maryland's Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers largely come from Florida and a few Southern states along the Eastern Seaboard. The population is almost exclusively Latino and Spanish speaking. The Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker population consists of either: (1) long-time migrants who have been picking crops for years; or, (2) persons of various backgrounds who are seeking to be part of an underground economy, which is difficult to trace for various legal reasons.

According to 2013 USDOL data, DLLR certified 640 H2A positions in Maryland, with the top work locations being:

• Kennedyville, Kent County • Westminster, Carroll County • Chesapeake City, Cecil County

In Maryland, the migrant and seasonal farmworker growing season begins in early to mid-March when nursery workers begin to arrive. Peak season is during July and August for harvesting vegetables including tomatoes, cantaloupes, and melons. The harvest season is concluded with the fall apple harvests, mostly in the Cumberland Valley of Western Maryland.

Despite a declining number of family farms overall, data from the Maryland Department of Agriculture suggest that the vast majority of Maryland farms continue to be family farms that do not employ outside labor. Maryland farms are mostly settled in pockets, maintained by Amish and Moravian families, who are known to rely only on the labor of family and friends. Both the number of farms employing Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers and the number of Migrant and Seasonal Workers who are employed have annually declined. Maryland estimates that fewer than 1,000 Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers are employed in the State's agricultural field during the growing season. During the winter months, from December through February, virtually no Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers are employed in the State.

## 2. Outreach Activities

The local offices outreach activities must be designed to meet the needs of MSFWs in the State and to locate and contact MSFWs who are not being reached through normal intake activities. Describe the State agency's proposed strategies for:

OUTREACH ACTIVITIES Contacting Maryland's Farmworkers As DLLR's outreach staff, Maryland's Wagner-Peyser State Merit staff have consistently out-performed the annual goal of reaching over 50 percent (a historical average) of the Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers who live and work in Maryland. Consistent with this performance and the resources available, staff and partners, such as Telamon Corporation, Legal Aid, and CATA Farmworkers Support Committee, plan to reach approximately 60 percent of the farm workers who are estimated to live or work in the State. Annual goals are as follows:

PY Estimated Population Total Outreach PY 16 1050 620 PY 17 1000 600 PY 18 975 585 PY 19 950 575

In addition to the Wagner-Peyser State Merit staff, DLLR has 2.5 full-time staff dedicated to outreach to Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers. These staff include the State Monitor Advocate, the State Rural Services Coordinator, and local office staff. Following a historical track, Maryland staff and cooperation agencies, such as Telamon Corporation, dedicate their outreach efforts through three major service areas, as shown below:

Service Area Counties Outreach Percent Eastern Shore Kent, Queen Anne's, Caroline, Dorchester, Somerset, Worcester 90 Mason-Dixon Border Garrett, Washington, Allegany, Frederick, Carroll, Baltimore, Harford, Cecil 7 Balance of State Howard, Montgomery, Anne Arundel, Prince George's, Calvert, Charles, St.Mary's 3

Of the 2.5 full-time equivalent staff who do outreach across the state, the Eastern Shore demands the most staff hours.

Despite continued efforts by DLLR and its partners to provide outreach services, recent experience suggests that outreach efforts are largely unfruitful. Zero Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers have been recorded in the MWE since 2014, and therefore, Equity Ratios Indicators cannot be computed.

Experienced outreach staff and the State Monitor Advocate suggest that the reason for the non-participation of Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers is two-fold: (1) the overwhelming majority of Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers encountered in the places where they live or work voluntarily self-attest that they are undocumented and therefore ineligible for services; and (2) most Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers express that they are only "passing through" the State, have established permanent residency elsewhere, and do not desire to participate in workforce services offered in Maryland. As appropriate, staff review data to validate the accuracy of identification and service provision for this population.

### A. Contacting farmworkers who are not being reached by the normal intake activities conducted by the employment service offices.

As DLLR's outreach staff, Maryland's Wagner-Peyser State Merit staff have consistently out-performed the annual goal of reaching over 50 percent (a historical average) of the Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers who live and work in Maryland. Consistent with this performance and the resources available, staff and partners, such as Telamon Corporation, Legal Aid, and CATA Farmworkers Support Committee, plan to reach approximately 60 percent of the farm workers who are estimated to live or work in the State. It is due to regular communication with agencies who provide services that DLLR remains current about the places where farm workers live and work. Annual goals are as follows:

PY Estimated Population Total Outreach PY 16: 1050, PY 17: 1000, PY 18: 975, and PY 19: 950 In addition to the Wagner-Peyser State Merit staff, DLLR has 2.5 full-time staff equivalents, dedicated to outreach to Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers. These staff include mostly local staff, with occasional support and assistance from the State Rural Services Coordinator, and the State Rural Services Administrator. Following a historical track, Maryland staff and cooperating agencies, such as Telamon Corporation, dedicate

their outreach efforts through three major service areas, as shown below:

Service Area	Counties	Outreach Percent
Eastern Shore	Kent, Queen Anne's, Caroline, Dorchester, Somerset, Worcester	90
Mason-Dixon Border	Garett, Washington, Allegany, Frederick, Carroll, Baltimore, Harford, Cecil	7
Balance of State	Howard, Montgomery, Anne Arundel, Prince George's, Calvert, Charles, St.Mary's	3

Of the 2.5 full-time equivalent staff who do outreach across the state, the Eastern Shore demands the most staff hours.

To provide outreach services, DLLR and its partners rely on their experience to reach workers where they live and work, as well as on-going information exchange with partners. Outreach materials include brochures, complaint posters and information, Hot Jobs, and information on local resources which they carry and provide to the workers. Most information on the location of Migrant and Season Farmworkers (MSFWs) is shared between DLLR, Telamon, & Legal Aid and various local organizations. Recent experience suggests that these outreach efforts are largely unfruitful. Zero Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers have been recorded in the MWE since 2014, and therefore, Equity Ratios Indicators cannot be computed.

Experienced outreach staff and the State Monitor Advocate suggest that the reason for the non-participation of Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers is two-fold: (1) the overwhelming majority of Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers encountered in the places where they live or work voluntarily self-attest that they are undocumented and therefore ineligible for services; and (2) most Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers express that they are only "passing through" the State, have established permanent residency elsewhere, and do not desire to participate in workforce services offered in Maryland. As appropriate, staff review data to validate the accuracy of identification and service provision for this population.

Further, DLLR is moving to regional business service model. Six regional representatives will be trained on all workforce programs and incentives. Each representative will be responsible for an areas of the state to supplement state, local and other partner staff outreach efforts. They will be specifically tasked with providing a higher level of services for multiple state funded workforce programs. As part of this effort, they will tasked with providing outreach to MSFW populations during the periods of the year of work. DLLR Central Office staff, including the State Monitor Advocate, will direct outreach efforts areas where eligible farm workers are located. In addition, DLLR will leverage information from Foreign Labor (FLC) outreach staff and relationships built to create new opportunities for outreach to farm workers. Regional staff will also be encouraged to be part of local business service teams and outreach efforts. Also, FLC reports and wage survey data will be shared for additional outreach efforts.

**B. Providing technical assistance to outreach workers. Technical assistance must include trainings, conferences, additional resources, and increased collaboration with other organizations on topics such as one-stop center services (i.e. availability of referrals to training, supportive services, and career services, as well as specific employment opportunities), the employment service complaint system, information on the other organizations serving MSFWs in the area, and a basic summary of farmworker rights, including their rights with respect to the terms and conditions of employment.**

Technical Assistance for Maryland's Outreach Workers Technical assistance is provided continuously to outreach workers, mainly by the State Monitor Advocate. Because the staff is small in size, the State Monitor Advocate is able to accompany local staff on outreach visits and review outreach topics, such as American Job Center services, career services, current available employment opportunities, the employment service complaint system, other organizations who serve Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers and other specific populations in the Local Area, and farmworker rights. Pre-season meetings are held annually with complaint system training to review program requirements. While DLLR has not increased its number of staff who conduct outreach, the program is reviewed annually by appropriate staff and supervisors in the American Job Centers. Personal interaction between the State Monitor Advocate and local workforce staff helps to ensure that technical assistance is consistent and updated as appropriate.

Staff and the State Monitor Advocate review labor law posters annually and assure that they are posted in the places where Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers live and work. This seems to be the most effective method for communicating rights regarding terms and conditions for employment. Staff also visit places where H2A workers are employed, especially where field checks are conducted, to ensure that workers have been given and understand the provisions found in their terms and conditions for employment.

**C. Increasing outreach worker training and awareness across core programs including the Unemployment Insurance (UI) program and the training on identification of UI eligibility issues.**

The Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning and the Division of Unemployment Insurance, both located within DLLR, have entered into conversation and trainings to outline the ways in which American Job Center staff will be educated on the correct information and services they can provide to unemployment insurance claimants. An Unemployment Insurance Liaison will attend joint meetings of American Job Center leadership to provide training. Ongoing information and training will also be provided to Wagner Peyser staff in the American Job Centers.

Under Title III of WIOA, the Wagner Peyser Act, a greater emphasis is placed on providing services to unemployment insurance claimants with referrals to additional American Job Center services. This is in an effort to ensure claimants remain eligible for unemployment insurance benefits and to provide meaningful assistance in their efforts to regain employment. Labor 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.

Maryland is actively engaged in work with the Division of Unemployment Insurance and Office of Workforce Development staff to develop and deliver training to American Job Center staff. The Division of Unemployment Insurance, in conjunction with state workforce development staff, has developed a “train the trainer” method of delivery. State staff will be the primary point of contact for training. The Division of Unemployment Insurance has developed training for staff use on the provision of meaningful Unemployment Insurance information.

In addition, staff working with profiled claimants will be provided additional training to address the identification and reporting of issues related to continued eligibility for unemployment benefits. Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment staff and Reemployment Opportunity Workshop staff will be provided specific training on providing an eligibility review and identifying available issues.

Outreach Workers & the WIOA System In addition to the technical assistance described above, outreach workers have the opportunity to participate in the same training as all DLLR staff. Labor Exchange Administrators, who oversee operations in American Job Centers, hold regular staff meetings which increase awareness and understanding across the WIOA core programs and the Unemployment Insurance program.

DLLR's Office of Workforce Development is actively engaged in work with DLLR's Division of Unemployment Insurance to develop and deliver effective training to American Job Center staff. The Division of Unemployment Insurance, in conjunction with state workforce development staff, have developed a “train the trainer” method of delivery. While the Division of Unemployment Insurance has developed training to ensure workforce staff are appropriately trained on the provisions of unemployment insurance, leadership within the Office of Workforce Development staff are the primary point of contact. Office of Workforce Development staff who work closely with unemployment insurance claimants are provided additional, intensive training to address the identification and reporting of issues related to continued eligibility for unemployment benefits. For example, Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) staff and Reemployment Opportunity Workshop (ROW) staff are provided specific training on conducting an eligibility review and identifying and referring “able and available” issues.

In line with WIOA, DLLR American Job Center staff assist unemployment insurance claimants on a more direct level than local workforce staff, through prescribed personal interviews and development of individual plans for claimants attending mandatory workshops, like RESEA and ROW. In collaboration with Office of Workforce Development program managers, Unemployment Insurance staff will continue to provide training and technical assistance as needed.

Labor Exchange Administrators in Maryland's American Job Centers have been provided resources to train all American Job Center staff on how to access unemployment insurance programs and staff. This allows for seamless communication across the WIOA system and creates a true one stop experience for customers.

#### **D. Providing State merit staff outreach workers professional development activities to ensure they are able to provide high quality services to both jobseekers and employers.**

Outreach Workers & Professional Development To ensure high quality services to both jobseekers and business, professional development opportunities are currently available and advertised through regular communications from Central Office administration. Under WIOA, through leveraging partnerships, new professional development and training opportunities on topics relevant to all WIOA Partners will be available to staff. To ensure a positive customer experience, when Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers are actively working in the State, DLLR's outreach workers provide monthly reports to the State Monitor Advocate that assist in identifying professional development needs. Maryland's State Monitor advocate is responsible for continuously reviewing state-wide agricultural activities and the provision of labor exchange and training services to employers and employees within agricultural communities.

## **E. Coordinating outreach efforts with NFJP grantees as well as with public and private community service agencies and MSFW groups.**

Coordinating with the National Farm Workers Jobs Program & Community Service Agencies Telamon Corporation, Maryland's WIOA Title I Section 167 National Farm Workers Job Program grantee, Telamon, is co-located with multiple WIOA agencies in the Salisbury American Job Center. The Job Center and Telamon Corporation formalize their relationship via a Memoranda of Understanding and Resource Sharing Agreement, which ensures Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers receive the appropriate level of assistance and identifies how resources will be shared and contributions will be made.

Each spring, DLLR and Telamon Corporation jointly host a pre-season meeting with public and private community service agencies and Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker groups. This meeting allows for the State team to appropriately plan outreach efforts and pathways for communication. It also ensures maximum cooperation and information sharing across agencies that interact with Maryland's farm worker and agricultural employers.

The State Monitor Advocate also seeks coordination with agencies and organizations on the federal, state and local levels that might be able to assist with regular concerns expressed by Maryland's agricultural communities. These include attending meetings with the new Director of United States Citizenship and Immigration Services, Bienvenidos meetings at Salisbury University, and the International Populations Network at Prince George's Community College. DLLR maintains a relationship with the Maryland Farm Bureau, which serves as a voice for Maryland's farm community. Such contacts have assisted the State Monitor Advocate to obtain valuable information about new programs that may result in savings for farmers. One such program that was considered was an energy savings program in cooperation with local electricity providers. This program allows farmers to work with Pepco, Delmarva Maryland, and BGE utility account holders to have contractors audit their energy use, at no charge, and advise them of their options for matching funds to have their equipment replaced, or retro-fitted with energy saving options.

In a team approach, Telamon and DLLR also visit the agricultural employers and migrant and seasonal workers. Telamon provides translation services to allow DLLR to communicate with the MSFWs. DLLR offers job seeker services and referrals to supportive services. Telamon offers food bank access, clothing, heat stress and pesticide training, ESOL training, and referrals to housing. The Lower Shore Workforce Area provides the mobile one-stop to allow the MSFW's to access job opportunities, and other resources available through MWE. Usually when the mobile is used, Telamon, DLLR and Lower Shore staff the mobile and use the mobile for the basis of operation in the the field. The other workforce partners provide literature about their services to the outreach team for distribution to the MSFWs, and are available for referrals.

Finally, as part of our local business service teams, DLLR will seek connections with organization that work with MSFW populations and invite these organization to partner on outreach efforts. In addition, organizations will be invited and encouraged to be part of AJC activities and training to ensure all partners have an awareness of programs available to assist MSFW populations.

## **3. Services provided to farmworkers and agricultural employers through the one-stop delivery system.**

Describe the State agency's proposed strategies for:

**(A) Providing the full range of employment and training services to the agricultural community, both farmworkers and agricultural employers, through the one-stop delivery system. This includes:**

- i. How career and training services required under WIOA Title I will be provided to MSFWs through the one-stop centers;**
- ii. How the State serves agricultural employers and how it intends to improve such services.**

SERVICE PROVIDED TO AGRICULTURAL JOBSEEKERS & EMPLOYERS THROUGH THE WIOA SYSTEM Serving Agricultural

Jobseekers & Businesses under WIOA Both workers and employers in the agricultural field are able to access the same services that are freely available to the public. Each of the State's American Job Centers is equipped with staff who provide a variety of services for both jobseekers and employers. Staff are kept current on available programs and resources mostly through staff meetings, trainings, and continuous information sharing. The full range of services to the agricultural community is provided through Maryland's American Job Center network. The centers and staff provide services to jobseekers such as:

- Job search workshops and resources including internet access
- Reemployment services
- Veterans services
- Distribution of federal, State & local government information
- Career planning and training programs
- Access to labor market information
- Bilingual assistance
- Complaint handling

DLLR raises awareness of available services within the Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker community through oral communication and distributing bilingual brochures specifically designed for this community. Recognizing that many Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers may require English Language Acquisition, brochures provide pictorial representations to ensure the message is effectively received.

Outreach to agricultural employers will be addressed using a number of strategies. The most effective strategy has been through use of the Rural Services Coordinator who provides guidance and technical assistance to local staff and works closely with individual agricultural employers across the state. The Rural Services Coordinator's long-standing relationship with agricultural employers assists the state agency to provide a conduit to additional business services. Maryland has recently hired an additional staff person as a business service staff person. The staff person works closely with Rural Service Coordinator to identify and assist new agricultural employers in the state.

Another current strategy in place is use of Foreign Labor staff from the American Job Centers. Currently, business service staff is assigned the function of collecting wage survey data. This allows business service staff the opportunity to ask additional questions concerning their business needs. The result of the discussion will be used to determine how the American Job Center can provide assistance.

Lastly, Maryland is moving toward a regional business service approach. This strategy creates a team of business professionals that are trained, flexible and articulate concerning all American Job Center programs. The result is a decrease in employee fatigue and a complete resource to our employers. Regional business service staff will also be aware of the supply side of their region in working with agricultural employers as well as the resources available within their region.

## **(B) Marketing the employment service complaint system to farmworkers and other farmworker advocacy groups.**

All services provided by the American Job Centers are available to all customers who utilize the American Job Center sites and the Maryland Workforce Exchange system. There is additional service to Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers as the information is provided them at their places of employment and residences.

Agricultural Employers may utilize the Maryland Workforce Exchange system to advertise their available employment, allowing more prospective employees to apply for agricultural jobs. Raising Awareness of DLLR's Complaint System Biannually, the State Monitor Advocate trains American Job Center staff on the Employment Service Complaint System who, in turn, ensure jobseekers are appropriately aware of the System. The System is available through legal advocacy groups and other farm worker advocacy organizations. Upon request, the State Monitor Advocate speaks at advocacy meetings to highlight the System. Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers are advised of their right to file complaints during outreach visits. There are also posters providing information about specific contacts with whom to file complaints at American Job Centers. Additionally, the outreach workers, as well as the State Monitor Advocate provide information on filing complaints and all are made aware that they do not have to go to an American Job Center to do so. Maryland does not have day-haul facilities. Advocacy groups are made aware of the complaint system at joint meetings.

## **(C) Marketing the Agricultural Recruitment System to agricultural employers and how it intends to improve such publicity.**

DLLR markets the Agricultural Recruitment System to agricultural employers to ensure Maryland meets the regulatory requirements associated with Foreign Labor Certification applications. However, the majority of marketing for American Job Center services is accomplished through personal contact and relationship building with the agricultural community. Additionally, DLLR employs a full-

time Rural Services Coordinator who provides guidance and technical assistance to local staff and works closely with individual agricultural employers across the State

Outreach personnel and business representatives continually look for new opportunities to market the Agricultural Recruitment System. The majority of marketing for American Job Center services is accomplished through personal contact and relationship building with the agricultural community. Marketing the Agricultural Recruitment System: Local agricultural establishments do not use the ARS, because Maryland farmers have found that employees are not seeking agricultural employment.

Moving forward, DLLR will employ regional business services representatives to assist in outreach to Maryland's agricultural community. DLLR is dedicated to this regional business services approach, and will have representatives in place on or before March 2017. Once on board, this team, in concert with field staff already dedicated to this program, will develop an analysis of current practices in outreaching to Maryland's agricultural community and will develop a plan to engage the agricultural community by providing educational opportunities regarding the Agricultural Recruitment System. This plan will be done in concert with already established groups such as the Maryland Farm Bureau or Maryland Department of Agriculture. Such a plan will be completed by December 2017 and will be reviewed annually.

## **4. Other Requirements**

### **(A) Collaboration**

Describe any collaborative agreements the state workforce agency (SWA) has with other MSFW service providers including NFJP grantees and other service providers. Describe how the SWA intends to build upon/increase collaboration with existing partners and in establishing new partners over the next four years (including any approximate timelines for establishing agreements or building upon existing agreements).

OTHER REQUIREMENTS Collaborating with Partners The Salisbury Job Market, Tri-county Council, and Telamon Corporation have a formally executed Memorandum of Understanding which codifies the participation for provision of services to the Agricultural Community in that Local Area. Telamon has annually renewed its partnership with the Job Corps program which provides the majority of pesticide training where needed across the state. The State Monitor Advocate and local staff attend periodic meetings of agencies and partner organizations which are known to provide services to Maryland's agricultural community. It is intended that attendance and participation at such meetings will build upon long-standing relationships and provide opportunities to forge new partnerships to improve service delivery and communicate resources throughout agricultural communities.

### **(B) Review and Public Comment.**

In developing the AOP, the SWA must solicit information and suggestions from NFJP grantees, other appropriate MSFW groups, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations, and other interested organizations. In addition, at least 45 calendar days before submitting its final AOP, the SWA must provide a proposed plan to NFJP grantees, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations, and other organizations expressing an interest and allow at least 30 days for review and comment. The SWA must: 1) Consider any comments received in formulating its final proposed AOP; 2) Inform all commenting parties in writing whether their comments have been incorporated and, if not, the reasons therefore; and 3) Transmit the comments and recommendations received and its responses with the submission of the AOP. The AOP must include a statement confirming NFJP grantees, other appropriate MSFW groups, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations and other interested employer organizations have been given an opportunity to comment on the AOP. Include the list of organizations from which information and suggestions were solicited, any comments received, and responses to those comments.

Review & Public Comment Maryland posted the draft Agricultural Outreach Plan on its website for public review and comment. DLLR also provided a copy of the draft Agricultural Outreach Plan to Telamon Corporation, Maryland's National Farm Worker Jobs Program grantee, and other community partners. DLLR received no comments.

### **(C) Data Assessment.**

Review the previous four years Wagner-Peyser data reports on performance. Note whether the State has been meeting its goals to

provide MSFWs quantitatively proportionate services as compared to non-MSFWs. If it has not met these goals, explain why the State believes such goals were not met and how the State intends to improve its provision of services in order to meet such goals.

Data assessment in Maryland continues to be challenging as the state continuously reports zero MSFWs in the MWE, which makes related quotients and ratios void of meaning. DLLR avows that it is providing Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers quantitatively proportionate and qualitatively equivalent services to the targeted population. To increase the number of customers accessing AJC services, the State is committed to increasing outreach efforts and partnerships developed, especially within areas that MSFWs may live and work. By engaging partners on a more regular basis to develop relationships with businesses and workers, DLLR can increase awareness of programs and services available. Creating partnerships with community based organizations to create a bridge to MSFWs will assist in developing trust among the population.

#### **(D) Assessment of progress**

The plan must include an explanation of what was achieved based on the previous AOP, what was not achieved and an explanation as to why the State believes the goals were not achieved, and how the State intends to remedy the gaps of achievement in the coming year.

Assessment in Progress The goals of Maryland's PY2014 Agricultural Outreach Plan were achieved as they were enumerated. Maryland continues to be challenged by the decline in agriculture and Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers across the State. As stated earlier, while agriculture remains a multi-billion dollar industry within the State, the economic opportunity for the agricultural community continues to decline. This decline requires constant re-evaluation of the resources that can be dedicated to services to the agricultural community. Another concern is the aging population of farmers, farm workers, and staff in Maryland. In spite of these challenges, Maryland believes that it continues to provide exemplary services to its agricultural community.

#### **(E) State Monitor Advocate**

The plan must contain a statement confirming the State Monitor Advocate has reviewed and approved the AOP.

State Monitor Advocate & The Agricultural Outreach Plan The State Monitor Advocate has had the opportunity to review this plan and was instrumental in its data collection and composition. The State Monitor Advocate has approved the Plan.

### **F. Wagner-Peyser Assurances**

The State Plan must include assurances that:

1. The Wagner-Peyser Employment Service is co-located with one-stop centers or a plan and timeline has been developed to comply with this requirement within a reasonable amount of time. (sec 121(e)(3)); Yes
2. The State agency is complying with the requirements under 20 CFR 653.111 (State agency staffing requirements) if the State has significant MSFW one-stop centers; Yes
3. If a State Workforce Development Board, department, or agency administers State laws for vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, that board, department, or agency cooperates with the agency that administers Wagner-Peyser services, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and Youth Programs under Title I; and Yes
4. State agency merit-based public employees provide Wagner-Peyser Act-funded labor exchange activities in accordance with Department of Labor regulations. Yes

### **Program-Specific Requirements for Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Programs**

The State Plan must include a description of the following as it pertains to Adult Education and Literacy programs under Title II, the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA).

## A. Aligning of Content Standards

Describe how the eligible agency will, by July 1, 2016, align its content standards for adult education with State-adopted challenging academic content standards, as adopted under section 1111(b)(1) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (20 U.S.C. 6311(b)(1)).

The Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation (DLLR) has adopted the College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS) Standards for Adults to align with the State K-12 College and Career Readiness Standards. The standards provide a rigorous education based on shared goals and expectations of what all Maryland high school graduates should know and be able to do in order to succeed in post-secondary education and careers. To ensure alignment, DLLR will:

- Conduct an assessment to determine local adult education program needs for full integration of CCRS into their practice.
- Gather data on effective models of statewide implementation.
- Educate local adult education program leadership and instructional staff on the components of CCRS.
- Create and deliver professional development and disseminate best practices for implementation in local programs.
- Provide technical assistance to local adult education programs to determine critical shifts in instruction necessary to align with the CCRS and current high school equivalency assessments.

## B. Local Activities

Describe how the State will, using the considerations specified in section 231(e) of WIOA, fund each eligible provider to establish or operate programs that provide the adult education and literacy activities, including programs that provide such activities concurrently. The Unified or Combined State Plan must include at a minimum the scope, content, and organization of local activities.

### Adult Education and Literacy Activities (Section 203 of WIOA)

- Adult education;
- Literacy;
- Workplace adult education and literacy activities;
- Family literacy activities;
- English language acquisition activities;
- Integrated English literacy and civics education;
- Workforce preparation activities; or
- Integrated education and training that—
  1. Provides adult education and literacy activities, concurrently and contextually with both, workforce preparation activities, and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster, and
  2. Is for the purpose of educational and career advancement.

Workplace Adult Education and Literacy Activities Workplace adult education and literacy activities will be offered by eligible providers in collaboration with an employer or employee organization at a workplace or an off-site location. These programs will be designed to improve the productivity of the workforce:

- Adult education programs will offer workplace literacy instruction in basic skills, GED® preparation, English language skills and Integrated English Literacy/Civics in partnership with businesses, to improve the skills and productivity of workers.
  - Programs will collaborate with local Workforce Investment Boards, American Job Centers and other workforce partners to market workplace literacy to businesses, including through the MWE.
  - Programs may be approved to use a portion of instructional funding for workplace literacy instruction and negotiate payment or in-kind services from the business partner. Workplace education activities are also an allowable activity for Title I incumbent worker training
  - The state will provide professional development/technical assistance in workplace literacy for local adult education programs.
- Family Literacy Activities Family literacy services will assist adults who are parents and family members to acquire the education and skills needed to become full partners in the education of their children. These services will also ensure that these customers attain the educational credentials needed to attain employment and increased economic opportunities for their family.

Family literacy services require instruction in collaboration with an approved family literacy partner program. Services must be provided to families with at least one eligible parent of a child aged birth through 16. This model will continue to address the basic four components of family literacy; however, there will be an emphasis on developing an educated, literate and well-trained workforce. Funds are expected to be used to improve economic opportunities for the family as a whole.

The expectation of local providers will be to move participants closer to achieving the goal of economic self-sufficiency through participation in activities designed to improve academic, critical thinking and digital literacy skills. Additionally, children's activities must be designed, delivered and supported by an approved provider. English Language Acquisition Activities Maryland will award grants to eligible providers for the delivery of English Language instruction which assists adult immigrants and other English language learners to improve reading, writing, speaking and understanding English. Curriculum will be expanded to include basic numeracy and mathematics vocabulary, and to provide transitions to Adult Basic Education classes.

### Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education

Through the competitive application process, Maryland will award section 243 funding grants to eligible providers to carry out Integrated English Literacy and Civics (IELC) instruction. Maryland's adult education population has seen a growth in foreign born students in recent years and a demand for English language instruction that also addresses employment needs. Grants will be available to eligible providers in areas of high immigrant residence to provide specialized curriculum in which English language skills are aligned with Maryland's ESL Content Standards and taught concurrently with instruction on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation, understanding American systems of government, education, healthcare etc. and participation in the workforce. Previous experiences with integrated education and training models demonstrated the importance of workforce preparation for immigrant populations. Integrated instruction that provides a cultural emphasis with focus on understanding the American workplace has assisted students to make a smoother transition to employment. IELC will be offered concurrently with occupational training in a high demand industry leading to potential advancement along a career pathway. Adult education funding will be used to provide the EL/Civics and workforce preparation components. Occupational training will be funded through a partner.

### Workforce Preparation Activities

Maryland will focus resources toward improving the rate at which students' transition from adult education programs to postsecondary education or training and employment. All academic instruction funded through AEFLA will be delivered concurrently with Workforce Preparation activities. State initiatives including implementation of the Integrating Career Awareness curriculum and integrated education and training (IET) pilots demonstrated that students need to master preliminary skills in order to succeed in academic and career training. Contextualized instruction incorporating the concurrently delivery of basic academic skills, critical thinking, and digital literacy and self-management skills in all levels of instruction will assist students to prepare for the rigor of a college curriculum and transition to a work environment. This further develops the career pathways model.

By bridging programming for integrated basic education and training and college transition programming and incorporating workforce preparation components, students will be better prepared for the rigor of a college curriculum and the transition to a work environment.

Local programs will receive professional development and technical assistance to ensure that contextualized workforce preparation activities are included and effectively implemented in curriculum offerings.

### Integrated Education and Training

The Adult Education will continue to support the instructional model that team teaches academic learning concurrently with specific occupational training. This model will be delivered in partnership with organizations that will provide concurrent occupational training in a high-demand industry sector. Early pilot programs demonstrated this model's effectiveness in increasing student retention, and accelerating progress through training. Participants in concurrent training are supported in their first step along a career pathway. Maryland will offer a service approach that provides adult education and literacy activities concurrently and contextually with workforce preparation activities and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster for the purpose of educational and career advancement.

- Maryland's Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (MI-BEST) initiative is based on the renowned Washington State I-BEST model which provides adult literacy and occupational skills instruction concurrently with wrap-around supportive services. The Adult Education program will continue to support this instructional model in partnership with organizations that provide funding for occupational training in a high-demand industry sector. The MI-BEST instructional model supports adult students in their first step along a career pathway.
- Adult Education will connect with GWIB, the Office of Workforce Development, workforce development boards, American Job Centers, state agencies, foundations and educational organizations to explore funding options to expand the MI-BEST model. The Maryland Adult Learning Advisory Council (MALAC) and the Adult Education and Career Pathways Workgroup will serve in an advisory capacity to guide the program in expanding this model to all jurisdictions.
- Professional development and ongoing technical assistance will be provided to local program administrators, teachers and partners on best practices incorporating the experience of the MI-BEST and ACE programs including recruitment, training selection, team teaching, support services, employer participation, outcomes, and data collection.

## Special Rule

Each eligible agency awarding a grant or contract under this section shall not use any funds made available under this title for adult education and literacy activities for the purpose of supporting or providing programs, services, or activities for individuals who are under the age of 16 and are enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under State law, except that such agency may use such funds for such purpose if such programs, services, or activities are related to family literacy activities. In providing family literacy activities under this title, an eligible provider shall attempt to coordinate with programs and services that are not assisted under this title prior to using funds for adult education and literacy activities under this title for activities other than activities for eligible individuals.

## C. Corrections Education and other Education of Institutionalized Individuals

Describe how the State will establish and operate programs under section 225 of WIOA for corrections education and education of other institutionalized individuals, including how it will fund, in accordance with the requirements of Title II, subtitle C, any of the following academic programs for:

- a. Adult education and literacy activities;
- b. Special education, as determined by the eligible agency;
- c. Secondary school credit;
- d. Integrated education and training;
- e. Career pathways;
- f. Concurrent enrollment;
- g. Peer tutoring; and
- h. Transition to re-entry initiatives and other post release services with the goal of reducing recidivism.

Each eligible agency using funds provided under Programs for Corrections Education and Other Institutionalized Individuals to carry out a program for criminal offenders within a correctional institution must give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within 5 years of participation in the program.

CORRECTIONAL EDUCATION Instruction is delivered in 22 state prisons and pre-release centers through the Maryland Correctional Education Program, in partnership with the Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services, and in local detention centers through local adult education grantee programs. Funded programs will deliver academic instruction in adult basic education, adult secondary education and English language acquisition for incarcerated individuals to provide the resources and tools needed for transition to post-secondary education and training opportunities and unsubsidized employment.

Within local detention centers, instruction is focused on improving basic academic skills and preparing for high school equivalency testing and providing the necessary credential for enrolling in post-secondary education or training or entering employment.

Within the State Correctional facilities, inmates with more than 18 months to serve on their sentence are required to take adult education classes if they do not have a high school diploma, unless they are exempt due to a medical, developmental or learning disability. Special education is available for eligible students under the age of 21, supported by an inter-agency partnership.

After earning a high school diploma, a number of transition offerings are available through the support of partner agencies and programs. Offenders are eligible for Correctional Education occupational programs or advanced education through a local partnering college or community college.

Programs are designed to reduce recidivism by supporting incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals' access to career pathways opportunities through innovative approaches that support academic achievement and transition to post-secondary training. Students who have a high school credential may earn college credit at a four year Liberal Arts college or one of three community colleges. Certificates are available in occupations (Desk Top User Specialist, Office Administration and Business Management) aligned with in-demand industry requirements and may be applied toward an Associate's Degree upon release. Correctional Education supports a number of competency-based occupational training programs which award a state or nationally recognized certificate upon completion.

Incarcerated individuals may also participate in internships, pre-apprenticeships and nationally recognized non-union apprenticeships. Maryland's intensive pre-release transition program prepares individuals for life outside of the institution and provides job readiness in collaboration with workforce partners. Representatives from state workforce programs visit exiting ex-offenders and provide services post release to support their transition to employment. The state supports two state of the art

American Job Centers that provide specialized services to this population.

All applicants for sections 225, 231 and 243 funds compete for funds through the same competitive grant process. Applicants have direct and equitable access to apply for grants and funding opportunities are announced in local newspapers and on the DLLR website. Each eligible provider desiring a grant shall submit an application containing information and assurances as described and required in the Request for Proposals (RFP), including a description of how funds awarded will be spent and a description of any cooperative arrangements the eligible provider has with other agencies, institutions, or organizations for the delivery of adult education and literacy activities. Applications are reviewed by a review panel established by DLLR. The panel is composed of individuals with expertise in adult education and literacy representatives from external organizations and DLLR personnel. The written grant proposals are evaluated using the same scoring criteria, and rated and assigned numerical scores. Grants are awarded to eligible providers who are able to demonstrate effectiveness in providing adult education and literacy services and satisfy the 13 considerations detailed in Subtitle C Section 231 (e) and described in their grant proposal. Each of the considerations receives a weighted value in the scoring rubric. All prospective grantees have equal access to grant processes including announcement, technical assistance meeting, application and submission criteria and review process.

## **D. Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education Program**

### **1. Describe how the State will establish and operate Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education programs under Section 243 of WIOA, for English language learners who are adults, including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries.**

Through a competitive application process, Maryland will award grants to eligible providers to carry out a program of integrated English Literacy/Civics instruction. Applicants for funds are required to apply for funding in a competitive process and to meet the same requirements as other WIOA Title II applicants.

Grants will be awarded on a competitive basis to those applicants that best address the following priority areas:

• Workforce participation • The rights and responsibilities of citizenship • Naturalization procedures • Civic participation • American government

Maryland will award funding for Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education through the competitive grant process to providers that propose to serve a significant number of English language learners.

### **2. Describe how the State will fund, in accordance with the requirements of title II, subtitle C, Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education services and how the funds will be used for those services.**

Funds allocated will be specifically used to provide integrated instruction to adult English language learners, including those who may have professional degrees or certifications in their native countries, that will enable them to develop proficiency in the English language and in the skills needed to become effective parents, workers and citizens in the United States. Instruction will include evidence based practices that honor cultural diversity and prepare adults for unsubsidized employment in high demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency.

English language learners will develop the language and academic proficiency to prepare them to access post-secondary education. Selected providers will be funded to support the English language and civics portion of an integrated education and training program in partnership with an organization that will fund the occupational training. Integrated EL/Civics instruction may also be used to provide funding for workplace education programs in partnership with business.

Integrated EL/Civics instruction will be contextualized to include academic and workplace preparation skills that provide English language learners with the skills needed to succeed in post-secondary education and develop an understanding of the American workplace, regional in-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency.

Maryland was recently awarded a Literacy Information and Communication Systems English as a Second Language Pro Technical Assistance grant and will use the opportunity to develop instructional practices that enhance the ability of local jurisdictions to effectively prepare English language learners for careers. The best practices developed in this initiative will be shared with all local

providers.

Ongoing professional development in Integrated English Literacy/Civics and focused technical assistance will be provided to local programs to ensure that effective practices in place that will support the goals of adult English language learners.

Local providers of Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education will be required to include in their applications a plan for the integration of activities and services with workforce development activities delivered in the Local Area. Maryland will uphold the expectation that alignment of activities is achieved through a planning process prior to submission of applications.

## **E. State Leadership**

### **1. Describe how the State will use the funds to carry out the required State Leadership activities under section 223 of WIOA.**

**FUNDING REQUIRED STATE LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES** In an effort to align adult education and literacy activities with other core programs and Maryland's American Job Center Partners, core program representatives will be appointed to the Maryland Adult Advisory Council (MALAC) and the Adult Education and Career Pathways Work Group to build interest, consensus and support for the Adult Education program, provide input on policy development and to create and implement a statewide career pathways system to support the progress of adult learners through an education and employment continuum leading to economic self-sufficiency. Sector partners, including the EARN grantees will update partners on labor market and training needs and guide the development of programs that will prepare workers to fill industry skills gaps. Adult education and workforce programs will coordinate initial assessments of literacy, numeracy and English language skills and selection of testing instruments to facilitate co-enrollment and referrals between programs. Finally, the State and local workforce areas will identify professional development that can be delivered to core partners to promote the development of a statewide career pathways system and build exceptional service delivery systems for customers. Professional Development High quality professional development programs are vital to ensuring that Maryland's adult learners obtain the best instruction possible.

To improve the instruction provided pursuant to local activities required under Section 231(b) of WIOA, including instruction incorporating the essential components of reading instruction as such components relate to adults, instruction related to the specific needs of adult learners and dissemination of information about models and promising practices related to such programs, Maryland's Adult Education programming will:

- Allocate resources to promote the development and implementation of statewide, regional and local training activities for adult education practitioners to improve academic instruction, digital literacy and transitions to post-secondary education and employment
- Conduct an annual statewide needs assessment to provide the State agency with input from the provider network as well as other stakeholders
- Require adult education teachers to receive professional development that will provide them with the tools to meet the new challenges in daily practice including college and career readiness standards for adult education and opportunities to learn more about the careers for which they are preparing their students
- Require administrators of local provider programs receive professional development on the best practices for management and collaboration. Technical Assistance The provision of technical assistance to eligible providers of adult education and literacy activities receiving funds under Title II, including—the development and dissemination of instructional and programmatic practices based on the most rigorous or scientifically valid research available and appropriate, in reading, writing, speaking, mathematics, English language acquisition programs, distance education, and staff training; the role of eligible providers as an American Job Center partner to provide access to employment, education, and training services; and assistance in the use of technology, including for staff training, to eligible providers, especially the use of technology to improve system efficiencies.

The adult education program will develop and maintain repository of information on research-based and best practices for adult literacy instruction and disseminate findings to local programs. It will also:

- Maintain a listserv of adult education providers for disseminating information about adult education
- Communicate regularly through a monthly conference call
- Develop a plan for disseminating information using an online platform of communication and staff development to improve system efficiencies
- Monitoring and Evaluation Monitoring and evaluation is important to ensure the quality of, and the improvement in, adult education and literacy activities and the dissemination of information about models and proven or promising practices within the State. Maryland will ensure the collection and reporting of valid and reliable data consistent with the current state and federal data collection guidelines and requirements through:
  - Maintaining the use of the LACES Management Information System database
  - Providing training and technical assistance to all agencies using the system
  - Conducting annual on-site monitoring of funded adult education program providers
  - Providing feedback

and information on improvement strategies/models • Conducting other activities necessary to ensure compliance with federal and state requirements and to determine the effectiveness of the program.

## **2. Describe how the State will use the funds to carry out permissible State Leadership Activities under section 223 of WIOA, if applicable.**

FUNDING PERMISSABLE STATE LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES Maryland will seek to develop and implement the use of technology applications, translation technology, or distance education, including professional development to support the use of instructional technology. This will be accomplished through:

- Utilizing the distance learning program, Maryland i-Pathways, to prepare students to pass the GED® tests.
- Ensuring that all providers integrate Maryland's Adult Education Technology Standards in their practices.
- Assessing and addressing the need for professional development surrounding the utilization of technology in delivering instruction and teacher training.

Developing content and models for integrated education and training and career pathways is also a priority. In establishing career pathways, Maryland is dedicated to:

- Conducting a pilot program through LINCS for English language learners to develop teaching strategies for integrating education and training using contextualization concepts in teaching.
- Identifying and disseminating a model of best practices for career pathways design and implementation through the Adult Education and Career Pathways Work Group.

Maryland will also work to provide assistance to eligible providers in developing and implementing programs that achieve the objectives of Title II of WIOA and in measuring the progress of those programs in achieving such objectives.

The State is also planning for integrating literacy and English language instruction with occupational skill training, including promoting linkages with employers. This can be accomplished through providing funding for basic skills and GED® preparation and partnering with local workforce programs to conduct MI-BEST programming.

In identifying curriculum frameworks and aligning rigorous content standards that specify what adult learners should know and be able to do in the areas of reading and language arts, mathematics, and English language acquisition; and take into consideration the following:

- State adopted academic standards
- The current adult skills and literacy assessments used in the State
- The primary indicators of performance described in section 116
- Standards and academic requirements for enrollment in non-remedial, for-credit courses in post-secondary educational institutions or institutions of higher education are supported
- Where appropriate, the content of occupational and industry skill standards widely used by business and industry in the State.

Maryland intends to accomplish this provision of WIOA by restructuring English Language Acquisition Content Standards to include integration of language acquisition and with workforce preparedness training. Further, professional development on integration of the College and Career Readiness Standards for adults with instruction for all students should be utilized. Through participation of the state interagency planning initiatives with the WIOA Partners, Maryland's adult education providers will collaborate where possible, and avoid duplicating efforts, in order to maximize the impact of the activities described above.

## **F. Assessing Quality**

Describe how the eligible agency will assess the quality of providers of adult education and literacy activities under title II and take actions to improve such quality, including providing the activities described in section 223(a)(1)(B) of WIOA.

ASSESSING QUALITY Maryland will assess the quality of adult education providers using a combined desk and onsite monitoring approach.

Maryland uses a combined approach of onsite and desk monitoring to assess quality in adult education programming. Each grantee is assigned to an Adult Education Program Specialist whose role is to provide monitoring and technical assistance to the grantees. Grantees analyze their program progress on a quarterly basis and submit quarterly data review reports to the Specialist. The reports include an analysis of data on enrollment, contact hours, student retention, and progress toward meeting performance goals. Specialists review the reports and provide follow up to the grantees. Technical assistance is offered as needed and professional development is recommended where indicated.

All AEFLA funded programs are required to review performance annually, identify any challenges that prevented meeting performance targets, and propose strategies to address these challenges. Proposals are reviewed by State Staff who provide technical assistance and make recommendations for additional strategies and professional development. Low performing programs may be assigned to a mentor from a high performing program.

A Performance Based Funding formula provides a system to incentivize high quality programming using available instructional funding.

The LACES data system captures student demographics, enrollment and student progress and meets the requirements of the National Reporting System. Annual sampling of data from LACES is verified in onsite student records to ensure the validity of data entered at the program level. In the event that errors or inconsistencies are found, programs submit a Corrective Action Plan. Subsequent monitoring and technical assistance from state staff is provided to ensure that the required changes are implemented. Program leadership members work as a team to ensure compliance with the Data Quality Checklist, and meet with staff to review new procedures.

A fiscal monitoring is conducted for all grantees using a risk analysis model. All programs are monitored over a three year cycle; however, those with risk factors are prioritized for immediate review.

State staff regularly meet onsite with key local staff, provide timely technical assistance and ensure that state and federal regulations are adhered to in program practice.

Assessing the quality of professional learning at both the state and local level supports high quality instruction and is essential to the operation of high professional development programs. The AELS office is responsible for implementing, and maintaining standards for professional learning and using standards to assess and evaluate state funded professional development for adult education. The tools that the AELS staff employ to ensure that professional development programming is addressing the targets for improving instruction in the local activities {required under section 231(b)} are based on Guskey's model for Five Critical Levels of Professional Development Evaluation, that include but are not limited to the following: annual needs assessment, state and local evaluation of materials, presentation and objective completion, workgroups for feedback and information in the field, state and local observation (program operation and instruction) and program outcome data. Local programs submit a plan for professional development with their grant application detailing selection criteria, delivery method, target audience and method for evaluation. Documentation of local professional development is submitted and maintained on the state online file sharing system and reviewed by state staff. Documentation for all professional learning activities at the state and local level is maintained to ensure that programs are in compliance with all state required professional development. The State also serves as a resource for information on best practices, program models and uses a variety of methods to disseminate information. Aside from tradition email distribution, AELS has a centralize online repository for programs to access resources and information, as well as a monthly conference call or Webinar to communicate promising practices, activities and initiatives. In evaluating the quality of professional development programs it is important to collect data using a variety of tools both quantitative and qualitative. Feedback from the State delivered foundation trainings and State facilitated sharing sessions for local programs' leadership team members provide data for evaluating the effectiveness of professional development activities.

(1) An emphasis on professional learning will be placed on local adult education providers incorporating the research-based components of phonemic awareness, system phonics, fluency, and reading comprehension. Reading test scores will be analyzed and evaluated at the state and local level to determine the impact, quality and need for changes in professional learning and adjustments will be made according to the results.

(2) Adult learning theory and the needs of adult learners will be the foundation of local adult education instruction. Professional learning activities will be planned and implemented to assist local programs in designing instruction with a basis in Knowles principles of andragogy, the learning needs specific to adult learners: need to be involved in planning and evaluation of instruction, experience as the basis for learning activities, immediate relevance and impact on work and life and problem-centered. Adult learner goal attainment and student education gain will be used to measure if students' involvement in planning and evaluation has been incorporated in the classroom. Additionally those measures will also be used to address the instructors practice of designing instruction that is relevant to the students life and work and based on students life experiences. Classroom observation can also demonstrate whether instructors using student experience as the basis for learning activities and is putting problem-centered instruction into practice. Data collected from observation, student goal attainment and educational gain will be used to analyze need and make changes and improvements future professional learning activities.

(3) Personnel both paid and volunteers will be afforded foundation professional learning activities in accordance with state required topics/subject areas. These activities include but are not limited to, assessment, College and Career Readiness standards, ESL content standards, essential components of reading, and numeracy. Instructors will be prepared in these core areas in order to implement instruction to support student educational gain and goal attainment. Programs and the state will review program data to evaluate the pre/post-test match, as well as student test score gains in reading, math, English language skills to evaluate the quality of the activities, this data will be used for continuous improvement for the foundation professional learning activities.

(4) AELS will disseminate information on promising practices and instructional models to local programs and stakeholders in adult education using a variety of methods. Professional learning sharing sessions, leadership team workgroups, meetings, email, as well as centralized online repository will help programs access current adult education programming and instruction information. All meetings and sharing sessions will be evaluated not only by participant evaluation but also feedback and observation on models or practices that have been implemented as a result of the receiving the information. The results of the evaluation and observations will determine the effectiveness of the dissemination processes, adjustments will be made as necessary to ensure that all relevant information is being distributed efficiently and effectively.

## Certifications

States must provide written and signed certifications that

1. The plan is submitted by the State agency that is eligible to submit the plan. Yes
2. The State agency has authority under State law to perform the functions of the State under the program. Yes
3. The State legally may carry out each provision of the plan. Yes
4. All provisions of the plan are consistent with State law. Yes
5. A State officer, specified by title in the certification, has authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under the plan. Yes
6. The State officer who is submitting the plan, specified by the title in the certification, has authority to submit the plan. Yes
7. The agency that is submitting the plan has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan. Yes
8. The plan is the basis for State operation and administration of the program. Yes

## Certification Regarding Lobbying

Certification for Contracts, Grants, Loans, and Cooperative Agreements

The undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

- (1) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of an agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.
- (2) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions.
- (3) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly. This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

## Statement for Loan Guarantees and Loan Insurance

The undersigned states, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions. Submission of this statement is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required statement shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

Applicant's Organization **Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation**

Full Name of Authorized Representative: **Kelly M. Schulz**

Title of Authorized Representative: **Secretary**

SF LLL Form – Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (only if applicable) (<http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html>). If applicable, please print, sign, and email to OCTAE\_MAT@ed.gov

## Assurances

The State Plan must include assurances that:

1. The eligible agency will expend funds appropriated to carry out title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) only in a manner consistent with fiscal requirements under section 241(a) of WIOA (regarding supplement and not supplant provisions). Yes
2. The eligible agency will ensure that there is at least one eligible provider serving each local area, as defined in section 3(32) of WIOA. Yes
3. The eligible agency will not use any funds made available under title II of WIOA for the purpose of supporting or providing programs, services, or activities for individuals who are not "eligible individuals" within the meaning of section 203(4) of WIOA, unless it is providing programs, services or activities related to family literacy activities, as defined in section 203(9) of WIOA. Yes
4. The Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be delivered in combination with integrated education and training activities; Yes
5. The Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be designed to (1) prepare adults who are English language learners for, and place such adults in, unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency and (2) integrate with the local workforce development system and its functions to carry out the activities of the program; and Yes
6. Using funds made available under title II of WIOA to carry out a program for criminal offenders within a correctional institution, the eligible agency will give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within five years of participation in the program. Yes

## Program-Specific Requirements for Vocational Rehabilitation

The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan\* must include the following descriptions and estimates, as required by section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA:

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\* Sec. 102(b)(D)(iii) of WIOA

### a. Input of State Rehabilitation Council

All agencies, except for those that are independent consumer-controlled commissions, must describe the following:

#### 1. input provided by the State Rehabilitation Council, including input and recommendations on

**the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, recommendations from the Council's report, the review and analysis of consumer satisfaction, and other Council reports that may have been developed as part of the Council's functions;**

The Maryland State Department of Education's Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) is a key component of Maryland's WIOA system. DORS offers programs and services that help students, youth, and adults with significant disabilities achieve their goals of post-secondary education, training, and careers. DORS administers the public Vocational Rehabilitation program through the following branches:

- The Office of Field Services prepares people with disabilities to become employed or assists them in maintaining their employment. Vocational rehabilitation counselors located in offices throughout Maryland provide or arrange for services that may include career counseling, assistive technology, vocational training, and/or job placement assistance. The Office of Field Services also provides Pre-Employment Transition Services to high school students with significant disabilities, to assist them in preparing for a seamless transition from high school to post-secondary education, vocational training, and employment.
  - The Office for Blindness & Vision Services specializes in helping people whose primary disability is blindness or vision loss go to work and remain independent in their homes and communities. The Office for Blindness and Vision Services also provides Pre-Employment Transition Services to high school students with significant visual disabilities. Finally, the office oversees the Maryland Business Enterprise Program for the Blind. This program prepares individuals who are legally blind to operate vending, gift, or food service businesses in public facilities.
  - The Workforce & Technology Center is a comprehensive rehabilitation facility that offers career assessment services, career and skills training, job placement assistance, assistive technology services, Pre-Employment Transition Services, and other medical and support services to consumers who are referred from the Office of Field Services and the Office for Blindness and Vision Services.
- Input and recommendations by the State Rehabilitation Council The Maryland State Rehabilitation Council (MSRC) was established under the 1992 Amendments to the Rehabilitation Act. The Council is made up of individuals who are interested in the success of public Vocational Rehabilitation programs. Maryland State Rehabilitation Council members are appointed by the Governor and include representatives from education, rehabilitation, employment, industry and consumer advocacy groups.

The Council reviews, analyzes, and advises DORS about issues, such as service provision, eligibility, strategic planning, and consumer satisfaction. MSRC members meet quarterly, perform extensive committee work, and help with informal consultation. The MSRC provides year-round formal and informal consultation to DORS, particularly at scheduled quarterly full Council meetings, at committee meetings, and during an annual DORS/MSRC executive planning meeting. Meeting minutes document discussions and recommendations. Additionally, DORS provided members of the MSRC Policy and Planning Committee with the following documents, so that the committee could offer formal recommendations for the agency's strategic planning needs:

- MSRC FY 2015 Annual Report
- DORS FY 2015 Outcomes
- FY 2015 Standards & Indicators
- Consumer satisfaction survey results from the Office of Field Services and the Office for Blindness & Vision Services
- DORS/MSRC 2015 Public Meetings Report

During FY2015, MSRC played an active role in many activities with and in support of DORS. These included the following:

- Advocating for increased awareness of public vocational rehabilitation programs and the Vocational Rehabilitation services portion of the WIOA System outlined in the Maryland Combined State Plan, including educating stakeholders about the impact of the DORS waiting list on people with significant disabilities, pre-employment transition services to students with disabilities, and enhancing collaboration with workforce partners to promote the competitive integrated employment of individuals with significant disabilities
- Facilitating statewide public meetings
- Providing consultation and review for consumer satisfaction surveys
- Providing review and analysis of Client Assistance Program outcomes and issues
- Reviewing and analyzing a DORS employment and retention study
- Contacting members of Maryland's General Assembly regarding the need to maintain state funding to address the needs of underserved populations and DORS staff vacancy rates, and to thank them for their continuing support of the public vocational rehabilitation program
- Actively participating in DORS strategic and annual planning process meetings
- Expressed continued concern in the MSRC Annual Report regarding the lengthy waiting list of DORS consumers with significant disabilities on the waiting list for services
- Participated in the Region 3 State Rehabilitation Councils' Community of Practice, the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation, the National Council of State Agencies for the Blind, and the National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils Recommendations from the Maryland State Rehabilitation Council

The Maryland State Rehabilitation Council takes an active and visible role in how Maryland's public Vocational Rehabilitation program is administered through a variety of activities, including:

- Reviewing, analyzing, and advising DORS regarding performance of its responsibilities and quality of its services
- Ensuring that the needs of individuals with disabilities are identified and addressed by state and federal legislators, service providers, employers and the community
- Collaborating with organizations and other state councils to promote services to underserved and unserved populations
- Developing and reviewing State goals and priorities, and assisting in the preparation of Maryland's annual State Plan for Vocational Rehabilitation.

The Council presented the following recommendations to DORS following the comprehensive 2013 Statewide Needs Assessment:

1. The Council commends DORS for the progress made in developing a comprehensive QA case review process to be implemented no later than July 1, 2014. The Council looks forward to hearing results of the initial "beta" year of implementation. The Council recommends that the agency address the methodology of consumer satisfaction surveys and explore web-based surveys. Consider strategies to expand sample size, reach underrepresented groups, and preserve anonymity. Explore web-based surveys, follow-up phone calls, and other response methods.
2. The Council recommends that DORS develop training for staff to expand knowledge and understanding of disabilities and functional capacities, means to mitigate limitations, such as assistive technology, and impact on employment, as a basis for providing effective career counseling.
3. The Council recommends that DORS continue collaboration with local providers, the Maryland Department of Disabilities, and the Developmental Disabilities Administration at the State and local levels, as related to the Employment First initiative. This should include an exploration of programmatic barriers to success and cross-agency training needs.
4. The Council recognizes the continuing barrier that lack of transportation causes for individuals with disabilities seeking employment statewide. The Council will work with DORS staff to determine the status of federal and state transportation efforts that may improve transportation resources for individuals with disabilities.
5. The Council recommends that DORS continue to explore, identify, and implement innovative practices in job development and placement, including evaluating the effectiveness of the new Business Services Branch.
6. The Council is interested in following the benefits realized through the expansion of services at the Workforce & Technology Center for consumers who are deaf/hard-of-hearing, blind, visually impaired, deaf-blind, and on the Autism spectrum; and recommends that the Workforce & Technology Center/DORS provide periodic updates to the Council on the effectiveness and utilization of these expanded services.
7. The Council recommends that DORS continue efforts to improve the effectiveness of the Agency's website and social media in providing consumer information, public education, outreach, and as a means of allowing stakeholders to provide feedback to the Agency.
8. The Council is supportive of the Agency's three-year strategic plan and annual planning activities.
9. The Council recommends that DORS evaluate the characteristics, including receipt of public benefits, of individuals on the waiting list and determine, within the capacity of the agency and case management system, their outcomes in terms of employment. This is to have a better understanding of the true cost of individuals being on the DORS waiting list.
10. The Council discussed the issue of DORS serving eligible individuals who require specific services or equipment to maintain employment, regardless of DORS' established order of selection and wait list of individuals with disabilities seeking DORS' services. The council discusses the impact of the decision, weighing both the costs and the benefits. The council recommends maintaining current policies until additional information is available regarding the potential costs to the program.

DORS supports these recommendations and continues to be very appreciative of the expertise of the individuals who comprise the Maryland State Rehabilitation Council. Their passion for and commitment to supporting individuals with disabilities is without equal. DORS values their contributions of time and knowledge.

## **2. the Designated State unit's response to the Council's input and recommendations; and**

DORS Responses to the Council's Input and Recommendations 1. DORS looks forward to implementation of the QA case reviews over the next year and will keep the Council apprised of findings and effectiveness of the process and methodology. Additional efforts will be made by DORS in collaboration with the MSRC in addressing the consumer satisfaction survey methodology and tool.

Update 11/24/15- DORS' comprehensive QA case review process was implemented July 1, 2014, and expanded from a 12-month beta period to an 18-month review period. The final district review was completed on November 17, 2015. Data analysis is underway, and a final report will be present in early 2016.

2. DORS agrees that having a clear understanding of the disability, its impact on employment, and ways to lessen the impact of functional limitations is needed in order to provide effective career counseling, and to help consumers select appropriate employment goals. DORS will develop a training series to address specific disabilities and will work with its WIOA Partners to train staff throughout the workforce system through the Maryland WIOA Convening, the WIOA Workgroups and more.

3. DORS looks forward to continuing to collaborate with other agencies, including the WIOA Partners, regarding Employment First. Employment First is an initiative that assures that employment is considered first for individuals with developmental/intellectual disabilities. DORS expects that there will be more progress toward Employment First in Maryland this coming year with new leadership in place at the Maryland Developmental Disabilities Administration.
4. DORS looks forward to working with the Council and its WIOA Partners to determine the current status of transportation initiatives, and will continue its efforts to work with other entities on transportation barriers, and to share information with all staff about transportation resources. DORS recognizes new opportunities may exist to leverage WIOA Partners' ability to provide supportive services to shared customers, and DORS commits to explore these opportunities.
5. DORS has created a new Business Services Branch, including Regional Business Services Representatives. We are eager to determine the effectiveness of the new organizational structure and will advise the Council of their role and progress in helping individuals with significant disabilities in achieving competitive integrated employment. DORS will also ensure its Business Services Branch works collaboratively with its WIOA Partners on the WIOA Business Service Team through communicating often and actively participating in the WIOA Workgroups.
6. DORS will continue to include Workforce and Technology Center staff on the agenda of MSRC committee and full council meetings to update the membership on these innovative and effective practices.
7. DORS has developed new MSRC and agency websites and will continue to update its website and effectively use social media. DORS will look for opportunities to highlight individuals with disabilities in social media and websites of its WIOA Partners.
8. DORS developed a Strategic Plan for 2014-2017, with input of the MSRC. As DORS continues to work closely with its WIOA Partners on implementation through the WIOA Alignment Group and participation on the State's WIOA Work Groups, DORS looks forward to reviewing the Strategic Plan and monitoring outcomes with continued input from the MSRC.
9. DORS will determine what information may be gleaned from the case management system related to waiting list and benefits status, and advise the Council. Through its active participation in the WIOA Alignment Group, the WIOA Jobseeker Advisory Focus Groups (to be planned), and the WIOA Workgroups, DORS will explore ways to better assist individuals with disabilities through the entire workforce system.
10. DORS will elect not to serve eligible individuals, regardless of the established order of selection, who require specific services or equipment to maintain employment. The issue will be reviewed regularly, with WIOA Partners and the MSRC, to determine the need to revise this position.

### **3. the designated State unit's explanations for rejecting any of the Council's input or recommendations.**

The agency does not reject any of the recommendations.

### **b. Request for Waiver of Statewideness**

When requesting a waiver of the statewideness requirement, the designated State unit must identify the types of services to be provided by the program on a non-statewide basis. The waiver request must also include written assurances that:

#### **1. a local public agency will provide the non-Federal share of costs associated with the services to be provided in accordance with the waiver request;**

The Maryland Division of Rehabilitation Services has not requested a waiver of statewideness.

#### **2. the designated State unit will approve each proposed service before it is put into effect; and**

The Maryland Division of Rehabilitation Services has not requested a waiver of statewideness.

### **3. All State plan requirements will apply**

requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan will apply to the services approved under the waiver.

The Maryland Division of Rehabilitation Services has not requested a waiver of statewideness.

### **c. Cooperative Agreements with Agencies Not Carrying Out Activities Under the Statewide Workforce Development System.**

Describe interagency cooperation with and utilization of the services and facilities of agencies and programs that are not carrying out activities through the statewide workforce development system with respect to:

#### **1. Federal, State, and local agencies and programs;**

Cooperation & Federal, State and local agencies and programs While DORS is committed to working collaboratively with its WIOA Partners, it recognizes the importance of maintaining other strong partnerships to provide exceptional customer service to businesses and individuals with disabilities. Cooperation with private and non-profit service agencies, related government agencies, and other professional organizations has long been a cornerstone of public vocational rehabilitation in Maryland. Such collaborations help to overcome the complex and multiple barriers that confront people with disabilities who want to work or stay independent in their communities.

The Division maintains cooperative agreements, memoranda of understanding and membership on Interagency Councils and Local Committees and other collaborative initiatives and projects with agencies and organizations outside the workforce development system. (1) Cooperative Agreements • Department of Health and Mental Hygiene: Behavioral Health Administration – This cooperative agreement, most recently updated effective December 2011, addresses referrals between agencies and specifies shared responsibilities for funding of supported employment, as well as cross-training for staff.

Developmental Disabilities Administration – Maryland State Department of Education, DORS, and the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Developmental Disabilities Administration updated and approved the Cooperative Agreement, Employment Services in October 2013. It focuses on implementation of Employment First in Maryland and addresses referral between agencies and specifies shared responsibilities for funding of supported employment. It also describes cross-training activities.

• Maryland Association of Student and Financial Aid Administrators - This cooperative agreement specifies the process for defining unmet financial need for higher education and the requirements for PELL Grant and scholarship applications. It also outlines the process for sharing information to determine the amount of assistance DORS can provide to a student for tuition and other educational costs. • Workers' Compensation Commission– This agreement describes the referral process and the procedure for submitting rehabilitation plans to the Commission to determine if costs will be covered by an insurer. • Maryland State Department of Education– The Intra-agency Cooperative Agreement on Transitioning specifies areas of cooperation among the Divisions of Student, Family and School Support Services; Special Education/ Early Intervention Services; Career and College Readiness, and Rehabilitation Services specific to transitioning students and youth with disabilities. Memorandum of Understanding (MOUs) • An MOU exists between DORS, the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's Behavioral Health Administration, and the Developmental Disabilities Administration that authorizes the issuance of vouchers for the Maryland Disability Employment Tax Credit. This MOU remains in effect and will be reviewed later this year. Interagency Councils and Local Committees DORS maintains an active presence on numerous statewide interagency councils within and beyond the WIOA workforce system.

Within the WIOA System, DORS actively participates on the following committees and groups: • Governor's Workforce Investment Board Interagency Committee; • Maryland Adult Learning Advisory Council; • All of the State's 9 WIOA Work Groups; and, • The WIOA Alignment Group;

Beyond the WIOA System, DORS regional and field offices, the Workforce & Technology Center, and the Office for Blindness and Vision Services also maintain active working relationships with many local committees and initiatives. Statewide: • Maryland Statewide Independent Living Council • Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council • Maryland Mental Health Advisory Board • Local Coordinating Councils • Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Traumatic Brain Injury Advisory Committee • Interagency Transition Council for Youth with Disabilities Under Executive Order 01.01.2007.13 (Interagency State Plan for Transitioning Students with Disabilities) • The Maryland Coordinating Committee for Human Services Transportation • Department of Health and

Mental Hygiene/Developmental Disabilities Administration, Maryland Department of Disabilities Employment First • The Maryland Library for the Blind & Physically Handicapped Advisory Board • Maryland Special Education State Advisory Committee Other Collaborative Initiatives and Projects DORS collaborates with the Department of Disabilities, a cabinet level agency, and is represented on the following committees/workgroups:

- SUCCESS - post-secondary education for individuals with intellectual disabilities • The annual Americans with Disabilities Act Celebration committee • Quarterly meetings between the Maryland Department of Disabilities Secretary and DORS Director to discuss state and national disability topics, project updates, etc. • DORS supports/collaborates with Maryland Department of Disabilities during legislative session on issues of importance to the disability community.

All committees bring together a variety of Maryland agencies that supply programs and services to individuals with disabilities.

There are also agreements with the Maryland School for the Blind and the Maryland School for the Deaf covering referral procedures, evaluation, individualized planning and follow-up. The Office for Blindness & Vision Services (OBVS) sponsors summer programs with the Maryland School for the Blind at the Workforce & Technology Center. Other collaborations: • Supported Business Enterprise-- DORS works with the Developmental Disabilities Administration and the Behavioral Health Administration to assure that self-employment is a viable career option for individuals with cognitive and psychiatric disabilities. Supported Business Enterprise is a form of self-employment for individuals who, because of their disability, require supports to operate their business. While the consumer must perform a core function of the business, extended service providers support certain activities and related functions to assure successful operation. All businesses operate within an integrated employment setting. • Blind Industries & Services of Maryland --DORS provides state-aided grants support services to individuals with vision loss, including rehabilitation teachers, aids and devices, and Braille production. • Community Colleges—Autism Supports - DORS has agreements with certain Maryland Community Colleges for designated Workforce & Technology Center staff to work collaboratively on their campuses with the college Disability Support Services staff to provide supports required by students with Autism spectrum disabilities. DORS has expanded the Pathways program to include Montgomery College, Howard Community College, and the three campus sites of Community College of Baltimore County. With the expansion of this program, a new position will be added to the staff at WTC, which will offer the opportunity for expansion to other Maryland colleges. • PROMISE Initiative – Maryland was one of six sites selected in September 2013 to participate in the U.S. Department of Education's PROMISE initiative. The goal of the initiative is to improve education and career opportunities for young people receiving Supplemental Security Income through the Social Security administration. It is a partnership of State agencies, including DORS, and private sector disability organizations. Led by the Maryland Department of Disabilities, the initiative involves research to determine the most effective methods to assist young people and their families to become more self-sufficient. • Reaching Independence through Self-Employment (RISE) Program – the RISE Program has been a program of DORS since 1997; with program training, guidance, and support services provided by a Community Rehabilitation Program. Its mission is to present self-employment as a realistic and viable vocational option to individuals with significant disabilities who are eligible for DORS services. RISE Program staff work with individuals and their families, rehabilitation professionals, and the business community to facilitate and encourage the successful launch and operation of consumer-owned businesses.

## **2. State programs carried out under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998;**

- The Maryland Technology Assistance Program (TAP) is a program of the Maryland Department of Disabilities. The mission of the program is to enhance the lives of Marylanders with disabilities and their families by helping support access to assistive technology (AT) devices and services. The program assists people with disabilities in obtaining assistive devices and remaining independent in their communities by providing services, such as information and referral, assistive technology demonstrations, option to borrow assistive technologies for a limited time, assistive technology re-use program, and low interest rate loans for purchase of assistive technology devices. • The Maryland Technology Assistance Program and DORS partner in demonstrating assistive technology devices. •

- DORS serves as a member of the Maryland TAP Advisory Committee. • Maryland TAP and DORS are members of the Governor's Interagency Transition Council for Youth with Disabilities. • DORS partners with Maryland TAP to coordinate and provide Assistive Technology training to DORS staff.

## **3. Programs carried out by the Under Secretary for Rural Development of the United States Department of Agriculture;**

The Maryland Division of Rehabilitation Services does not carry out any programs for Rural Development of the Department of Agriculture.

## **4. Noneducational agencies serving out-of-school youth; and**

DORS provides vocational services to out-of-school youth in collaboration with Community Rehabilitation Programs licensed through the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene for either Developmental Disabilities Administration and/or the Behavioral Health Administration employment services, as well as Community Rehabilitation Programs that are DORS accredited.

## **5. State use contracting programs.**

DORS does not carry out any programs for State use contracting programs.

## **d. Coordination with Education Officials**

Describe:

### **1. DSU's plans**

The designated State unit's plans, policies, and procedures for coordination with education officials to facilitate the transition of students with disabilities from school to the receipt of VR services, including pre-employment transition services, as well as procedures for the timely development and approval of individualized plans for employment for the students.

The Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) considers service provision to high school students with disabilities and their families a high priority. The agency coordinates services with local educational agencies in order to identify diploma and certificate students with disabilities and to provide services designed to help them prepare for and achieve employment and self-sufficiency. Vocational Rehabilitation services and Pre-Employment Transition services are coordinated both at the statewide level, as well by regional directors and supervisors on a local level.

### **2. Information on the formal interagency agreement with the State educational agency with respect to:**

#### **A. consultation and technical assistance to assist educational agencies in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including VR services;**

DORS is an organizational unit of the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE). DORS, therefore, is a signatory and partner in implementation of the Maryland Intra-agency Cooperative Planning Agreement for Secondary Students with Disabilities. This is an agreement with three other cooperating Divisions within MSDE: the Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services; the Division of Career Technology; and the Division of Student, Family, and School Services. The agreement identifies the roles and responsibilities of the cooperating Divisions at the state and local level, including the process for technical assistance and training to schools; assurances for the development and completion of the Individualized Education Program that is coordinated with the development of the Individualized Plan for Employment within 90 days of an Eligibility determination or off-delayed date; financial responsibilities and methods to resolve disputes; and referrals, including those students with disabilities at risk of dropping out, having been suspended or expelled. High School students with disabilities are referred for Vocational Rehabilitation Services during the fall of their next to last year in secondary school. Schools also provide information to families and high school students who are at least 14 years old but less than 22 regarding Pre-Employment Transition Services available through DORS. The Intra-agency Cooperative Planning Agreement for Secondary Students with Disabilities is in the process of being updated to incorporate changes as a result of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014. Local Agreements Upon finalization of the updated Maryland Intra-agency Cooperative Planning Agreement for Secondary Students with Disabilities, DORS and local education agencies will update local cooperative agreements to clarify roles and responsibilities at the local level as appropriate. DORS also maintains local cooperative agreements with the Maryland School for the Blind and the Maryland School for the Deaf regarding appropriate transition services for these under-served student populations. State Law – Counselor Assignment to Secondary Schools; Completion of the Individualized Plan for Employment Maryland State Law requires that DORS assign a counselor to each public secondary school in the state to promote effective transition. It also requires that DORS complete the Individualized Plan for Employment for eligible

students with disabilities within 90 days of an Eligibility determination or off-delayed date. The Governor's Interagency Transition Council for Youth with Disabilities By state law, DORS is a permanent member of the Governor's Interagency Transition Council for Youth with Disabilities, reissued as Executive Order 01.01.2007.13. DORS collaborates with 26 other Council members, including WIOA Partners (Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation, Department of Human Resources, and the Governor's Workforce Investment Board), other State agencies (Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Maryland Technology Assistance Program, Maryland Higher Education Commission, and the Maryland Department of Juvenile Services), representatives of schools, disability advocacy groups, and individuals with disabilities and their families. The purpose of the Council is to promote effective transition services for students with disabilities throughout Maryland. This includes outreach to students and referral to DORS and other agencies that can be of assistance.

## **B. transition planning by personnel of the designated State agency and educational agency that facilitates the development and implementation of their individualized education programs;**

Transition Planning by Personnel of the Designated State Agency and Educational Agency DORS maintains a Staff Specialist for Transition position to lead the following activities: • Coordinate all VR and Pre-Employment Transition Service activities and projects with other WIOA Partners to facilitate access to WIOA Programs, such as the Youth Program, the career pathways system, and apprenticeship programs. Also coordinate with other state agencies, community organizations, public and private facilities, local DORS field offices, and employers. • Collaborate with the DORS Grants Administrator and WIOA Partners in responding to federal and state transition requests for proposals and in implementing cooperative agreements. • Develop, update and monitor transition documents in collaboration with WIOA Partners in responding to federal and state transition requests for proposals and in implementing cooperative agreements. • Provide program information to state level transition personnel and to the local education agencies through in-service training and publications. • Serve as consultative staff for the Governor's Interagency Transition Council for Youth with Disabilities. • Facilitate an intra-agency transition group for counselors who provide transitioning services for the purpose of information sharing and ongoing training.

## **C. roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency, including provisions for determining State lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services;**

DORS maintains a Staff Specialist for Transition position to lead the following activities: • Coordinate all VR and Pre-Employment Transition Service activities and projects with other WIOA Partners to facilitate access to WIOA Programs, such as the Youth Program, the career pathways system, and apprenticeship programs. Also coordinate with other state agencies, community organizations, public and private facilities, local DORS field offices, and employers. • Collaborate with the DORS Grants Administrator and WIOA Partners in responding to federal and state transition requests for proposals and in implementing cooperative agreements. • Develop, update and monitor transition documents in collaboration with WIOA Partners in responding to federal and state transition requests for proposals and in implementing cooperative agreements. • Provide program information to state level transition personnel and to the local education agencies through in-service training and publications. • Serve as consultative staff for the Governor's Interagency Transition Council for Youth with Disabilities. • Facilitate an intra-agency transition group for counselors who provide transitioning services for the purpose of information sharing and ongoing training.

DORS and the other Divisions of MSDE that are partners in the interagency agreement share lead responsibility for the activities under the agreement:

- DORS has the responsibility for the provision of vocational rehabilitation services that support the Individualized Plan for Employment and for Pre-Employment Transition Services for eligible students with disabilities.
- The Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services has the responsibility for the provision of a free and appropriate public education for students with disabilities under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 2004.
- The Division of Career Technology and Adult Learning provides leadership for Career and Technology Education. The Division of Student and School Services has responsibility for administering and supervising federal and State programs to improve the teaching and learning of students who are at risk of academic failure and to help facilitate the emotional, mental, and physical health needs of all students.

At the State level, all collaborating partners jointly share the financial responsibilities of the agreement. For example, partner Divisions provide personnel resources for developing, planning coordinating, and implementing transition services. Additionally, all Divisions fiscally support the Statewide Annual Transition Conference. At the local level, local school systems provide education services at no cost to the students and his/her family. DORS' role in paying for rehabilitation services is determined on an individual basis.

## **D. procedures for outreach to and identification of students with disabilities who need transition services.**

Outreach to and Identification of Students with Disabilities Who Need Transition Services • DORS will facilitate activities to bring state of the art transitioning services to Maryland's students and families, including the following Pre-Employment Transition Services as outlined in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act: job exploration counseling, work-based learning experiences, counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or post-secondary educational programs, workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living, and instruction in self-advocacy. • DORS will continue to explore, develop, and expand new initiatives and methodologies that promote the provision of Pre-Employment Transition Services and successful post-school outcomes, including the following: employment, post-secondary education and training, community participation, independent living, and healthy lifestyles. The initiatives will be accomplished through a variety of cooperative agreements, cooperative funding agreements, special grants, or other innovative means. • DORS will work with local businesses and agencies as needed to expand opportunities for internships, mentoring, and summer employment experiences as a way to prepare students for viable careers. • DORS will identify opportunities to provide information and outreach materials for transitioning students and their families.

DORS managers and counselors develop cooperative working relationships with local education staff. DORS local offices designate and ensure transition counselor liaisons to secondary schools and State operated programs. The DORS manager and counselor will collaborate with the local education staff as follows:

- Establish linkages within each school system with the chairperson of special education, school principal, transition coordinator/teacher guidance counselor, school health personnel, pupil personnel workers, and other school-based personnel
- Provide information sharing activities and cross-training with local school staff, parent information training centers, local workforce investment boards, and other parent groups and student advocacy groups
- Inform students and parents of the aspects of the vocational rehabilitation program and Pre-Employment Transition Services
- Serve in an advisory capacity to facilitate development of appropriate referrals to DORS and provide consultation to local education staff regarding particularly challenging or complex situations prior to and after referral
- Provide feedback and data to schools/referral source, as appropriate, on jointly served students Participate on Local Coordinating Councils to help facilitate to and provision of appropriate adult services for students returning from out-of-state placements.

## **e. Cooperative Agreements with Private Nonprofit Organizations**

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.8(b)(3)). Describe the manner in which the designated State agency establishes cooperative agreements with private non-profit VR service providers.

Cooperative Agreements are developed between DORS and approved Community Rehabilitation Programs in order to assure a mutual understanding of the services to be provided to DORS consumers, referral procedures, expectations, and responsibilities of all parties. The Division utilizes Community Rehabilitation Programs to the maximum extent feasible to provide a wide range of highly skilled vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities around the State. DORS continually assesses the needs of individuals with disabilities and recruits new organizations and expands services with existing ones in order to meet those needs.

### **DORS Accreditations**

Accreditation of Community Rehabilitation Programs is an important factor in the operation of the state vocational rehabilitation program in Maryland. The purpose of these reviews and accreditations is, as follows:

- To improve the quality of services delivered to individuals with disabilities;
- To assist the governing board of the Community Rehabilitation Program and other interested groups in the community to better understand what is required for a sound program; and,
- To serve as a means for self-evaluation by the board, administrator, and staff.

### **The Accreditation Process**

DORS purchases services from Community Rehabilitation Programs that are accredited and operate in compliance with federal regulations and operate in compliance with the regulations for Title I, Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program implementing the

Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1992, Section 361.51.

These Community Rehabilitation Programs must hold accreditations from a national organization such as the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF), or may also be in “deemed” status, having been accredited by other Maryland government agencies, such as the Department of Health & Mental Hygiene. Otherwise, the DORS staff specialist for community rehabilitation programs will perform onsite accreditations every three years. The specialist, along with a local DORS staff person, advises the Community Rehabilitation Programs on what is required and then conducts an onsite review to examine all resource documents, consumer files, and details about programs. As appropriate, Community Rehabilitation Programs staff may attend the overview and exit conferences.

If the program demonstrates its ability to serve DORS consumers, a cooperative agreement is drafted for approval and signature. The agreement outlines roles, responsibilities and fees.

#### Services Purchased by DORS

DORS purchases a wide variety of services that assist people with disabilities to reach independence and employment. These may include pre-employment transition services, assistive technology services, employee development services, non-supported employment job coaching, skills training and specialized services such as those for individuals with acquired brain injury.

DORS may also purchase job-coaching services from CRPs that have supported employment programs approved by the Behavioral Health Administration and the Developmental Disabilities Administration.

DORS will also purchase career assessment services which include community based assessment provided by private vendors who are Certified Vocational Evaluators or Professional Vocational Evaluators.

### **f. Arrangements and Cooperative Agreements for the Provision of Supported Employment Services**

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.8(b)(4)). Describe the designated State agency’s efforts to identify and make arrangements, including entering into cooperative agreements, with other State agencies and other appropriate entities in order to provide supported employment services and extended employment services, as applicable, to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities.

The Division enters into cooperative agreements with the Developmental Disabilities Administration and the Behavioral Health Administration in order to provide for increased interagency cooperation, to ensure the maximum utilization of appropriate programs and resources in the provision of services to individuals with disabilities, to expand and improve services to individuals with significant disabilities, and to maximize the use of comparable benefits.

Formal written agreements set forth terms and conditions under which the Division and another agency or organization will cooperate in the provision of services. These formal interagency cooperative agreements will: Identify policies, practices, and procedures that can be coordinated among the agencies (particularly definitions, standards for eligibility, the joint sharing and use of evaluations and assessments, and procedures for making referrals), identify available resources and define the financial responsibility of each agency for paying for necessary services (consistent with State law) and procedures for resolving disputes between agencies, and include all additional components necessary to ensure meaningful cooperation and coordination. Evidenced Based Supported Employment DORS has implemented a Milestone Payment system for psychiatric rehabilitation programs offering Evidence-Based Supported Employment services. The Milestone Payment system significantly streamlines provision of services for DORS and provider staff by substantially reducing preparation of authorizations and invoices, tracking of hours of services, and simplifying reporting. Employment First DORS is a partner with other State agencies (including WIOA Partner, DLLR) and Community Rehabilitation Programs in implementing Employment First, a national effort to assure that all individuals, including those with significant disabilities, consider employment on a preferred basis in planning for their lives. Employment First, is consistent with DORS’ belief that individuals with disabilities, even the most significant disabilities, can work in meaningful positions in integrated settings when provided with adequate, appropriate supports. Supported employment is appropriate for individuals in Employment First and is the means to assure the best chance for success in employment. Benefits planning is an important part of services for individuals served through Employment First. Governor’s Employment Program for Persons with Acquired Brain Injury The Governor’s Employment Program for Persons with Acquired Brain Injury (ABI Project) provides intensive vocational rehabilitation and long-term supports to individuals with acquired brain injuries. This often includes needed neuropsychological and other assessments, training and supported employment services, and long-term job coaching.

Individuals with acquired brain injuries often do not qualify for long-term supports offered through the Behavioral Health Administration for people with chronic mental illness or the Developmental Disabilities Administration for individuals with

developmental disabilities. This program includes periodic meetings of DORS staff assigned ABI Project cases, DORS managers and staff of CRPs serving individuals with acquired brain injuries and includes a training component.

The ABI Program allows DORS to identify and serve 50 individuals annually with traumatic brain injuries with intensive and continuous service delivery with community partnerships. DORS is working with Community Rehabilitation Programs and other organizations to provide the necessary services, including job coaching, to eligible individuals. A unique aspect of this program is that DORS provides the funding for the long-term job coaching support as part of post-employment services for individuals.

## **g. Coordination with Employers**

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.8(b)(5)). Describe how the designated State unit will work with employers to identify competitive integrated employment and career exploration opportunities in order to facilitate the provision of:

### **1. VR services; and**

Businesses must play a central role in the workforce system and, in coordination with its WIOA Partners, DORS is well-positioned to expand engagement with businesses to provide for quality vocational rehabilitation services and employment outcomes. Like its WIOA Partners, DORS has embraced the dual-customer model and has been building capacities over the last several years for dedicated positions tasked with employer outreach and engagement, as well as technical assistance to vocational rehabilitation counselors and consumers.

DORS has created a Business Relations Branch that includes a Program Manager and seven regional Business Services Representatives. This organizational structure ensures statewide oversight, information sharing and collaboration, and a team approach to employer engagement. The Business Relations Branch works closely with the agency's Workforce and Technology Center Employment Services to coordinate services to employers that enhance services and employment outcomes for consumers. Workforce and Technology Center's training advisory committees engage employers in specific industries to ensure training programs are in line with industry needs and standards, and the Workforce and Technology Center's Work Readiness Programs work with community employers to develop worksites for students. Additionally, the Workforce and Technology Center's Rehabilitation Technology Services is a key component to serving employers through its worksite services.

Currently, DORS Business Services Representatives participate alongside DLLR State and local workforce business services representatives in quarterly statewide training that includes effective skills, strategies and collaboration for business outreach and quality services, business and industry-specific information, and real-time and projected labor market and economic development information. The WIOA Partners and their Business Services Team agree to work together to ensure quality customer service to businesses. In frequent communication, the WIOA Business Services Team will develop a deeper understanding of the services each partner offers, and, after understanding a business's needs, will be able to refer the businesses to the services of fellow team members. The DORS Business Relations Branch and Employment Services at the Workforce and Technology Center meet and participate in quarterly training to enhance team capacities in working with employers to expand employment and work-based learning experiences.

These structures and collaborative activities ensure that DORS is prepared and able to effectively engage with businesses to meet their workforce needs. The activities also provide the best information on careers, business needs, labor market information, and opportunities to jobseekers so that they can make informed choices on their employment goals and access programs and services that lead to successful outcomes. (1) DORS will build relationships with businesses that result in improved career development and competitive-integrated employment outcomes for consumers through the following activities:

- Promoting and marketing the employment of persons with disabilities by networking and developing active partnerships with businesses and business-related organizations, such as Chambers of Commerce, Society of Human Resource Managers, Business Leadership Networks, WIOA Partners in the State's American Job Centers, DLLR, State and local workforce development boards, and statewide and local economic development offices. Regional Business Services Representatives will be visible and available to area businesses and will serve as a single-point-of-contact, leading to improved business relations and access
- Training and technical assistance to employers and WIOA Partners to promote the awareness of the skills and benefits that people with disabilities can bring to their workforce. Types of training include: information on DORS services and training programs, disability awareness, requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act, and federal contractor compliance with Section 503. Group training opportunities for businesses will be offered, as well as individual consultation and need-driven training for specific employers
- Providing consultation on and support to remove disability-related obstacles to employment and the provision of reasonable accommodations for recruitment, work-based learning activities, and on-boarding and retention of employees, including assistive technology and worksite assessments. Business Services Representatives will serve as points of contact for businesses needing

guidance, and the Workforce and Technology Center Rehabilitation Technology Services unit will provide specific and applicable worksite services for consumers and employers • Providing information and resources on hiring incentives, including tax credits and on-the-job training wage reimbursements. Business Services Representatives will provide technical assistance to businesses in completing any required forms to access incentives • Facilitating and coordinating recruitment activities for business partners who are interested in hiring DORS consumers, including advertisement, pre-screening, and interview preparation of consumer applicants, providing interview venues, referral and follow-up. Job openings and recruitment activities will be shared via email with counselors, consumers, and Community Rehabilitation Programs, and jobs will be posted and tracked in the AWARE Employer module • Collaborating with WIOA Partners, including DLLR business services representatives, and economic development partners to leverage business contacts, share resources and expertise, and coordinate services that are beneficial to businesses and promote the employment of individuals with disabilities; • Coordinating with the WIOA Business Services Team and American Job Centers in recruitment events and job fairs, including recruiting businesses and facilitating the inclusion of DORS consumers in the talent pool • Engaging with businesses interested in hiring people with disabilities through VR National Employment Team (NET) connections and activities. This includes NET conference calls, webinars and events with business partners and facilitating the inclusion of Maryland consumers in the national Talent Acquisition Portal • Partnering with Community Rehabilitation Programs to facilitate communication and collaboration among business services representatives and employment specialists in sharing business contacts, job openings, and strategies on job placement for consumers; this includes expansion of regional Job Placement Networks • Providing business and industry-specific career information and training sessions for consumers; • Developing and monitoring of work-based learning and resume-building opportunities, such as internships, job shadowing, disability employment awareness month activities, volunteering and on-the-job training, including expanding programs already in place, such as the Governor's QUEST Internship Program, and the federal agency vocational rehabilitation internship programs • Promoting the federal Workforce Recruitment Program to businesses and consumers • Engaging businesses in Training Program Advisory Committees at DORS' Workforce and Technology Center to ensure training programs meet business and industry needs and standards and to facilitate work-based learning and employment opportunities • Coordinating with businesses to develop community worksites for students in Workforce and Technology Center's Work Readiness 2 Program. Students spend a portion of their day during the six-week program at a business worksite learning and performing job tasks • Developing customized training programs for DORS consumers based on business-specific workforce needs • Collaborating with strategic partners, such as the Maryland Department of Disabilities, colleges and universities, and federal, state and local governments to connect employers and consumers • Supporting and promoting state industry-led workforce training initiatives of the WIOA system, such as apprenticeship programs and Maryland's EARN program to DORS consumers • Connecting DORS consumers with businesses and employment opportunities through the Maryland Workforce Exchange.

DORS Business Services Representatives will provide technical assistance to both counselors and consumers related to job readiness, career information, labor market analysis, and real-time and projected employment opportunities gleaned through active engagement with businesses, business-related organizations, and WIOA Partners.

## **2. transition services, including pre-employment transition services, for students and youth with disabilities.**

- Awareness opportunities on careers, industries, labor market information, and workforce needs, including workshops or other training that includes employer speakers and presentations, career fairs, and workplace tours; • Preparation activities that teach workplace skills, job readiness, interview skills and practice, and self-advocacy in application and employment processes; • Exploration and skill-building opportunities to include job shadowing and mentoring, volunteering, internships, on-the-job training, and employment; • Development and coordination of pre-employment transitioning programs through community colleges, schools, Community Rehabilitation Programs, and American Job Centers; • Expansion of current internship programs, such as QUEST, to include students and transitioning youth; and, • Promotion of summer youth employment programs to businesses and students.

## **h. Interagency Cooperation**

Describe how the designated State unit will collaborate with the State agency responsible for administering each of the following programs to develop opportunities for competitive integrated employment, to the greatest extent practicable:

### **1. the State Medicaid plan under title XIX of the Social Security Act;**

DORS will work with the Maryland Medicaid agency toward establishing a cooperative agreement, as outlined in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. DORS and the State Medicaid agency will collaborate in developing strategies to maximize resources and develop opportunities for competitive integrated employment for individuals with disabilities.

## **2. the State agency responsible for providing services for individuals with developmental disabilities; and**

DORS has entered into a cooperative agreement with the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA), to provide for increased interagency cooperation, to ensure the maximum utilization of appropriate programs and resources in the provision of services to individuals with disabilities, to expand and improve services to individuals with significant disabilities, and to maximize the use of comparable benefits. The agreement sets forth terms and conditions under which DORS and DDA will cooperate in the provision of services. The formal interagency cooperative agreement identifies policies, practices, and procedures that are coordinated between DORS and DDA (particularly definitions, standards for eligibility, the joint sharing and use of evaluations and assessments, and procedures for making referrals). It also identifies available resources and defines the financial responsibility of each agency for paying for necessary services, consistent with State law and procedures for resolving disputes between agencies, and includes all additional components necessary to ensure meaningful cooperation and coordination.

DORS and DDA updated and approved the Cooperative Agreement, Employment Services, in October 2013. The agreement focuses on the implementation of Employment First in Maryland. It addresses referral between agencies, specifies shared responsibilities for funding of supported employment, and describes cross-training activities.

## **3. the State agency responsible for providing mental health services.**

DORS has also entered into a cooperative agreement with the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Behavioral Health Administration. The cooperative agreement, most recently updated effective December 2011, addresses referrals between agencies and specifies shared responsibilities for funding of supported employment, as well as cross-training for staff.

## **i. Comprehensive System of Personnel Development; Data System on Personnel and Personnel Development**

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.10)). Describe the designated State agency's procedures and activities to establish and maintain a comprehensive system of personnel development designed to ensure an adequate supply of qualified State rehabilitation professional and paraprofessional personnel for the designated State unit, including the following:

### **1. Data System on Personnel and Personnel Development**

#### **A. Qualified Personnel Needs.**

Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on qualified personnel needs with respect to:

i. the number of personnel who are employed by the State agency in the provision of VR services in relation to the number of individuals served, broken down by personnel category;

DORS has established policies and procedures for a Comprehensive System of Personnel Development, which ensures that all personnel:

- Are well qualified
- Regularly take part in staff development
- Participate in performance-based evaluation systems
- Meet required licensing/certification standards

Training, education, and developmental activities ensure appropriately skilled staff, with special emphasis given to rehabilitation technology, employer services, transition and disability-specific (e.g., blindness) skills. This system strives to fill vacancies with well-qualified and culturally diverse applicants.

As part of the Maryland State Department of Education, DORS is required to adhere to personnel development policies and procedures contained in 34 CFR 300.15, 34 CFR 300-383, 20. U.S.C. 1413 (A) (3) and in the Code of Maryland Regulations 13 A., 05.01.03G.

(1) Data System on Personnel and Personnel Development. (A) Qualified Personnel Needs.

DORS has a data system to annually obtain information on personnel and personnel development, as follows: • The number of personnel who are employed by the state agency in the provision of VR services in relation to the number of individuals served, broken down by personnel category. By December 31 of each year DORS will: 1. Use the RSA A2 Report of September 30 to determine the number of DORS positions in provision of VR services (total number of DORS positions minus total number of Disability Determination Services positions). 2. Determine the number of positions in the following categories: a. Rehabilitation Counselors; b. Administrative Staff; c. Staff Supporting Counselor Activities; and, d. Other. 3. Determine the number of individuals served effective September 30 from the AWARE case management system.

• The number of personnel currently needed by the state agency to provide Vocational Rehabilitation services, broken down by personnel category; Using the MSDE Personnel Report of September 30, DORS will analyze vacancy rate and vacancies in the specific categories. DORS will also consider total number of staff needed based on waiting list and other factors.

• Projections of vacancies in personnel, broken down by personnel category, needed by the state agency to provide Vocational Rehabilitation services in the state in 5 years based on projections of the number of individuals to be served, including individuals with significant disabilities, the number of personnel expected to retire or leave the field, and other relevant factors. • Ascertain turnover rate for most recent federal fiscal year; and,

ii. the number of personnel currently needed by the State agency to provide VR services, broken down by personnel category; and

The cart below shows the number of personnel who were employed by DORS in the provision of VR services in relation to the number of individuals to be served, which is expect to exceed 25,000 in FFY 2017.

Job Title	Current positions	Current vacancies	Projected Vacancies over next 5 years
Rehabilitation Counselors	174	15	75
Administrative Staff	64	2	10
Staff Supporting Counselor Activities	143	16	80
Other	9	1	5

iii. projections of the number of personnel, broken down by personnel category, who will be needed by the State agency to provide VR services in 5 years based on projections of the number of individuals to be served, including individuals with significant disabilities, the number of personnel expected to retire or leave the field, and other relevant factors.

See chart in pervious section that also projects vacancies over the next 5 years.

## B. Personnel Development

Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on personnel development with respect to:

i. a list of the institutions of higher education in the State that are preparing VR professionals, by type of program;

Following is a description of DORS' system for collecting and analyzing data on personnel development on an annual basis:

- Compile a list of the institutions of higher education in the state that are preparing Vocational Rehabilitation professionals, by type of program
- Compile a list of programs in Maryland preparing Vocational Rehabilitation staff at the bachelor's, master's, and certificate level
- Determine the number of students enrolled at each of those institutions, broken down by type of program
- Determine the number of students who graduated during the prior year from each institution with certification or licensure, or with the credentials for certification or licensure, broken down by the personnel category for which they have received, or have the credentials to receive, certification or licensure. See chart below.

Institution	Location	Programs
		• Undergraduate degree in Rehabilitation Counseling;

Coppin State University (Historically Black Institution)	Baltimore, Maryland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling;</li> <li>• Certificate Program in Assistive Technology;</li> </ul> Post-Master Certificate Program in Professional Counselor Licensure.
The George Washington University	Washington, DC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling (online &amp; on-site);</li> <li>• Master's degree in Vocational Evaluation;</li> <li>• Master's degree in Secondary Special Education and Transition Services;</li> <li>• Certificate program in Job Development/Placement;</li> </ul> Certificate program in Transition Special Education.
The University of the District of Columbia	Washington, DC	Master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling (new program)
University of Maryland Eastern Shore	Princess Anne, Maryland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undergraduate degree in Rehabilitation Counseling;</li> </ul> Master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling

ii. the number of students enrolled at each of those institutions, broken down by type of program; and

At the conclusion of each academic year, DORS will contact coordinators of programs at Maryland institutions of higher education to obtain information about the following: • The number of students enrolled in each type of program • The number of employees sponsored by DORS or the US Department of Education, Rehabilitation Services Administration • The number of employees sponsored by DORS or the Rehabilitation Services Administration who have graduated • The number who have graduated • The number who have graduated with certification or licensure or credentials required to achieve certification/licensure.

The chart below provides Maryland university data as of August 2015.

University of MD: Eastern Shore

Name of Degree or Program	Total Number of Students Enrolled	Number of DORS Employees Sponsored by DORS and/or RSA	Total Number of Graduates	Number of DORS Employees who Graduated and were Sponsored by DORS/RSA
Bachelor's Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling	138	0	20	0
Master's Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling	35	0	11	0
Bachelor's Degree in Rehabilitation Psychology	100	0	04	0

Coppin State University

Name of Degree or Program	Total Number of Students Enrolled	Number of DORS Employees Sponsored by DORS and/or RSA	Total Number of Graduates	Number of DORS Employees who Graduated and were Sponsored by DORS/RSA
Bachelor's Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling	40	0	12	0
Master's Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling	105	2	20	0
Post-Master's Certificate in Professional Counselor Licensure	50	0	15	n/a
Certificate Programs in: Assistive Technology, Vocational Assessment, Job Placement/Development	0	0	0	n/a

The George Washington University

Name of Degree or Program	Total Number	Number of DORS Employees	Total Number of	Number of DORS Employees who Graduated
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	Students Enrolled	Sponsored by DORS and/or RSA	Graduates	and were Sponsored by DORS/RSA
Master's Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling	27	1	5	1
Certificate in Job Development and Job Placement	7	0	7	0

One (1) DORS Counselor graduated in 2015.

University of D.C

Name of Degree or Program	Total Number of Students Enrolled	Number of DORS Employees sponsored by DORS and/or RSA	Total Number of Graduates.	Number of DORS Employees who Graduated and were Sponsored by DORS/RSA
M.A. in Rehab Counseling	19	0	4	0

iii. the number of students who graduated during the prior year from each of these institutions with certification or licensure, or with the credentials for certification or licensure, broken down by the personnel category for which they have received, or have the credentials to receive, certification or licensure.

At the conclusion of each academic year, DORS will contact coordinators of programs at Maryland institutions of higher education to obtain information about the following: • The number of students enrolled in each type of program • The number of employees sponsored by DORS or the US Department of Education, Rehabilitation Services Administration • The number of employees sponsored by DORS or the Rehabilitation Services Administration who have graduated • The number who have graduated • The number who have graduated with certification or licensure or credentials required to achieve certification/licensure.

DORS staff will then determine personnel category of graduates who have certification, licensure, or credentials to achieve certification/licensure.

ANNUAL ANALYSIS/REPORT 1. Compile data; 2. Analyze information compared to previous years and determine trends; 3. Based on data and trends, determine implications for rehabilitation services for individuals with disabilities in Maryland; and, 4. No later than December 31, prepare a report of findings to include recommendations in Division planning and other activities, as appropriate.

The chart in the previous section provides Maryland university data as of August 2015. Enrollment and graduation data for all DORS employees relates to Rehabilitation Counselors.

## 2. Plan for Recruitment, Preparation and Retention of Qualified Personnel

Describe the development and implementation of a plan to address the current and projected needs for qualified personnel including, the coordination and facilitation of efforts between the designated State unit and institutions of higher education and professional associations to recruit, prepare, and retain personnel who are qualified, including personnel from minority backgrounds and personnel who are individuals with disabilities.

Plan for Recruitment, Preparation and Retention of Qualified Personnel • Annually take the information and recommendations from the Data System described above regarding current and projected needs for personnel; • Based on findings, design a recruitment plan for the upcoming year in collaboration with colleges and universities, and the Maryland Rehabilitation Association; and, • Update the Plan on an annual basis, as needed.

Colleges/Universities in Maryland with Rehabilitation Counseling Programs: Institution Location Programs Coppin State University (Historically Black Institution) Baltimore, Maryland • Undergraduate degree in Rehabilitation Counseling; • Master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling; • Certificate Program in Assistive Technology; • Post-Master Certificate Program in Professional Counselor Licensure. The George Washington University Washington, DC • Masters degree in Rehabilitation Counseling (online & on-site); • Master's degree in Vocational Evaluation; • Master's degree in Secondary Special Education and Transition Services; • Certificate program in Job Development/Placement; • Certificate program in Transition Special Education. The University of the District of Columbia Washington, DC • Master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling (new program) University of Maryland College Park College Park, Maryland • No longer offers any VR related programs. University of Maryland Eastern Shore Princess Anne, Maryland • Undergraduate degree in Rehabilitation Counseling; • Master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling

The plan may include the following:

- Active membership on advisory boards of colleges/universities with programs in Rehabilitation Counseling
- Provision of job shadowing opportunities for Masters level students in their first year
- Provision of internship opportunities in the comprehensive rehabilitation facility and field offices;
- Staff presentations to students and classes about the public rehabilitation program
- Collaboration with the Maryland Rehabilitation Association training committee to provide on-going in-service training opportunities to current and prospective staff
- Maintain effective partnership with historically black institutions to assure sufficient number of applicants for state agency job vacancies, so that the workforce reflects the composition of the State
- To support retention of staff and succession planning, collaborate with university, professional association and the National Rehabilitation Leadership Institute partners to provide on-going mentoring and leadership activities.

### **3. Personnel Standards**

Describe the State agency's policies and procedures for the establishment and maintenance of personnel standards consistent with section 101(a)(7)(B) and 34 CFR 361.18(c) to ensure that designated State unit professional and paraprofessional personnel are adequately trained and prepared, including:

#### **A. standards that are consistent with any national or State-approved or -recognized certification, licensing, registration, or other comparable requirements that apply to the profession or discipline in which such personnel are providing VR services; and**

DORS has policies and procedures in place related to personnel standards to ensure that designated state unit professional and paraprofessional personnel are adequately trained and prepared, including:

- Standards for hiring vocational rehabilitation specialists/rehabilitation counselors are consistent with standards in Maryland law, Labor and Employment Article which specify that rehabilitation counselors “have a bachelor’s degree from an accredited institution in rehabilitation counseling, human services, psychology, or a related field with at least 1 year of work experience in a human services occupation.” §9-6A-09. DORS considers related fields to include rehabilitation - career assessment, rehabilitation - employer services, education, deaf education, social work, psychology, human services, blind and vision services, employment/career counseling, and community counseling.
- Specific time period by which all state unit personnel will meet the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development standard: For 2015, 100 percent of DORS VR specialists/rehabilitation counselors met the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development standard of a bachelor’s degree and a year of experience. No one is hired for such positions with less than a bachelor’s degree.
- Standards for achievement of journeyman counselor status include a master’s degree. DORS requires that vocational rehabilitation specialists considered for promotion to rehabilitation technical specialist (the highest level of rehabilitation counseling) have a master’s degree in rehabilitation counseling or a closely related field, which may include rehabilitation - career assessment, rehabilitation - employer services, education, deaf education, social work, psychology, human services, blind and vision services, employment/career counseling, and community counseling. DORS provides technical assistance in career development for staff, and facilitates staff application for Rehabilitation Services Administration scholarships and also provides tuition reimbursement to support staff in achieving required credentials. These education and experience requirements ensure that personnel have current understanding of the labor force and the needs of individuals with disabilities.
- DORS encourages and supports through reimbursement of initial certification fees, achievement of Certified Rehabilitation Counselor certification, but does not require it.
- Paraprofessional personnel must meet standards of their specific position in the classified service according to position descriptions developed and updated by the Maryland State Department of Education Personnel Office and the Maryland Department of Personnel.

#### **B. the establishment and maintenance of education and experience requirements, in accordance with section 101(a)(7)(B)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act, to ensure that the personnel have a 21st century understanding of the evolving labor force and the needs of individuals with disabilities.**

DORS has policies and procedures in place related to personnel standards to ensure that designated state unit professional and paraprofessional personnel are adequately trained and prepared, and that they have an understanding of the labor force and the needs of individuals with disabilities.

Standards for hiring vocational rehabilitation specialists/rehabilitation counselors are consistent with standards in Maryland law, Labor and Employment Article which specify that rehabilitation counselors “have a bachelor’s degree from an accredited institution in rehabilitation counseling, human services, psychology, or a related field with at least 1 year of work experience in a human services

occupation.” §9-6A-09. DORS considers related fields to include rehabilitation - career assessment, rehabilitation - employer services, education, deaf education, social work, psychology, human services, blind and vision services, employment/career counseling, and community counseling.

Specific time period by which all state unit personnel will meet the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development standard: For 2014, 100 percent of DORS VR specialists/rehabilitation counselors met the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development standard of a bachelor’s degree and a year of experience. No one is hired for such positions with less than a bachelor’s degree.

Standards for achievement of journeyman counselor status include a master’s degree. DORS requires that vocational rehabilitation specialists considered for promotion to rehabilitation technical specialist (the highest level of rehabilitation counseling) have a master’s degree in rehabilitation counseling or a closely related field, which may include rehabilitation - career assessment, rehabilitation - employer services, education, deaf education, social work, psychology, human services, blind and vision services, employment/career counseling, and community counseling. DORS provides technical assistance in career development for staff, and facilitates staff application for Rehabilitation Services Administration scholarships and also provides tuition reimbursement to support staff in achieving required credentials. These education and experience requirements ensure that personnel have current understanding of the labor force and the needs of individuals with disabilities.

DORS encourages and supports through reimbursement of initial certification fees, achievement of Certified Rehabilitation Counselor certification, but does not require it.

Paraprofessional personnel must meet standards of their specific position in the classified service according to position descriptions developed and updated by the Maryland State Department of Education Personnel Office and the Maryland Department of Personnel.

#### **4. Staff Development.**

Describe the State agency’s policies, procedures, and activities to ensure that, consistent with section 101(a)(7)(C) of the Rehabilitation Act, all personnel employed by the designated State unit receive appropriate and adequate training in terms of:

##### **A. System of staff development**

a system of staff development for professionals and paraprofessionals within the designated State unit, particularly with respect to assessment, vocational counseling, job placement, and rehabilitation technology, including training implemented in coordination with entities carrying out State programs under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998; and

The Division maintains a system of staff development for staff professionals and paraprofessionals that includes the identification of training needs, developing policies and procedures, and conducting training activities. Training needs are identified based upon results of a variety of assessment instruments and methods which include: (1) the organizational Planning Process in which training areas are determined by the initiatives identified in the Division’s five year Strategic Plan, the Annual Program Plan, and the Maryland WIOA State Plan; (2) DORS Performance Appraisal, which allows each professional employee and the employee’s supervisor to identify on a semi-annual basis training needs and to develop a plan to assist the employee to meet the essential functions of their position as reflected in their position description. These needs are shared with the Staff Development Specialist and training needs are prioritized, developed, implemented, and/or coordinated based on the results of the information; (3) Program Evaluation: Areas of need are identified by the DORS program evaluator, through the case review process and the RSA 107 review; (4) The triennial comprehensive assessment of the needs of individuals with disabilities, included as Attachment 4.11 (a); (5) Division’s Policy Review Committee, the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC), and annual public meetings provide feedback and a continuous evaluation component identifying needs which can be addressed and/or alleviated by training which are submitted to the Staff Development Office for appropriate action; (6) Individual Staff Training Needs Survey: A training needs assessment questionnaire is distributed to all staff annually. The results are tabulated and categorized to prepare for individual and/or group training programs.

##### **Training Activities**

The Staff Development program identifies training needs from surveys and sources noted above, and it develops and provides training to professional and paraprofessional staff through quarterly, annual, and customized training activities, which include the following:

- Orientation and training on fundamental rehabilitation process and procedures is provided to all new staff through Getting Connected, the Supervisor's Guide to training new staff through the Divisions, and the Quality Rehabilitation Training program provided to all new staff;
- Training for special populations is provided including: blindness and vision services, deaf and hard of hearing services, services for individuals with acquired brain injury, individuals on the autism spectrum, transitioning youth, and psychiatric rehabilitation throughout the year;
- Training in career assessment services is offered semi-annually;
- Rehabilitation technology training is offered throughout the year on a variety of assistive technology and worksite accommodation issues. When possible, these Assistive Technology trainings are coordinated with the MD Technology Assistance program;
- Statewide prescriptive training on a variety of topics is delivered to all counselors, including career counseling, employer services, ethics, job placement, case note/case documentation training, Americans with Disabilities Act training, autism spectrum disorders;
- Staff participate in the annual statewide training conference sponsored by the DORS and the Maryland Rehabilitation Association;
- New supervisors training and ongoing training activities for supervisors and Division administrators are provided during semi-annual statewide supervisors meetings. Staff managers participate in management and leadership training through vendors;
- Training is provided on topics specific to the implementation of WIOA, such as Pre-Employment Transition Services and Sub-Minimum Wage requirements; and,
- Paraprofessionals participate in statewide prescriptive training throughout the year with their units, as well as an annual training activity customized to meet the needs of staff and to address agency priorities.

The Staff Development office maintains a data base of all training activities attended by Division professional and paraprofessional staff, according to the individual staff member, unit, and Office.

## **B. Acquisition and dissemination of significant knowledge**

procedures for the acquisition and dissemination of significant knowledge from research and other sources to designated State unit professionals and paraprofessionals.

Acquisition and Dissemination of Knowledge The Division ensures that professional and paraprofessional staff receive significant knowledge from research and other sources by keeping abreast of the latest information on disability issues, legislation, and current topics and training on rehabilitation. Information, including WIOA implementation policy and procedures, will continue to be disseminated to staff in a variety of ways including the following:

- Posting information to staff on the Division's InDORS intranet and public website: [www.dors.maryland.gov](http://www.dors.maryland.gov)
- Disseminating email and agency program directives, administrative instructions, and information bulletins;
- Developing agency policy and procedures based on federal and state law and regulation, as needed;
- Revising agency policy and procedures manuals, as needed
- Providing staff training on new policy and policy and procedural updates
- Providing staff training, by DORS and WIOA Partners, on a variety of current topics
- Attending meetings, conferences, and workshops, including the Maryland WIOA Convening, Maryland WIOA Work Group meeting, and WIOA Partner training
- Posting training resources and archive presentations on the DORS website and intranet.

## **5. Personnel to Address Individual Communication Needs**

Describe how the designated State unit has personnel or obtains the services of other individuals who are able to communicate in appropriate modes of communication with or in the native language of applicants or eligible individuals who have limited English speaking ability.

Meeting the needs of individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or deaf/blind DORS has personnel skilled in sign language who are assigned to provide services to consumers who are deaf and hard of hearing and deaf/blind who require such communication. DORS has TTYs in offices and has installed video phones within the office locations of our rehabilitation counselors for the deaf (RCDs). DORS hires approved interpreters, as needed, to assure that consumers have access to the full range of rehabilitation services they may need. DORS supports attendance of consumers at institutions specializing in services for the deaf, as appropriate.

Meeting the needs of individuals who are blind or vision impaired DORS has a dedicated office, the Office for Blindness & Vision Services, which has counselors who have specialized caseloads working with individuals who are blind, visually impaired, or deaf blind. These staff participate in at least quarterly training on topics specific to blindness and vision services, assistive technology, job development, career counseling, and participate in other Division sponsored training with all staff. DORS collaborates with its partners in the provision of training including the National Federation of the Blind (NFB), the American Foundation for the Blind (AFB), Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (AER), and Helen Keller National Center (HKNC). DORS provides assistive technology, as appropriate and required, for individuals who are blind or vision impaired. DORS provides all information for consumers in the requested alternate format of the individual. DORS website and intranet are fully accessible to users of screen readers. Meeting the needs of individual with limited English DORS provides interpreter and translation services to consumers through the state contract for such services and through staff with skills in languages other than English. A DORS workgroup addresses a multicultural initiative, which includes identification of staff with language skills in addition to English, enhancing cultural competencies of staff, identification of community resources, and provision of public information and agency forms in alternate languages. The Division includes periodic in-service training opportunities on cultural proficiency.

## **6. Coordination of Personnel Development Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act**

As appropriate, describe the procedures and activities to coordinate the designated State unit's comprehensive system of personnel development with personnel development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

The Division has personnel who have specialized caseloads serving transitioning youth. These staff participate in quarterly training activities on current transition topics. Staff are also encouraged to participate in ongoing professional development through participation in a variety of workshops, conferences, and in service training opportunities that are disseminated via email to all staff and posted on the Divisions InDORS intranet. The Division also co- sponsors and coordinates an annual transition conference that is attended by over 500 staff, education partners, stakeholders, parents, and consumers. Staff are also encouraged to participate on WIOA Partner trainings and in other activities, such as the George Washington University's Master's level 12 credit online transition certificate program. Examples of cross-training with secondary school personnel include the following:

- Training in evidence-based transition practices for Local Education Agency staff and DORS staff provided by TransCen, Inc., as part of the Maryland Seamless Transition Collaborative
- Training on Autism Spectrum disorders provided by DORS in partnership with Pathfinders for Autism and the Maryland Rehabilitation Association. The Workforce & Technology Center supervisor of Autism Services is a certified Autism Specialist and has provided training to Workforce & Technology Center staff, to offices with the Office of Field Services, and at the Maryland Rehabilitation Association/DORS Annual Training Conference
- Training and presentations on blindness and vision services with the Local Education Agency and itinerate teachers and DORS staff are held on a regular basis

## **j. Statewide Assessment**

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.11(a)).

### **1. Provide an assessment of the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing within the State, particularly the VR services needs of those:**

#### **A. with the most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment services;**

The last Statewide Needs Assessment was conducted in 2013 and is the basis for the following assessment of the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities in Maryland. Updates have been provided as appropriate. The 2016 Statewide Needs Assessment is currently being conducted, and the results will be reported at a later time.

In Maryland, the prevalence of disability in 2013 was 10.6%; and the percentage actively looking for work among people with disabilities who were not working was 12.2%. In 2013, the prevalence of six disability types was as follows: 1.9% reported a Visual Disability, 2.8% reported a Hearing Disability, 6.0% reported an Ambulatory Disability, 4.1% reported a Cognitive Disability, 2.1% reported a Self-Care Disability, and 4.6% reported an Independent Living Disability. (2013 Disability Status Report, Maryland, Employment and Disability Institute at the Cornell University ILR School)

DORS and Maryland State Rehabilitation Council -- Impact of Federal funding and staff capacity Emphasized in the previous two

Needs Assessments, the DORS waiting list and delays in service provision remain a prominent concern and constitute the most significant need for individuals with significant disabilities in Maryland. Currently over 3,400 eligible individuals with significant disabilities are placed on a waiting list for vocational rehabilitation services lasting up to 24 months. Clearly, individuals on the waiting list are the most seriously un-served of populations. These are individuals who have come to DORS requesting services to become and/or remain employed and have been determined eligible for such services, but cannot be served. In September 2009, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) released a report to Congress (GAO-09-798) that makes clear that Maryland has the third most poorly-funded state VR program due to inherent inequities in the formula used to allocate federal dollars between states. Without an act of Congress to change the formula, Maryland's federal funding may not be sufficient to prevent a substantial increase in the waiting list over time.

In addition to federal funding inequities, the State of Maryland continues to impose a hiring freeze that affects vocational rehabilitation specialists/counselors, as well as most other agency staff, with extended periods of vacancies for staff who have left DORS. This has become another significant factor in the agency's ability to shorten the waiting list and provide services to individuals with significant disabilities on a more timely basis. During fiscal year 2012 DORS has received approval for six additional contractual positions from the state which are expected to somewhat reduce the waiting list.

Recommendation related to Federal funding and staff capacity The overriding vocational rehabilitation services need of individuals with disabilities residing in Maryland is equitable distribution of federal VR funds, and timely filling of counselor positions. While other recommendations in this attachment address ways to incrementally improve VR services to individuals with disabilities, continuation of historical underfunding of Maryland VR in relation to other states and continuation of extended periods of vacancy for front line staff will make it very difficult to implement changes that could result in many more individuals with disabilities achieving employment. (1) Assessment of Rehabilitation Needs of Individuals with Disabilities Residing in the State: Individuals with the most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment services.

Blind/Vision Impaired and Deaf-Blind: Maryland DORS operates the Office for Blindness & Vision Services (OBVS) to assure provision of specialized, quality services to individuals who are blind, vision impaired and deaf-blind. The Blindness & Vision Services committee of the State Rehabilitation Council plays a critical role in establishment and operation of OBVS. The Office for Blindness and Vision Services includes the following DORS programs and services:

- Rehabilitation counselors in DORS field offices throughout Maryland who are specialists in employment and independent living issues for people who are blind. They provide technical support to counselors for the deaf who work with deaf-blind individuals whose primary communication is American Sign Language (ASL) or Tactical sign;
- Rehabilitation teachers across the state who deliver community-based services, such as mobility training, household management skills and communication device training. These teachers also provide independent living training to individuals who have vision impairment, are age 55 and over, and are not seeking employment;
- The Maryland Business Enterprise Program for the Blind, which provides opportunities for individuals who are legally blind to operate vending, gift or food service businesses in public and private facilities;
- Programs for individuals who are blind located at the Division's Workforce and Technology Center. These programs include assessment, training and support groups;
- The newly hired Deaf-Blind Specialist will provide technical assistance and support to all staff on issues pertaining to Deaf-Blindness. One of the major goals of this position is to develop and implement Support Service Provider services for the Division.

The 2013 Needs Assessment identified new ideas and trends. For example, although Deaf-Blindness is considered a low incidence disability, the cost of services, technical skills and specific knowledge required to impact change are significant.

Prevalence: According to the National Center for Health Statistics, as of March 2013, it was estimated that as many as 10 million Americans are blind or visually impaired, and each year 75,000 more people in the U.S. will become blind or visually impaired. In 2013, 56,900 individuals in Maryland between the ages of 21 and 64 reported a visual disability. This represents 1.6% of the base population (2013 Disability Status Report for Maryland from the Employment and Disability Institute at the Cornell University ILR School). Additionally, the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissions estimates that 70,000 - 100,000 people living in the US are deaf-blind. This means that the individuals identified have some significant level of both vision and hearing loss. Based on the reported statistics, it is critical that rehabilitation agencies maintain quality services to assist these individuals with their independent living and employment needs.

Methodology: To ascertain the needs of individuals who are blind, visually impaired and deaf-blind, DORS requested and received feedback from consumers, stakeholders, and staff through: (1) stakeholder focus groups (blindness); and, (2) an online survey (deaf-blindness). Similar methodologies were used in the 2010 Needs Assessment and some comments were similar, but new issues were introduced. The valuable feedback received from the focus groups has already prompted some change in our policies and procedures as it relates to funding college books and supplies.

Focus Groups' Needs/Concerns: In November 2012, separate focus groups at the National Federation of the Blind and the American Council of the Blind state conventions were convened to solicit feedback from attendees about the unmet needs and to gather recommendations to address those unmet needs. Approximately 10 individuals from each convention participated and the responses are summarized as follows:

- Enhance job placement methods to ensure individuals, especially those who complete training, receive continuous assistance and have access to job leads through various mediums
- Review and update, on an annual basis, agencies policies and procedures as they relate to procurement of goods and services for consumers
- Increase outreach to prospective consumers using marketing strategies to target more businesses, community organizations (e.g., American Diabetes Association, Department of Veterans Affairs), doctors, churches, neighborhood associations, etc. to increase the visibility of the agency. This could include billboards, large signage in high traffic area (i.e. Inner Harbor), and mailing DORS literature out to the community in an effort to reach individuals before they are in “disaster mode” when they are losing their homes and jobs
- Enhance and emphasize counselor’s role in: (1) advising consumers about the full scope of services, the rehabilitation team and process; (2) focusing on capabilities and individualized needs and learning styles; (3) facilitating access to assistive technology; (4) minimizing gaps in the provision of services; and, (5) increasing timeliness of the services provided
- Address concerns related to technology, including initial access and follow-up training, lack of usage after provision, role of consumer in identifying needed technology, response to technical concerns, and access to accessible textbooks

Survey on Deaf-blind Services & Needs/Concerns: A survey regarding Deaf-Blind services was emailed to stakeholders, consumers, community partners, caregivers, and DORS staff to solicit feedback about the unmet needs of individuals who are deaf-blind. DORS received 22 returned surveys via mail, email, and fax. Although deaf-blindness is considered a low incidence disability, it is noted that providing services to deaf-blind individuals is particularly challenging because of the complex needs and cost of ongoing supports. As in the previous Needs Assessment survey, there were universal themes of transportation, communication, and support services as major unmet needs of individuals who are Deaf-blind. The responses can be summarized as follows:

- Increase flexibility and consider supporting and funding “unconventional” VR services that may be exclusive to this disability, in light of their unique needs and complexities
- Enhance career services for the Deaf-Blind consumers. Employ the assistance of experts to assist with navigating the complexities associated with job development and placement. This includes services such as Orientation and Mobility, Rehabilitation Teaching, and Assistive Technology
- Expand staff and advocate for community resources to provide a full range of independent living and employment services to deaf-blind, including older deaf-blind, within DORS and community programs/providers (qualified interpreters, technologists, teachers, counselors, therapists, psychologists, psychiatrists and other professionals)
- Explore means of increasing access to transportation (limitations are primarily due to the communication barrier)
- Continue to work closely with grassroots organizations, community partners, advocacy groups, and the Helen Keller National Center to ensure that Deaf-Blindness remains a priority for the agency
- Develop an agency-funded Support Service Provider program to provide necessary support services and visual information to deaf-blind for daily living and employment skill development.

Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Late Deafened: DORS has established a workgroup to assess VR services to persons who are deaf, hard of hearing, or late deafened. The group included representatives from the Maryland State Rehabilitation Council, the Assistant Superintendent from the Maryland School for the Deaf, lead Transition Services staff from Maryland Public Schools, Maryland Department of Disabilities staff, Community Rehabilitation Program staff, as well as a variety of Division staff from the Office of Field Services and the Workforce and Technology Center. Using the “Model State Plan for Vocational Rehabilitation Services to Persons who are Deaf, Deaf-Blind, Hard of Hearing and Late Deafened”- University of Arkansas RRTC 2008 as a guide, the workgroup reviewed current services and statewide challenges, and developed collective plans and goals to enhance services in Maryland.

As a result of this work, progress has been made in many aspects of service delivery and program growth. Plans for improved recruitment and on-going support of the most qualified Rehabilitation Counselors for the Deaf throughout the state have been developed. Plans also focused on the need to: develop additional Community Rehabilitation Program services; implement a plan to provide support for consumers starting new employment; improve transitioning youth services, especially for non-college bound students; and improve the transition process for mainstreamed students to DORS services. DORS staff began developing new partnerships and began serving on several committees to help accomplish these goals. In addition, the ideas for enhanced services at Workforce and Technology Center, especially in the areas of training, job placement, and technology were implemented.

Prevalence: According to the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (NIDCD), approximately 17 percent (36 million) of American adults report some degree of hearing loss; and about 3 out of every 1,000 children in the United States are born deaf or hard of hearing. In 2013, 60,500 individuals in Maryland between the ages of 21 and 64 reported a hearing disability. This represents 2.8% of the base population (2013 Disability Status Report, Maryland, Employment and Disability Institute at the Cornell University ILR School). Estimates from the Hearing Health Foundation are that 20 percent of the U.S. population aged 12 years and older has hearing difficulties severe enough to impact communication. In terms of late deafened individuals, NIDCD reports approximately 4,000 new cases of sudden deafness occur each year in the U.S. The Hearing Health Foundation reports that about 26 million Americans between the ages of 20 and 69 have high frequency hearing loss due to exposure to loud noises at work or in leisure activities. In addition, about 60 percent of deployed military service men and women have noise induced hearing loss, tinnitus (ringing in the ear), or other hearing injuries. Impairment of auditory acuity and tinnitus are more likely to occur in Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans than post-traumatic stress syndrome. Lastly, the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association reports that based on data gleaned from Federal surveys, the number of Americans with a hearing loss has essentially doubled during the past 30 years.

Methodology & Data Review: Data and statistics were reviewed regarding census and location of this disability population statewide; overall numbers of consumers served; average caseload size; distribution of consumers served by county; numbers of consumers served in this population, grouped by type/degree of hearing loss; employment/other outcome data for the last three years; number and location of staff compared to distribution and number of consumers served by county/region; and number, location and capacity of Community Rehabilitation Programs serving this population compared to number and distribution of staff and consumers utilizing these services.

Needs/concerns: • There is a steady increase in the number of consumers being served and a limited and/or decreased number of staff and Community Rehabilitation Programs directly serving this population statewide; • There are a large number of individuals who fall under Category II of the DORS Order of Selection who are placed on the waiting list and who are in need of assistance for job retention; and, • There remains a need to further analyze the distribution of consumers to staff by county/region, with consideration for the need to add an additional Rehabilitation Counselor for the Deaf position to balance some caseloads and reduce overall caseload size; analyze the employment outcomes compared to proximity of staff/consumers to existing Community Rehabilitation Programs and the Workforce & Technology Center, to assist in planning for program development.

Focus Groups: During the 2013 needs assessment, information was gathered from staff groups and consumer groups to discuss the quality and effectiveness of services currently being provided, and to solicit feedback from attendees about any unmet needs. Responses and recommendations for improvements were compiled and shared with appropriate DORS staff for further consideration. Additional areas of concern and unmet needs are summarized as follows:

- Transitioning students need to have more opportunities for basic work experiences and exposure to role models to develop an understanding of employer expectations and to develop a strong work ethic rather than being satisfied with remaining on government assistance
- American Job Centers are not adequately serving deaf and hard of hearing individuals who are not DORS consumers. In general, there seems to be a lack of any training or specialized staff there; and many referrals made to DORS do not qualify for services
- There has been a significant increase in foreign born deaf consumers. They often have extensive needs and are not successful at receiving services such as Adult Basic Education, GED®, or other training from other agencies
- Veterans returning from service with hearing loss often receive limited assistance from other agencies and are facing great difficulty adjusting to their disability
- Many employers still seem reluctant to hire deaf and hard of hearing individuals due to concerns over paying for interpreting services or other accommodations.

Key Informant Interviews: Interviews were conducted with key informants to gather information and input based on their role in the Division, and it also included information from their committee work and other networking activities. An interview was conducted with Hank Passi, DORS Staff Specialist III for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, who serves as the State Coordinator for the Deaf in Maryland. Mr. Passi serves as a committee member for the State Coordinator for the Deaf National Training Forum, he is a representative to the National Summit on Deaf Education, and also served on MSDE's focus group for Deaf and Hard of Hearing services. An interview was also conducted with Mrs. Kathy Schwabeland, former Workforce & Technology Center Staff Specialist III for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. Interview information is summarized as follows:

- Additional focus is needed on outreach to transition coordinators and students who graduate or leave from regular public schools and who are not referred to DORS in advance of graduation or not referred at all. This may include students with an IEP or 504 plans
- DORS may be able to collaborate with community colleges statewide to encourage and support degree and certificate programs that are more accessible and "deaf friendly" for students
- Concerns exist regarding the impact of the upcoming change in procurement practices for sign language interpreting
- An increasing number of students are being identified as non-college bound and are not earning diplomas. Many are deaf plus they have additional disabilities. They may also lack hands-on work experiences. The need for additional focus on this population is critical
- The need for specialized training programs and employment opportunities for the deaf is an issue. Consideration by DORS and its Workforce & Technology Center on focusing efforts on the development of programs in cooperation with local community colleges, technical trade schools, or apprenticeship programs in the building trades would be very beneficial
- Expanding the use of On-The-Job Training to customize employment opportunities with Maryland businesses would help increase employment outcomes. This approach has been successfully used by Workforce & Technology Center and other DORS staff.

Additional strategies for deaf, hard of hearing, and late deafened individuals include the following:

- Establish a workgroup to develop a strategic plan for working with Community Rehabilitation Programs to expand services for this population
- Further analyze staffing needs and resources based on caseload size, distribution of consumers by region, and availability of Community Rehabilitation Programs and Workforce & Technology Center services;
- Form a committee to develop plans related to full implementation of the Rehabilitation Communication Specialist model, and how Rehabilitation Counselors for the Deaf and Rehabilitation Communication Specialists can work in cooperation with the new Business Services Representatives in each region to increase On-The-Job Trainings for this population
- Convene a workgroup of DORS, Workforce & Technology Center, college and trade school representatives, WIOA Partners, and other community partners to work on development of specialized training programs for full access to a broader range of employment options. Create a model that can be duplicated for other targeted populations
- Create a resource guide for staff working with special populations including foreign born deaf individuals, transitioning

youth, and people who are hard of hearing/late deafened • Need to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs within the State; and/or, • Assess the needs of individuals with disabilities for transition career services and pre-employment transition services.

Supported employment needs of individuals with most significant disabilities residing in Maryland: Between FY 2013 and FY 2015 (see \*note below), the overall number of initial plans developed during the year, which included supported employment services, decreased 3% from 1,556 in FY 2013 to 1,501 in FY 2015. This is largely due to the 6% decrease in initial plans, which included supported employment, developed for youth with disabilities age 24 or less at application during this same period, when initial plans were more frequently being prepared for students in high school before long-term funding for supported employment could be verified. However, during this same period, the percentage of initial plans developed for individuals referred by community rehabilitation programs and including supported employment services increased from 77% in FY 2013 to 84% in FY 2015.

\*Note:

- In FY 2013, of the 5,178 plans initiated, 1,556 (30%) were supported employment plans. Out of 1,556 supported employment plans, 455 (29%) were developed for youth with significant disabilities age 24 and younger.
- In FY 2014, of the 5,274 plans initiated, 1,626 (31%) were supported employment plans. Out of the 1,626 supported employment plans, 419 (26%) were developed for youth with significant disabilities age 24 and younger.
- In FY 2015, of the 5,276 plans initiated, 1,501 (28%) were supported employment plans. Out of the 1,501 supported employment plans, 340 (23%) were developed for youth with significant disabilities age 24 and younger.

As of January 2016, there are 2,671 individuals in Maryland earning subminimum wages under a 41c certificate. Section 511 of WIOA states that the DSU must provide youth with disabilities documentation that the youth have completed certain activities, such as receipt of transition services and Pre-Employment Transition services, under the VR program prior to the youth engaging insubminimum wage employment. Additionally, in Maryland SB 417/HB 420: Individuals With Disabilities: Minimum Wage and Community Integration (Ken Capone Equal Employment Act) was passed during the 2016 Maryland Legislative Session. The bill phases out the authority for the Commissioner of Labor and Industry to authorize a work activities center or other sheltered workshop to pay a subminimum wage to an employee with a disability. It also restricts the authority of a work activities center or other sheltered workshop to pay a subminimum wage and/or a sub-prevailing wage to an employee with a disability. Beginning October 1, 2020, the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) may not fund providers that pay individuals less than the minimum wage under a specified federal certificate. For both these reasons, there will be an increased need for supported employment services.

**B. who are minorities;**

The Maryland 2013 Comprehensive Assessment of the Needs of Individuals with Disabilities identified a need for DORS to continue to expand services to minority individuals with disabilities, focusing on those from the Hispanic and Asian communities.

Prevalence: According to the 2010 U.S. Census for Maryland, 8.2 percent of the population identified as Hispanic (2007: 6.7 percent) and 5.5 percent identified as Asian (2007: 5.1 percent). In Maryland in 2013, the overall percentage of disability among people of Hispanic/Latino origin between the ages of 21 and 64 was 5.4%, and 5.0% of persons in Maryland in the same age group in Maryland. As indicated below, DORS has seen little change in the number of individuals served from Hispanic background and a modest increase in individuals served from Asian background in the past 3 years:

Hispanic

Fiscal Year	Number Served
FY 2013	721
FY 2014	722
FY 2015	725

Asian

Fiscal Year	Number Served
FY 2013	588
FY 2014	607
FY 2015	650

Needs/concerns:: During FY 2013 through FY 2015, the percentage of individuals served who were Asian was consistently 2% of

the whole, and the percentage of individuals served who were Hispanic was consistently 3% of the whole. Similar percentages appear when examining specific services provided by DORS to Asian and Hispanic individuals. For instance, 4% of DORS-sponsored training in colleges or universities was for Asian individuals and 3% for Hispanic individuals, and 2% of DORS-sponsored transportation services were for Asian individuals and 3% for Hispanic individuals, during each of the last three years,

English has been the predominant language of 95% of DORS consumers. However, the number of consumers whose primary language is a foreign language has increased 21% between FY 2013 (189) and FY 2015 (230).

The table below shows that Spanish is the language most frequently spoken by those who report a primary language other than English. The DORS *Application for Rehabilitation Services* is available in Spanish, as well as Korean and Vietnamese languages. The DORS Multi-Cultural Committee will continue to recommend strategies for serving consumers from various racial and ethnic cultures, including those who primarily use foreign languages.

Primary Language:	FY 13	FY 14	FY 15
Foreign Sign Language	13	19	19
Chinese	8	10	9
Korean	8	6	6
Russian	7	9	8
Spanish	70	73	93
Vietnamese	4	5	3
Other Language	79	85	92
Grand Total	189	207	230

The 2016 Statewide Needs Assessment will further analyze the service needs of these populations and others in developing short-term and strategic goals and objectives. Additionally, DORS Multi-Cultural Workgroup will continue to develop and publicize specialized resources for minority groups identified in the Needs Assessment.

### C. who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program;

Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD). To analyze needs of individuals with autism spectrum disorders, members of the needs assessment committee reviewed available data regarding the incidence of autism, and then supplemented this information with an online survey, interviews of key informants, and a focus group. Data continues to reveal an increase in the prevalence of ASD in the United States and in Maryland.

Prevalence: Based on the Maryland Commission on Autism report dated September 2012, it was noted that nationally, the prevalence of ASD among children increased by 78 percent from 6.6 per 1000 children in 2002 to 11.3 per 1000 children in 2008 (or one in eighty-eight). In Maryland, according to the Maryland Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring Project, the total prevalence of ASD is 12.4 per 1000 or one in eighty. In Maryland, 1 in 55 children meet the criteria for Autism Spectrum Disorder data, compared to 1 in 65 in the United States (“U.S. Autism Rate Unchanged in New CDC Report,” Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring Network (ADDM), John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, March 31, 2016)

Method/Discussion: To analyze the needs of individuals with ASD, members of the 2013 needs assessment committee reviewed data regarding the number of individuals being served by DORS with ASD listed as a cause of disability and the Regions in which they are being served. When reviewing the data regarding numbers of individuals served within DORS by Region, the data revealed an increase in numbers served when comparing FY 2010, FY 2011, and FY 2012.

Total number of Individuals Served by DORS during the past 3 years is shown below:

	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015
OBVS	6	10	13
Region I	289	320	351
Region II	404	433	483
Region III	86	113	152
Region V	445	542	572
Region VI	474	532	579
Total	1,704	1,950	2,150

Method/Discussion: The committee also conducted an online survey of DORS approved Community Rehabilitation Programs to determine the availability of services within the Regions that serve the highest number of individuals with ASD. Of the 233 surveys sent to individuals employed in DORS-approved Community Rehabilitation Programs, 63 individuals responded from 51 of different providers. Of the 51 providers, 30 providers indicated that they provide services to individuals with ASD. The data also revealed that there are certain providers who indicated they serve multiple Regions. Further analysis by Region revealed the following:

The number of providers per Region who reported they provide services to individuals with ASD • Region I - 11 • Region II - 9 • Region III - 11 • Region IV - 9 • Region V - 13 • Region VI - 6

Needs/concerns: 1. While the number of individuals with ASD accessing DORS services has increased over the past three fiscal years, it does not appear that the number of DORS approved providers is sufficient to meet the needs of these consumers; 1. In comparing the data across regions and providers, Region VI has the second highest prevalence of ASD consumers with the least number of providers who indicate they work with consumers with ASD; 2. Further training of adult service providers related to programming and services for individuals with ASD should be considered to increase the availability of services for this population; 3. The DORS Pathways Program has expanded beyond the Community Colleges of Baltimore County to now include Prince George's and Montgomery Counties.

#### **D. who have been served through other components of the statewide workforce development system; and**

The DORS Comprehensive Needs Assessment committee, including members of the Maryland State Rehabilitation Council, identified community colleges and American Job Centers as focus areas because of their importance as resources for individuals with significant disabilities seeking employment. Community Colleges remain a major component of Maryland's workforce system and are a primary training provider to DORS consumers for both credit and noncredit workforce certificate training. According to the 2012 Data Book of the Maryland Association of Community Colleges, a total of 6,492 individuals with disabilities were attending the 16 Maryland community colleges in 2011. The reported enrollment of students with disabilities attending these colleges has increased every year since 2005, which had a reported enrollment of 3,530 students with disabilities.

Methodology: A student survey and survey of disability support services professionals were developed to assess the unmet needs of students with disabilities.

Students with Disabilities Survey: Surveys were sent to 357 consumers that had been identified as receiving some level of financial support to attend a community college during the 2012 calendar year. An online survey using Survey Gizmo was used for the 55 percent (197) of the consumers who had an email on file, and the U.S Postal Service was used to distribute paper surveys (with return postage paid envelopes) to the 45 percent (160) who did not have an email address on file. Eleven emails and eight mailed surveys were returned as non-deliverable.

DORS received 58 survey responses (24 percent return rate) from consumers living in 16 of Maryland's 24 counties and Baltimore City. Twenty-six percent of the respondents identified as being part of a racial or ethnic minority. Fifty-five percent of the respondents indicated they lived in the suburbs, 24 percent indicated they lived in an urban area, and 21 percent indicated they lived in a rural locale. Based on the reported demographics, the sample is a good statewide representation. In addition, the reported county demographic indicates that respondents likely attended all of the community colleges with the exception of one (Harford Community College).

The following general disability categories were self-reported by the 58 respondents: • 29% psychosocial (bi-polar, depression, anxiety, schizophrenia); • 22% cognitive (learning disability, ADHD); • 15% blindness/other visual impairment; • 14% mobility (multiple sclerosis, paraplegia, brain injury); • 10% general physical (kidney transplant, bone marrow disorder, back/neck injury); • 10% deaf/hard of hearing; and, • 1% deaf-blind.

Needs/Concerns: When asked to identify unmet needs, 67 percent of the respondents indicated they had no unmet needs or that their accommodation needs were met. The following issues represent needs that students identified as unresolved issues:

- Better note takers;
- Better tutors;
- Better Case Management and Access (DORS and Disability Services); and,
- Improve Instructor Disability Awareness.

Disability Support Services Professionals Survey: An online survey using Survey Gizmo was sent to the 16 Maryland community college disability support offices. Three responses (19 percent) were received. In addition, a telephone interview was conducted with a disability support services professional to gain insights not sought in the online survey.

Needs/Concerns: When asked about the unmet needs of community college students with disabilities, the three respondents

provided the following responses:

- Lack of mental health care for students who do not have insurance; • “Specialized” tutoring (e.g. beyond what the college provides for all students - this could be one-on-one tutoring by staff with specific expertise in working with students with learning disabilities); • Develop more viable employment options for individuals with borderline intellectual disabilities and provide training for transition from high school to college; • Other one-on-one personal services, such as those required by students with autism spectrum disorders who could benefit from in-class assistance to maintain focus and attention or be reminded of classroom behaviors; • Collaboration with Community and Continuing Education to develop training and skills to facilitate employability; • Continue to support students when they enroll part-time - it’s often the best way for them to manage their college classes; • Provide funds for tutoring resources for individuals taking credit courses; • Provide assistive technology and training prior to attending college; • Funding for Community and Continuing Education courses leading to obtaining job skills; • Expand the Pathways program to other community colleges; and,
- Role of parents

Discussion: Twenty-nine of the 58 student respondents indicated they applied for services through the disability support services office. Of the 29 who applied, 24 (83 percent) reported the accommodations requested allowed them to successfully complete their course work. The 5 individuals who reported that their accommodations were not successful indicated that better note takers, professional tutoring, instructors with better disability awareness, and better DORS support would have been helpful.

Fifteen (52 percent) of the 29 students who did not apply for accommodations indicated they did not need them. Four of the students who didn’t apply cited an interest in non-disclosure and seven of the students lacked knowledge about the disability support services program. Other reasons for not applying included the amount of time to apply for services and the belief that there were no accommodations for their particular needs.

Based on the student survey results, it appears that a large percentage of students’ accommodation needs were successfully met. The “unmet” needs identified in the student survey are mostly related to service coordination rather than an actual unmet accommodation needs required for successful college participation. Such issues as transportation, payment timeliness, career guidance, medical services, and tuition funding are services provided by DORS and not considered accommodations.

The disability support services survey identified the need for mental health services for those students without insurance and tutoring by staff with specific expertise in working with students with disabilities. These needs seem to be consistent with the fact that 32 percent of the student respondents identified a mental health disability and that another unmet need identified by the students was for more experienced tutors. Other recommendations include supporting students enrolled part-time and to provide assistive technology and training prior to attending college. There are policy provisions for part-time enrollment and efforts continue to streamline assistive technology services to insure timely provision of technology and training prior to college admission. The final recommendation by two disability support services surveys was related to serving those students who are on the autism spectrum. It was recommended that DORS expand their Pathways project to other community colleges beyond the Baltimore County Community College campus. The enhanced case management of this program, including in-class personal assistance, was viewed as a good accommodation for the autism spectrum population. The Pathways program has proven to be successful and efforts to serve individuals through the Baltimore County campus continues to be the most cost effective means to serve this college bound population.

It is noteworthy that none of the survey respondents reported an unmet need for the provision of assistive technology or computer provision in general. One possible reason for this could be that the agency response to a recommendation in the last statewide needs assessment was to explore a policy change regarding the provision of computers for college students. A policy change has made it easier to purchase a non-adaptive computer for college students. In addition, resources have been developed to purchase refurbished computers.

DORS suggests the following additional strategies:

- Continue to strengthen the relationship between DORS and the college disability support services offices. This could be accomplished by increasing the coordination between DORS counselors and disability support service professionals when coordinating individualized accommodations and support planning for students with disabilities as they plan for transitioning into college. This would also likely help address the lack of awareness of disability support services noted by several student respondents. The need to enhance this relationship was also a recommendation in the previous statewide needs assessment. • DORS counselors should insure the readiness of students for the demands associated with college and make sure appropriate supports are in place. A number of student survey respondents had issues associated with what they perceived as unrealistic instructor expectations and some expressed their frustration with the administrative demands of attending college. Parental involvement should be a significant consideration during the college transitioning planning for high school students. • Assess the utilization and effectiveness of DORS funded tutoring for community college students. Both the student survey and the disability support services survey results indicate the need for specialized tutoring beyond what is normally provided by colleges. DORS policy allows for tutoring in specific situations, however, additional resource development is likely needed in rural areas to insure successful tutoring outcomes. American Job Centers While most of the WIOA Partners have worked closely together for a number of years,

WIOA provides an opportunity for workforce programs to work more closely together, to create one comprehensive WIOA service system. Jobseekers, including individuals with disabilities, can access this system through a network of American Job Centers. Services are developed and implemented by a number of WIOA Partners, as outlined within this Plan. While some of the Maryland WIOA Partners have been determined by Governor Hogan, others—like Vocational Rehabilitation, administered by DORS—is mandated as a partner by law. Of the WIOA Partners, Maryland's Vocational Rehabilitation program is the only one that focuses solely on individuals with disabilities.

While DLLR has hired a Youth & Disabilities Service Coordinator since the 2007 Needs Assessment, due to budget constraints, it no longer employs Disability Navigators within the State's AJCs. For this reason, it is more important than ever for DORS and AJC staff to work collaboratively, as WIOA Partners, so that individuals with disabilities can benefit from all of the opportunities and resources the State's variety of WIOA Programs offers.

DORS used three methods to assess the needs of individuals with disabilities served within Maryland's AJC system within the review period: (1) a survey of AJC staff; and, (2) a survey of DORS' business liaisons; and (3) information from two key informant interviews. Four surveys were returned from each group.

Discussion: AJC Staff Survey Results • Staff indicated that the available access to assistive technology is the most beneficial service provided to individuals with disabilities within the AJCs • Staff reported that it is very helpful when DORS counselors share career assessments, as available, with AJC staff assisting individuals with disabilities • Staff find that those individuals with disabilities who are not adequately prepared for work have unrealistic expectations as to the services the AJC staff can provide • Staff are frustrated when they refer individuals to DORS for formal assessments (which the AJC is not able to provide), and the individuals are placed on the DORS waitlist or determined ineligible for vocational rehabilitation services • Staff are concerned that neither the AJCs nor DORS have enough staff and resources to effectively assist individuals with disabilities • AJC staff would like to receive additional training in the following areas: a. Reasonable Accommodations; b. Functional limitations and their impact on employment; c. Disability-specific information; d. Assistive Technology; and, e. Available funding options for individuals with disabilities beyond SSI and SSDI. Discussion: DORS Business Liaisons Survey Results • Not all DORS Business Liaisons collaborate with AJCs and those that do collaborate are either co-located or are located in close proximity • Monthly meetings are held to discuss various concerns, such as: barriers to employment, how to prepare a consumer for an interview, and how to approach businesses regarding an individual's disability • DORS and AJC staff partner on programs, such as Summer Youth Employment and projects such as Mock Interview Days • Efforts have been made to partner and share business contacts; however, a method to maximize and effectively share existing relationships with businesses had not yet been developed • DORS counselors often refer consumers to AJCs for a variety of services, especially while on the DORS wait list; however, the consumers often need more individualized supports and training than the One-Stop is able to offer due to limited human and financial resources

Needs/concerns: Identify means to enhance collaboration between DORS Business Liaisons and AJC staff, including cross training regarding roles of each agency. This would promote realistic expectations of consumers and WIOA staff, and would ensure that individuals with disabilities can be provided effective employment services.

## **E. who are youth with disabilities and students with disabilities, including, as appropriate, their need for pre-employment transition services or other transition services.**

Transitioning Youth with developmental/intellectual disabilities Background: The seamless transition from the school system into adult employment services is a major component in the successful rehabilitation process for transitioning youth with developmental/intellectual disabilities. Governor's Transitioning Youth Initiative: Established in 1989, the Governor's Transitioning Youth Initiative is a partnership between the DORS and the Maryland Developmental Disabilities Administration consistent with the belief that all students with disabilities can work and contribute to Maryland's future after leaving school. This partnership was designed to ensure a smooth transition from school-based employment/training to short-term services funded by DORS, and then to long-term services funded by the Developmental Disabilities Administration. It enables students with disabilities to achieve employment toward the end of secondary school and then retain and maintain employment following their exit from school. Decrease in number of transitioning youth with developmental/intellectual disabilities served by DORS: While historically DORS served many transitioning youth with developmental/intellectual disabilities, over the years there has been a significant reduction in the numbers served by DORS and in collaborative relationships with providers approved by the Developmental Disabilities Administration. This has been attributed to: (1) DORS paying less for employment services than the Developmental Disabilities Administration; (2) DORS requiring monthly reporting of services and Developmental Disabilities Administration not having this requirement; and, (3) experiences in the past with providers being cited for "double-dipping" for accepting payment for DORS employment services at the same time as DDA employment services.

Employment First: Over the last several years, Maryland has embraced the concept of Employment First, which assures that employment is considered by individuals with developmental/intellectual disabilities and their families, rather than assuming that non-

integrated day services are the best or only option. While DORS, the Maryland Developmental Disabilities Administration, the Maryland Department of Disabilities all have declared support for Employment First, actual implementation has been limited to several Developmental Disabilities Administration providers with support of the Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council. While these providers have demonstrated the success of the Employment First approach, they have been focused on individuals currently in day programs who are interested in employment services, rather than on transitioning students.

DORS and DDA Cooperative Agreement: DORS and the Developmental Disabilities Administration have a cooperative agreement for employment services dated in 2006. Over the last year both agencies, along with the Maryland Department of Disabilities, have been working on updating the agreement, hoping to address the issues that have impeded the full implementation of the Governor's Transitioning Youth Initiative, including addressing the long-term issue of double dipping. Along with developing the updated Agreement, the Developmental Disabilities Administration is revising State regulations which should also clarify the ways that DORS and the Developmental Disabilities Administration providers work collaboratively, with braided funding to assure that transitioning students with disabilities have every opportunity to pursue employment, consistent with the concepts of Employment First.

Method/Discussion: Data were collected from the AWARE case management system utilized by DORS, and reviewed to determine the total number of Governor's Transitioning Youth Initiative consumers served by DORS during fiscal years 2010, 2011, and 2012 in comparison to the number of Governor's Transitioning Youth Initiative consumers who achieved successful employment during the same 3 years. The data collected confirmed that there has been a decrease over the last 3 years in the number of Governor's Transitioning Youth Initiative consumers achieving successful employment:

- In FY 2013, 137 consumers achieved successful employment;
- In FY 2014, 120 consumers achieved successful employment;
- and, • In FY 2015, 98 consumers achieved successful employment.

Method/Discussion: To further explore the decrease in the number of DORS successful outcomes for transitioning youth with developmental/intellectual disabilities, 48 DORS transition counselors and supervisors were surveyed. Of the 18 responses received, the following possible reasons for this decrease were expressed by both DORS transition counselors and supervisors:

- As noted in several responses, some providers do not appear to have a strong vocational component, including sufficient job coaches, that would enable consumers to achieve competitive outcomes but rather focus on Day Habilitation Services funded by the Developmental Disabilities Administration;
- It appears that some providers may have a lack of understanding as to the role of DORS in providing short-term funding for the Governor's Transitioning Youth Initiative focusing on employment, and instead, utilize Developmental Disabilities Administration funds, bypassing DORS;
- Several respondents noted that providers choose to receive monies from the Developmental Disabilities Administration, rather than accessing DORS funding, as the DORS fees paid for employment services are less than those of Developmental Disabilities Administration's;
- Communication between providers and DORS appears to be an issue in some instances;
- Families are sometimes delaying their selection of long-term adult service providers, which affects how quickly a provider can begin working with an individual; and,
- It is perceived that agencies fear the appearance of double-dipping, receiving funding for the same services from both DORS and the Developmental Disabilities Administration.

Needs/concerns: • Continue efforts at updating of the Cooperative Agreement between DORS and the Developmental Disabilities Administration, focusing on clarifying the role of Employment First for transitioning students with developmental/intellectual disabilities, discussing the ways DORS and the Developmental Disabilities Administration can work effectively using braided funding, and spelling out procedures for providers to access DORS short-term funding and Developmental Disabilities Administrations long-term funding without the perception of double dipping. • Once the Cooperative Agreement is completed, training should be provided to provider staff on the Agreement and ways to effectively implement it locally; • Enhance lines of communication between DORS and approved Developmental Disabilities Administration providers and emphasize the importance of communication to better coordinate the short-term services and achievement of employment by the transitioning youth; • Provide cross-training opportunities; and, • Utilize DORS and Developmental Disabilities Administration data collection systems to track anticipated increases in transitioning youth served through the Governor's Transitioning Youth Initiative and their outcomes.

## **2. Identify the need to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs within the State; and**

The success of DORS consumers is due in many instances and respects to the partnerships DORS has established with Community Rehabilitation Programs, which provide a number of direct services throughout the state. To assess the need to establish, develop, or improve Community Rehabilitation Programs within the State, DORS conducted: (1) a survey of Community Rehabilitation Program Executive Directors and Vocational Staff; (2) a survey of DORS staff; and, (3) several small focus groups of DORS consumers who had been served by Community Rehabilitation Programs. Results suggest needs, particularly for development and improvement of Community Rehabilitation Programs and enhancement of working relationships between DORS and Community Rehabilitation Programs.

Survey of Community Rehabilitation Programs: During the 2013 Statewide Needs Assessment, 115 surveys were sent electronically to Community Rehabilitation Program Executive Directors and 118 surveys were sent to vocational staff within each of the agencies; 63 responses were returned. Respondents identified their particular agencies and indicated whether their Community Rehabilitation Program was in an urban, a rural and/or a suburban area. Twenty-three (23) respondents indicated that the Community Rehabilitation Programs primarily serve the developmentally disabled population; thirty (30) serve the mental health population; one (1) primarily serves individuals on the autism spectrum; one (1) primarily serves individuals with brain injury; zero (0) serve individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing; four (4) primarily serve individuals who are blind/vision impaired, and four (4) primarily serve individuals they felt did not fall into the categories outlined above and described their population as "all disabilities served." When asked what it would take to consider expanding services to include additional populations, several indicated intensive education and training for existing staff, funding for additional staff with specific skills sets, and technical assistance.

When asked about populations served, irrespective of primary population, 77 percent indicated that they serve the mental health population; 61 percent serve the developmentally disabled population; 52 percent serve individuals on the autism spectrum; 52 percent serve individuals with brain injury; 44 percent serve individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing; 44 percent serve individuals who are blind/vision impaired; 50 percent serve ex-offenders; 31 percent serve veterans, and 14 percent serve individuals defined as "other." Those responses included: the homeless, the learning disabled, individuals with physical disabilities, individuals with substance abuse, transitioning students, and all disabilities.

Needs/concerns identified by Community Rehabilitation Programs: In analyzing findings, the types of needs expressed by Community Rehabilitation Programs included the following:

- Additional trainings regarding job carving, customized employment, and job development in general;
- Increased assistance to help the consumers with their transportation needs including: comprehensive travel training and reduced delays in transportation funding for consumers
- Opportunities to interface with DORS staff and expand collaborative efforts in job development to include employment specialists and local businesses, opportunities for brainstorming client cases, and for employment specialists across agencies to share strategies and job leads
- The hourly rates for services have not been increased in over five years. The low rates make it difficult for Community Rehabilitation Programs to hire effective job developers

Survey of DORS staff: During the 2013 Statewide Needs Assessment, approximately 181 surveys were forwarded to DORS field counselors and supervisors. Seventy-five were returned. Staff were asked about what services they most often request from Community Rehabilitation Programs, quality and timeliness of services, and specific populations served. This year, staff were asked to identify and rate each provider identified as one from which services were purchased. Eighty-four percent identified non-supported job coaching for job development as being the most frequently purchased service; 60 percent identified benefits counseling; 53 percent supported employment job coaching for job development; 48 percent identified non-supported job coaching for maintaining employment; 45 percent identified career assessment services; 44 percent identified work adjustment training/employment development services; 38 percent identified supported employment job coaching for maintaining employment, and 20 percent identified job skills training.

Needs/concerns related to CRP Service Needs identified by DORS Staff: • Expand capacity for employment services for special populations (blind/vision impaired; deaf/hard of hearing; ABI; Autism spectrum) • Expand the number of Community Rehabilitation Programs that will provide services to ex-offenders including work adjustment training services • Increase the number of Community Rehabilitation Programs that provide employment skills training, especially trade skills • Expand the type of services available to individuals with autism (therapy, social support group, social skills training, and ADHD organizational training) and increase the job development skills for providers who currently work with individuals with autism.

Focus Groups - Consumers previously served by Community Rehabilitation Services: During the 2013 Statewide Needs Assessment, DORS held several focus groups for consumers who had been served by Community Rehabilitation Services to solicit their perspective on services. Three groups were held throughout the State. Participants were asked what services they had received, why they chose the provider, would they recommend similar services to a friend, was their DORS counselor involved, did they get a job as a result of the services, and what would improve the services at the Community Rehabilitation Program. While not a large sampling, there was some commonality among their responses and reactions. The majority of comments were positive about their experience with DORS and the Community Rehabilitation Programs.

Needs/concerns related to Community Rehabilitation Program Service Needs expressed by Focus Group participants: • Increase information provided to consumers about provider choices when discussing services • Consumers want DORS counselors to return their calls promptly. Sometimes the consumers need advocacy from their counselor when working with providers • Improve access to transportation for employment • Keep the momentum going. When training is completed (or job readiness), consumers want to move quickly into job development. They do not want one service to end and have a prolonged wait to continue services.

### **3. Include an assessment of the needs of individuals with disabilities for transition career**

## **services and pre-employment transition services, and the extent to which such services are coordinated with transition services provided under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act .**

DORS and the Maryland State Rehabilitation Council will assess the needs of individuals with disabilities for transition career services and pre-employment services through the 2016 Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment that is currently in process. DORS pre-employment transition services, as required through WIOA, will be provided in coordination with school-based transition services as required through IDEA and will be used to enhance rather than supplant such services. An Intra-Agency Cooperative Agreement will be developed to assist with identifying roles and responsibilities as well as promoting the coordination of timely and appropriate services to students with disabilities.

### **Overall 2013 Needs Assessment Recommendations**

Recommendation related to Federal funding and staff capacity: The overriding vocational rehabilitation services need of individuals with disabilities residing in Maryland is equitable distribution of federal VR funds, and timely filling of counselor positions. While other recommendations address ways to incrementally improve VR services to individuals with disabilities, continuation of historical underfunding of Maryland VR in relation to other states, and continuation of extended periods of vacancy for front line staff, will make it very difficult to implement changes that could result in many more individuals with disabilities achieving employment. Recommendations from the focus areas of the Needs Assessment addressing the required elements are as follows:

1. Promote and facilitate staff development for DORS staff, WIOA Partner staff, and community partners through employment services, needs of and resources for special populations, career counseling/counselor role (i.e., focus on consumer capabilities and interests, address adjustment to disability issues, take into account learning styles, minimize gaps in the rehabilitation process and maintain momentum, provide appropriate support services, and support consumers with employment goals beyond entry level).
2. Enhance relationships with community partners, including WIOA Partners - Bolster relationships with Community Rehabilitation Programs, AJCs, community college Disability Support Services staff, and local education agencies to effectively provide targeted employment services and addressing transportation needs of individuals with disabilities.
3. Finalize the DORS-Developmental Disabilities Administration Cooperative Agreement in keeping with Employment First; provide training to both agencies' staff.
4. Promote expansion of quality services for individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders through Community Rehabilitation Programs and the Workforce & Technology Center's Pathways Program.
5. Continue outreach to minorities, especially those of Hispanic and Asian background.
6. Enhance resources for deaf/hard of hearing consumers -consider (1) development of training programs for deaf/hard of hearing, (2) promotion of Community Rehabilitation Programs working with deaf/hard of hearing, and (3) exploration of Rehabilitation Communication Specialist service model.
7. Provide targeted outreach to individuals with blindness/vision impairments and deaf/blindness.
8. At least annually, review distribution of DORS staff assigned statewide, compared to the numbers of individuals with disabilities, the number of SSI/SSDI beneficiaries, the number of students in Special Education, and other relevant factors, to include distribution of disability groups. Adjust deployment of staff and programming consistent with findings.
9. DORS should examine longitudinal data trends related to utilization of services, especially for high incidence populations such as Supported Employment for individuals with mental health disabilities, and use this information to inform program development, and staff and provider training needs.

## **k. Annual Estimates**

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.11(b)). Describe:

### **1. The number of individuals in the State who are eligible for services;**

DORS estimates that 25,000 individuals are eligible for services under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act.

## 2. The number of eligible individuals who will receive services under:

### A. The VR Program;

Based on historical data, economic trends, and other factors, the estimated number of individuals who will receive services under the VR program is 18,800. The chart in Section C provides details.

### B. The Supported Employment Program; and

Based on historical data, employment trends, and other factors, the estimated number of individuals who will receive services under the Supported Employment Program is 300. Chart in next section provides details.

### C. each priority category, if under an order of selection;

Under the order of section, the estimated numbers of individuals within each priority category are as follows:

Category	Title I or Title VI	Estimated Funds	Estimated Number to be Served	Average Cost of Services
Most Significant	Title I	\$30,774,341	14,000	\$2,198
Most Significant	Title VI	\$480,000	300	\$1,600
Significant	Title I	\$13,189,003	4800	\$2,748

The number of individuals in Category 3, Non-Severe: 0

## 3. The number of individuals who are eligible for VR services, but are not receiving such services due to an order of selection; and

The number of individuals determined eligible for VR services, but not receiving services due to an order of selection is 3,400. Individuals on the wait list are those determined to be Category 2, Significant Disability.

## 4. The cost of services for the number of individuals estimated to be eligible for services. If under an order of selection, identify the cost of services for each priority category.

The table below provides information on the number of individuals to be served under the VR Program and the Supported Employment Program, by priority category, and the cost of services.

Category	Title I or Title VI	Estimated Funds	Estimated Number to be Served	Average Cost of Services
Most Significant	Title I	\$30,774,341	14,000	\$2,198
Most Significant	Title VI	\$480,000	300	\$1,600
Significant	Title I	\$13,189,003	4800	\$2,748

## I. State Goals and Priorities

The designated State unit must:

## 1. Identify if the goals and priorities were jointly developed

Identify if the goals and priorities were jointly developed and agreed to by the State VR agency and the State Rehabilitation Council, if the State has a Council, and jointly agreed to any revisions.

The goals and priorities provided below were jointly developed and agreed to by DORS and the Maryland State Rehabilitation Council. These two entities have also agreed to the revisions of the same.

## 2. Identify the goals and priorities in carrying out the VR and Supported Employment programs.

Goal 1: Assure high-quality employment outcomes for individuals with significant and most significant disabilities in Maryland through the vocational rehabilitation and supported employment programs.

Objective 1.1 - Provide rehabilitation services and pre-employment transition services in partnership with local education agencies that lead to successful outcomes in post-secondary education and employment for students with disabilities.

Strategies: Ensure that VR counselors and staff work with high school students (including those in special education, with 504 plans, with severe medical conditions, and those who have a disability for purposes of section 504), families, school personnel, WIOA Partners, and community partners to help students prepare for and achieve employment and self-sufficiency. Continue to emphasize and implement evidence-based transition practices, including work-based experiences, such as Project Search, internships, and summer employment to promote long-term career success and leadership, including expanding transitioning services at the Workforce & Technology Center (especially for consumers not planning to attend college).

1. Implement the provision of Pre-Employment Transition Services as outlined in WIOA including the following services: Job Exploration Counseling, Work-based learning experiences, Counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or post-secondary educational programs, Workplace readiness training, and Instruction on Self-Advocacy for high school students with disabilities who are 14-21 years old. 2. Provide training and support to DORS transition counselors through the Transition Specialists Group and other meetings, the Transition Conference and training programs. Training shall help counselors identify and develop tools and resources related to post-secondary education, and best practices in working with families and transitioning students. Collaborate with the Developmental Disabilities Administration and clarify procedures to ensure seamless transition for individuals receiving Developmental Disabilities Administration assistance. 3. Establish effective levels of staffing to ensure that pre-employment transition services are available to all individuals who are referred for pre-employment transition services and are eligible to receive the services.

Performance Measures by September 30, 2016: • The number of transitioning individuals served will match or exceed those served in the previous year, including an increase in the number of students with 504 plans compared with the previous year • There will be an increase in transitioning students who achieve employment compared with the previous year • Grants and funding will be provided to support leadership programs for youth with disabilities • The DORS Transition Specialists Group will meet at least semiannually and include staff training on pertinent topics (e.g. pre-employment transition services), and will identify, develop and disseminate tools and resources for transitioning students related to post-secondary education • Establish both a baseline and programmatic structure for the implementation of Pre-Employment Transition Services as outlined in WIOA.

Objective 1.2 - DORS will provide high quality services and outcomes for individuals with disabilities served by the Office of Field Services

Strategies: DORS will: 1. Provide high quality comprehensive services to eligible individuals with significant disabilities in keeping with the Rehabilitation Act and Federal Regulations, the Code of Maryland regulation, and DORS Policy; 2. Collaborate with the Workforce & Technology Center in assuring consumers with all disabilities have equal access to all programs available at the Center 3. Establish linkages with businesses and employers to include customized training, education and disability awareness, work site Assistive Technology services, and mentoring/internship activities 4. Continue to enhance relationships with Community Rehabilitation Programs through increased participation from the Office of Field Services management in conjunction with the Staff Specialists for Community Rehabilitation Programs (Needs Assessment Recommendation 2).

Performance Measures by September 30, 2016: • Meet or exceed federal performance indicators for VR services • Office of Field Services will achieve at least 85 percent consumer satisfaction • Office of Field Services will achieve 2,387 employment outcomes • Achieve at least 90 percent in presumption of eligibility in SSI and SSDI cases • Consumers will achieve an increase in average

hourly earnings from the previous year • More consumers will achieve professional, technical, and managerial positions than in the previous year.

Objective 1.3 - DORS will provide high-quality services and outcomes for individuals who are blind, vision impaired and Deaf-Blind.

Strategies: Provide high quality comprehensive services to eligible individuals who are blind, vision impaired and Deaf-Blind in keeping with the Rehabilitation Act and Federal Regulations, the Code of Maryland regulation, the Randolph Shepard Act and DORS Policy.

1. Provide independent living services to older individuals who are blind through: (1) direct services of DORS rehabilitation teachers; and, (2) grants to community organizations 2. Collaborate with the Workforce & Technology Center in assuring that Blind, Visually Impaired, and Deaf-Blind consumers have equal access to all programs available at the Workforce & Technology Center 3. Enhance linkages with businesses and employers to include customized training, education and disability awareness, work site Assistive Technology services and mentoring/internship activities, raising awareness and expectations for competitive employment for consumers who are blind/visually impaired and Deaf-Blind 4. Continue to expand services and outreach to individuals who are deaf-blind and provide technical assistance to staff serving this population (Needs Assessment Recommendation 7) 5. Recruit and train Maryland Business Enterprise Program for the Blind vendors

Performance Measures by September 30, 2016: • The Office of Blindness and Vision Services will meet or exceed federal performance indicators for services for blind/vision impaired • The Office of Blindness and Vision Services will achieve 165 employment outcomes • The Business Enterprise Program will recruit/train/license two new managers and establish new vending sites where available • Establish a baseline of Independent Living Older Blind outcomes in light of programmatic/service modifications and anticipated funding reductions • An increased number of consumers who are blind/vision impaired or deaf-blind will be referred to the Workforce & Technology Center compared to the previous year • Achieve a consumer satisfaction rate of 85 percent.

Objective 1.4 - Provide effective pre-employment transition services and employment services at the Workforce & Technology Center using state-of-the-art interdisciplinary strategies.

Strategies: 1. Provide high quality comprehensive services to individuals with significant disabilities to facilitate successful employment outcomes 2. Develop relationships with employers utilizing agency staff who specialize in underserved populations to address service needs, as well as, issues and trends related to the employment of underserved disability populations 3. Enhance linkages between employers, the business community, DORS Business Services staff, WIOA Partners, and community partners 4. Explore strategies for Workforce & Technology Center staff to collaborate with Office of Field Services and Office of Blindness and Vision Services to enhance consumer services, increase referrals to the Workforce & Technology Center, develop pre-employment transition services, and contribute to successful employment outcomes.

Performance Measures by September 28, 2016: • Increase the number of consumers achieving employment outcomes compared to the previous year • Increase the number of consumers in special populations (blind, deaf, deaf-blind, Autism) who will receive services compared to the previous year • Increase the number of customized and/or partnership trainings from the previous year • Participate in a division-wide Business Services work group which will develop a collaborative effort between the Office of Field Services, Office of Blindness and Vision Services, and the Workforce & Technology Center to enhance the Agency's delivery of effective and efficient consumer services • Develop a work group, to include WIOA Partners, which is aligned with the agency's initiative to provide pre-employment transition services to students with disabilities

Objective 1.5 - Enhance collaboration with and services to Maryland private and public employers.

Strategies: 1. With appropriate WIOA Partners, the Business Services Representatives in each region will assist with identifying and implementing strategies to assist consumers in achieving middle-skill as well as professional, managerial, and technical positions, and higher earnings (Needs Assessment Recommendations 1 and 10) 2. In coordination with WIOA Partners, the Business Services Representatives in each region will assist with enhancing services to businesses to include recruitment assistance, technical assistance for tax incentives, development of work-based learning opportunities, on-the-job training and customized training, education and disability awareness training 3. Conduct at least quarterly meetings of Business Services Representatives and Business Services Specialists with appropriate WIOA Partners to enhance their skills and develop strategies for engaging businesses 4. Participate in the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation national business network and bring national efforts and strategies (i.e., the NET and use of the Talent Acquisition Portal) to Maryland 5. Business Services Representatives will engage with employers and WIOA Partners to develop and expand work-based learning opportunities, career exploration, and work-readiness activities for students with disabilities

Performance Measures by September 30, 2016: • In coordination with WIOA Partners, labor market information on middle-skill jobs will be shared with consumers and documented in AWARE • The number of services to businesses will increase and will be documented in the AWARE Employer module • Business Services staff trainings will be conducted, in coordination with WIOA

Partners, on a quarterly basis; agendas and minutes of Business Services meetings will document activities and progress • Minutes of Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation NET meetings and the number of consumers enrolled in the Talent Acquisition Portal will confirm activities and progress • The number of work-based learning opportunities, including QUEST, and On-the-Job Training opportunities will increase and be tracked through the AWARE case management system.

Goal 2: This goal focuses on a non-Vocational Rehabilitation program that is outside of WIOA and not applicable to the WIOA State Plan (Disability Determination Services).

Goal 3: Partner and collaborate with WIOA partners, public agencies, private organizations, employers, community groups, and individuals to enhance the integration of vocational rehabilitation and supported employment services to individuals with disabilities leading to competitive integrated employment and independence. Increase the number of individuals with most significant disabilities who receive supported employment services.

Objective 3.1 - Enhance/expand supported employment services and services provided to individuals in priority populations, within the capacities of the agency.

Strategies: 1. Continue collaboration between Maryland DORS and the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's Behavioral Health Administration in the implementation of a braided funding model that enhances and expands the ability of both DORS and BHA to fund services and increase capacity in the number of individuals eligible for mental health supported employment, 2. Continue to provide staff resources and staff training to support Evidence-Based Practice Supported Employment and consumers who receive Assertive Community Treatment services (Needs Assessment Recommendation 1), 3. Continue strategic activities that will enhance DORS capacity to meet the unique needs of individuals with autism spectrum disorders preparing for employment (Needs Assessment Recommendation 4), 4. Enhance utilization of the Acquired Brain Injury program and continue regularly scheduled meetings with Acquired Brain Injury VR Specialists, to include Transitioning Youth VR Specialists, as appropriate, 5. Continue collaboration with the Developmental Disabilities Administration to implement Employment First, ensuring that individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities consider employment on a preferred basis in planning for their lives, 6. The DORS multi-cultural workgroup will continue to develop and publicize specialized resources for minority groups, focusing on Hispanic and Asian consumers (Needs Assessment Recommendation 5,) 7. DORS will assure that liaison relationships are in place with Community Rehabilitation Programs, Community Colleges, Local Education Agencies, Maryland Association of Nonpublic Special Education Facilities Schools, and other organizations to enhance effectiveness and establish promising practices and procedures (Needs Assessment Recommendation 2), 8. Pilot the Rehabilitation Communication Specialists for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing in at least one region (Needs Assessment Recommendation 6), 9. Update the MOU with the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's Developmental Disabilities Administration that defines the roles of each agency in establishing a collaborative process toward the provision of customized employment and supported employment services in support of individuals moving from sheltered work to competitive integrated employment, 10. Align services, rates, and reporting requirements in support of pre-employment transition services and supported employment job placement/support services, 11. Identify, develop, and implement a more seamless services delivery system among workforce partners in Maryland 12. Continue collaboration between Maryland DORS and the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's Behavioral Health Administration in the implementation of a braided funding model that enhances and expands the ability of both DORS and BHA to fund services and increase capacity in the number of individuals eligible for mental health supported employment.

Performance Measures by September 30, 2016: An increased number of consumers with most significant disabilities will receive supported employment services • An increased number of consumers will be served through Evidence-Based Practice for Supported Employment and Assertive Community Treatment sites compared with the previous year • An increased number of consumers will be served in the Governor's Transition Youth Initiative compared with the previous year • Increase the number of Asian and Hispanic consumers served by DORS, compared with the previous year • Increase the number of Acquired Brain Injury consumers achieving employment compared with the previous year • Increase the number of consumers with Autism served by DORS compared with the previous year • Assign a DORS staff person to contact and meet with each community college Disability Determination Services office at least once per semester • Track and assess Rehabilitation Communication Specialist pilot outcomes; and, • Develop/Update Memoranda of Understanding with Medicaid.

Objective 3.2- DORS will provide support to the State Rehabilitation Council to maintain and enhance its leadership role in the oversight of vocational rehabilitation service delivery in Maryland.

Strategies: 1. DORS will ensure that it works with the State Rehabilitation Council in accordance with federal law, regulations, and Council By-Laws 2. Council members will review and comment on the annual agency program plan to monitor DORS progress in meeting its performance goals and to highlight DORS program accomplishments

Performance Measures by September 30, 2016: • The Maryland State Rehabilitation Council will conduct four quarterly meetings, including a meeting during the legislative session in Annapolis • The Maryland State Rehabilitation Council and DORS will conduct annual public meetings in preparation for developing the VR portion of the WIOA State Plan • The Maryland State Rehabilitation Council will submit its annual report to the Governor and the U.S. Department of Education's Rehabilitation Services Administration,

as required by law • The tri-annual statewide Needs Assessment will be completed.

Objective 3.3 - Promote and enhance quality independent living outcomes for individuals with disabilities in Maryland through independent living programs.

Strategies 1. Provide grant support, technical assistance and monitoring to the Statewide Independent Living Council; 2. Manage DORS grants to Centers for Independent Living, including providing technical assistance and monitoring regarding the Independent Living program, the Independent Living, Assistive Technology program, and fiscal responsibilities; 3. Participate as an Independent Living Partner in implementation of the 2014-2016 State Plan for Independent Living; and, 4. Regional Directors and Office of Blindness and Vision Services Supervisors will conduct an annual meeting with Executive Directors of CILs within their areas to discuss issues of mutual interest.

Performance Measures by September 30, 2016: • Annual reviews of grant performance will be conducted for each Center for Independent Living with which DORS has a grant, and the Statewide Independent Living Council; • Meeting minutes will confirm DORS staff attendance and participation in quarterly meetings of Maryland Independent Living Partners; and, • DORS Regional/Program directors will confirm at least annual meetings with Center for Independent Living Executive Directors.

Goal 4: Provide Infrastructure to promote and support the accomplishment of the DORS mission.

Objective 4.1- Complete year 2 activities that support the goals and objectives of the DORS 2015-2018 Strategic Plan, in the areas of organizational structure, information technology, succession planning, and community partners.

Strategies: DORS will 1. Assign appropriate staff to work groups, including WIOA Work Groups, to see that strategic planning activities are carried out; 2. Review strategic plan for possible revisions, as necessary; and, 3. Assure that progress is made through presentations to the Executive Staff.

Objective 4.2 - Staff training will be provided to assure that staff maintains current competencies in rehabilitation practice, special populations, and administrative issues; Leadership development programs will be offered (Needs Assessment Recommendation 1).

Strategies: 1. Provide effective Vocational Rehabilitation training for all staff, to include but not limited to employment services, needs of and resources for targeted populations, and the role of the Counselor. (Needs Assessment Recommendation 1); 2. Include WIOA Partners and community partners in DORS training and meetings as appropriate. (Needs Assessment Recommendation 1); 3. Continue to expand online and web-based training modalities for training staff; 4. Plan and implement a Supervisor training series in coordination with the WIOA Partners; 5. Provide leadership activities for staff and succession planning for the agency; 6. Provide training in current technologies; and, 7. Provide training to staff on changes to federal reporting requirements resulting from WIOA.

Performance Measures by September 30, 2016: • Staff training in rehabilitation topics, including special populations, will be available at least bi-monthly, to include WIOA Partners and community partners as appropriate; • There will be a minimum of four trainings /meeting specifically for DORS Supervisors; • Staff will be trained on the new federal reporting requirements resulting from WIOA, in coordination with WIOA Partners. • An increase in the provision of distance learning training opportunities for staff, WIOA Partners, and community partners, as appropriate, will be demonstrated; and, • At least one multi-session leadership program will be offered annually.

Objective 4.3 - Enhance Quality Assurance

Strategies: 1. Refine Quality Assurance Program for VR, as needed, per analysis of beta test results.

Performance Measures by September 30, 2016: • Analysis of Quality Assurance beta testing will be completed; and, • Findings and recommendations will be provided to Executive Staff in addition to appropriate WIOA Partners.

Objective 4.4 - Implement changes required by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, including Title IV, Amendments to the Rehabilitation Act or 1973, in consultation with the Rehabilitation Services Administration, the Maryland State Rehabilitation Council, other programs identified in the Maryland WIOA State Plan, and the Technical Assistance Centers.

Strategies: 1. Participate in the WIOA Workgroups, the WIOA Alignment Group, the Maryland WIOA Convening to review the final regulations and recommend changes in policy and practice accordingly and in collaboration with WIOA Partners; 2. Participate in the establishment and implementation of the WIOA Jobseeker Advisory Groups to inform Maryland's customer-centered design; 3. Provide training to staff on changes in the Rehabilitation Act and implications for DORS policy and procedures; 4. Develop data sharing agreement with WIOA Partners required for DORS to fulfill new federal reporting requirements.

Performance Measures by September 30, 2016: • DORS Rehabilitation Services Manuals will be updated consistent with changes in the Rehabilitation Act, as amended by WIOA, and in consultation with WIOA Partners; • Training will be provided to DORS staff on

changes resulting from the reauthorization of the Rehabilitation Act (e.g. pre-employment transition services, customized employment, limitations on use of subminimum wage, “competitive integrated employment” criteria, and services to employers) in coordination with WIOA Partners; a. DORS will continue to collaborate with WIOA Partners in the development and implementation of the Maryland WIOA State Plan.

### **3. Ensure that the goals and priorities are based on an analysis of the following areas:**

The state goals and priorities are based on the analysis of the 2013 comprehensive needs assessment and updates, the State’s performance under performance accountability measures, input from the Maryland State Rehabilitation Council, and recommendations from monitoring activities.

#### **A. The most recent comprehensive statewide assessment, including any updates;**

The state goals and priorities are based on the analysis of the 2013 comprehensive needs assessment and updates, the State’s performance under performance accountability measures, input from the Maryland State Rehabilitation Council, and recommendations from monitoring activities.

#### **B. the State's performance under the performance accountability measures of section 116 of WIOA; and**

The state goals and priorities are based on the analysis of the 2013 comprehensive needs assessment and updates, the State’s performance under performance accountability measures, input from the Maryland State Rehabilitation Council, and recommendations from monitoring activities.

#### **C. other available information on the operation and effectiveness of the VR program, including any reports received from the State Rehabilitation Council and finding and recommendations from monitoring activities conducted under section 107.**

The state goals and priorities are based on the analysis of the 2013 comprehensive needs assessment and updates, the State’s performance under performance accountability measures, input from the Maryland State Rehabilitation Council, and recommendations from monitoring activities.

### **m. Order of Selection**

Describe:

#### **1. Whether the designated State unit will implement and order of selection. If so, describe:**

##### **A. The order to be followed in selecting eligible individuals to be provided VR services.**

Individuals shall be placed in priority categories at the time of eligibility determination. Depending upon DORS’ resources, the categories shall be closed for services in ascending order beginning with Category III and proceeding to Categories II and I. Services shall be provided only to those individuals in an open category. However, DORS shall continue to plan for and provide services to any individual determined eligible prior to the date on which the Order of Selection category to which the individual has been assigned has been closed, irrespective of the severity of the individual’s disability.

DORS staff will be advised via formal issuance when categories are closed or reopened. Consumers shall be taken off the waiting list when resources are available to provide services, based on their application date. The Order of Selection categories are as

follows:

- I. Individuals with Most Significant Disabilities.
- II. Individuals with Significant Disabilities.
- III. Individuals with Non-Severe Disabilities.

Under the order of selection, DORS will continue to emphasize and enhance services to students with disabilities transitioning from school to work. Description of Priority Categories An individual with a most significant disability (Category I) is an eligible individual:

- a) Who has a severe physical or mental impairment which seriously limits three or more functional capacities such as mobility, communication, self-care, self-direction, interpersonal skills, work tolerance, or work skills, in terms of an employment outcome;
- b) Whose vocational rehabilitation can be expected to require multiple vocational rehabilitation services: at least two from the main services of guidance and counseling, medical rehabilitation services including technology services, job placement and vocational training; and,
- c) Whose vocational rehabilitation is projected to require an extended period of time of at least 6 months.

An individual with a significant disability (Category II) is an eligible individual whose severe physical or mental impairment seriously limits one or two functional capacities, and also meets requirements in b and c above.

An individual with a non-severe disability (Category III) is an eligible individual who does not meet the definition of significant or most significant disability.

**B. The justification for the order.**

An order of selection is required under section 101 (a)(5) of the Rehabilitation Act if a rehabilitation agency determines that it is unable to provide services to all eligible individuals who apply for services. With an order of selection, services must first be provided to individuals with the most significant disabilities before they are provided to other eligible individuals.

Due to limited personnel and financial resources, DORS has been unable to provide services to all eligible individuals. Based on projected fiscal and personnel resources, an order of selection will remain in effect. The Division’s order of selection ensures that eligible individuals with the most significant disabilities receive priority.

**C. The service and outcome goals.**

The Division’s case management system is designed to assure that individuals with the most significant disabilities are selected for services before all others.

Priority Category	Number of individuals to be served	Estimated number of individuals who will exit with employment after receiving services	Estimated number of individuals who will exit without employment after receiving services	Time within which goals are to be achieved	Cost of services
I	14,000	2027	1640	27 months	\$30,774,341
II	4800	507	410	27 months	\$13,189,003
III	0	0	0	0	\$0

Serving Eligible Individuals, Regardless of the Order of Selection, Who Require Specific Services or Equipment to Maintain Employment DORS has elected not to serve eligible individuals who require specific services or equipment to maintain employment, regardless of the established order of selection.

**D. The time within which these goals may be achieved for individuals in each priority category within the order.**

Priority Category Number of individuals to be served Estimated number of individuals who will exit with employment after receiving services Estimated number of individuals who will exit without employment after receiving services Time within which goals are to be achieved Cost of services I 14,000 2027 1640 27 months \$30,774,341 II 4800 507 410 27 months \$13,189,003 III 0 0 0 0 \$0

**E. How individuals with the most significant disabilities are selected for services before all other individuals with disabilities; and**

Under an order of selection, DORS selects individuals with the most significant disabilities first for the provision of vocational rehabilitation services. (Section 101(a)(5)(C) of the Act and 34 CFR 361.36(a)(3)(iv)(A).

Individuals who are eligible for VR services and who cannot presently be served under the order of selection are advised that their record will be placed on a waiting list. Eligible individuals are removed from the wait list based on their application date, once resources are available to serve them.

**2. If the designated State unit has elected to serve eligible individuals, regardless of any established order of selection, who require specific services or equipment to maintain employment.**

DORS has elected not to serve eligible individuals who require specific services or equipment to maintain employment, regardless of the established order of selection.

**n. Goals and Plans for Distribution of title VI Funds.**

**1. Specify the State's goals and priorities for funds received under section 603 of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of supported employment services.**

Supported employment services are provided on a statewide basis through the Title VI, Part B, and also Title I funds. Supported employment is competitive employment or employment in integrated work settings in which individuals are working toward competitive work, with ongoing support services for individuals with the most significant disabilities for whom competitive employment has not traditionally occurred, or for whom competitive employment has been interrupted or intermittent as a result of a significant disability. Fund allocation on a statewide basis ensures an equitable statewide service delivery.

DORS will continue to encumber Title VI, Part B funds on a fee-for-service basis. When supported employment services exhaust Title VI, Part B funds, DORS counselors shall be instructed to encumber Title I funds. In that way, individuals in need of supported employment services will continue to be served, even when Title VI, Part B funds are exhausted. DORS counselors will expend Title VI, Part B funds after receipt of documentation confirming the provision of extended services. In compliance with the Rehabilitation Act, as amended, DORS will expend Title I dollars until an extended source of funding has been obtained. The goal of the State's supported employment program is to maintain a system whereby individuals with the most significant disabilities are afforded the opportunity to participate in integrated competitive employment. It is estimated that 4,000 individuals with the most significant disabilities will be served in FY17 in supported employment.

**2. Describe the activities to be conducted, with funds reserved pursuant to section 603(d), for youth with the most significant disabilities, including:**

**A. the provision of extended services for a period not to exceed 4 years; and**

DORS will continue to encumber Title VI, Part B funds on a fee-for-service basis. When supported employment services exhaust Title VI, Part B funds, DORS counselors shall be instructed to encumber Title I funds. In that way, individuals in need of supported employment services will continue to be served, even when Title VI, Part B funds are exhausted. DORS counselors will expend Title VI, Part B funds after receipt of documentation confirming the provision of extended services. In compliance with the Rehabilitation Act, as amended, DORS will expend Title I dollars until an extended source of funding has been obtained. The goal of the State's supported employment program is to maintain a system whereby individuals with the most significant disabilities are afforded the opportunity to participate in integrated competitive employment. It is estimated that 4,000 individuals with the most significant

disabilities will be served in FY17 in supported employment.

The MOU with the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's Developmental Disabilities Administration will outline services and timelines for extended supported employment services, for a period of up to 4 years, through vocational rehabilitation for youth with the most significant disabilities.

## **B. how the State will leverage other public and private funds to increase resources for extended services and expanded supported employment opportunities for youth with the most significant disabilities.**

It is estimated that 1,250 transitioning students will be served in supported employment. In accordance with WIOA requirements, DORS will be setting aside 50 percent of its Supported Employment allotment as well as a 10 percent match to provide supported employment services, including extended services to youth with the most significant disabilities for a period not to exceed four years. There has been a steady growth in the numbers of individuals with serious and persistent mental illness being served in supported employment.

DORS will continue to collaborate with the State educational system to ensure that appropriate services are provided to students with disabilities under IDEA and the vocational rehabilitation and supported employment, including extended services. Further partnership and collaboration with the State educational system will assist in assisting youth with the most significant disabilities achieve an outcome of supported employment in competitive integrated employment.

DORS and the Maryland Behavioral Health Administration collaborate in provision of supported employment services to youth and adults with persistent mental illness at approximately 29 community programs throughout the State. Further, DORS and the Maryland Behavioral Health Administration work with the Evidence-Based Practice Center at the University of Maryland to promote the Evidence-Based Supported Employment initiative. The initiative now includes 13 of the community programs statewide that meet Evidence-based Supported Employment fidelity.

DORS supports the use of supported employment models that maximize integration of youth and adults with the most significant disabilities in real work sites, doing meaningful work. The Division encourages expansion of models beyond enclaves and does not support the use of bench work models. DORS policy includes a strong preference for individual placement models.

The estimated number of individuals with significant disabilities who will achieve a supported employment outcome during FY 2017 is 775 individuals.

DORS will access community rehabilitation programs, public resources, and private resources that have received funding from private grants, not funded by VR, so that youth with the most significant disabilities may participate.

DORS will collaborate with the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's (DHMH) Behavioral Health Administration in the provision of pre-employment transition services and VR transition services to youth experiencing first episode psychosis. DORS will determine the feasibility of implementing the braided funding model currently used in providing traditional and evidence-based mental health supported employment.

DORS will develop Evidence-Based Practices with DHMH, Behavioral Health Administration in providing employment supports to youth with psychiatric disabilities and determine the feasibility using the braided funding model currently used in providing traditional and evidence-based mental health supported employment.

## **o. State's Strategies**

Describe the required strategies and how the agency will use these strategies to achieve its goals and priorities, support innovation and expansion activities, and overcome any barriers to accessing the VR and the Supported Employment programs (See sections 101(a)(15)(D) and (18)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act and section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA)):

### **1. The methods to be used to expand and improve services to individuals with disabilities.**

Expanding & Improving Services to Individuals with Disabilities • DORS will continually analyze office locations, staff deployment, staff positions and responsibilities, in accordance with DORS mission to more effectively serve students and adults with disabilities, and in collaboration with the WIOA Partners; • The 2016 Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment will include an assessment

and recommendations for expanding and improving services to students and adults with disabilities; • In collaboration with the WIOA Partners, DORS will establish linkages with businesses and employers to include training, customized employment, education and disability awareness, on-site worksite assistive technology services, and mentoring/internship activities; • DORS will continue to enhance relationships with Community Rehabilitation Programs to ensure availability of Community Rehabilitation Program services statewide; • DORS will continue to expand services and outreach to individuals who are deaf-blind and provide technical assistance to staff and WIOA Partners serving this population; • In collaboration with WIOA Partners, DORS will develop relationships with employers and analyze labor trends, to increase opportunities for employment of populations that are unserved or underserved.

## **2. How a broad range of assistive technology services and devices will be provided to individuals with disabilities at each stage of the rehabilitation process and on a statewide basis.**

The Division of Rehabilitation Services, Workforce & Technology Center's Rehabilitation Technology Services (RTS) program is a national leader in providing worksite evaluation and assistive technology services that help people with disabilities get and maintain employment. Through the effective use of assistive technology, Rehabilitation Technology Services staff solve problems for people who have limitations in communication, mobility, vision and thinking. • Rehabilitation Technology Services provides services to DORS consumers and employers in the areas of worksite job accommodations, adaptive driving, assistive technology assessment and training, and residential modification consultation. Examples of assistive technology provided included hand controls for cars, ramps and stair glides for the home, alternative keyboards and mice or screen magnification and screen readers for computers, and specialized computer-based writing tools. Rehabilitation Technology Services include assistive technology, driver and vehicle services, residential modifications, and worksite evaluations. • DORS policies and procedures will continue to support statewide assistive technology services and devices for consumers at each stage of the rehabilitation process.

Consumers in need of assistive technology are referred to RTS from the VR Field Counselors at any stage of the of the rehabilitation process. Customized assistive technology assessments are conducted to determine the appropriate assistive technology that will assist consumers with their employment goals. Assistive technology assessments and services are provided either at the Workforce Technology Center, or RTS staff travel statewide to make the services available to consumers in their communities. Additionally, RTS worksite services, such as assistive technology assessments and assistive technology training, are available to consumers in the work setting to help individuals with disabilities remain employed. Worksite services staff work with the individual and their employer to determine the accommodation(s) needed for the employee's job.

## **3. The outreach procedures that will be used to identify and serve individuals with disabilities who are minorities, including those with the most significant disabilities, as well as those who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program.**

• DORS will continue to provide staff resources and staff training to support Evidence-Based Practice Supported Employment and consumers who receive Assertive Community Treatment services; • The DORS multi-cultural workgroup will continue to develop and publicize specialized resources for minority groups, focusing on Hispanic and Asian consumers; • DORS will continue strategic activities to enhance the agency's capacity to meet the unique needs of students and adults with autism spectrum disorders who are preparing for employment; • DORS will enhance utilization of the Acquired Brain Injury program and continue meetings with Acquired Brain Injury VR Specialists, to include Transitioning Youth Specialists; • DORS will pilot the Rehabilitation Communication Specialists for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing; and, • Through the WIOA Jobseeker Advisory Focus Groups and additional means, DORS will seek input of minorities, those with the most significant disabilities, and those who have been unserved or underserved at statewide public meetings and at quarterly State Rehabilitation Council meetings.

## **4. The methods to be used to improve and expand VR services for students with disabilities, including the coordination of services designed to facilitate the transition of such students from school to postsecondary life (including the receipt of VR services, postsecondary education, employment, and pre-employment transition services).**

DORS provides VR services and pre-employment transition services in partnership with local education agencies, workforce partners, and businesses that lead to successful outcomes in post-secondary education and employment for students with disabilities. • DORS will ensure that VR counselors and staff work with high school students (including those in special education, with 504 plans, with severe medical conditions, and those who have a disability for purposes of section 504), families, school personnel and community partners to help students prepare for and achieve employment and self-sufficiency; • DORS will continue

to emphasize and implement evidence-based transition practices, including work-based experiences such as Project Search, internships, and summer employment to promote long-term career success and leadership, including expanding transitioning services at the Workforce & Technology Center (especially for consumers not planning to attend college); • DORS will implement the provision of Pre-Employment Transition Services as outlined in the Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act, including the following services: Job Exploration Counseling, Work-based learning experiences, Counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or post-secondary educational programs, Workplace readiness training, and Instruction on Self-Advocacy for high school students with disabilities who are 14-21 years old; • The Division will continue to provide training and support to transition counselors through the Transition Specialists Group and other meetings, the Transition Conference, and training programs. Training shall help counselors identify and develop tools and resources related to post-secondary education, and best practices in working with families and transitioning students. The agency will also collaborate with Developmental Disabilities Administration and clarify procedures to ensure seamless transition for individuals receiving Developmental Disabilities Administration assistance.

## **5. If applicable, plans for establishing, developing, or improving community rehabilitation programs within the State.**

- DORS is exploring means of monitoring Community Rehabilitation Programs to assure accountability and quality of services;
- DORS is also exploring payment rates and systems of payment which incentivize outcomes and are fair to providers; and,
- DORS promotes the availability of Community Rehabilitation Programs that serve unserved and underserved populations.

## **6. Strategies to improve the performance of the State with respect to the performance accountability measures under section 116 of WIOA.**

- DORS will continue to actively participate with the WIOA Partners on the Performance Accountability WIOA Workgroup. The collaboration will ensure effective and efficient implementation of new common performance accountability measures in Maryland, identification of best presentation of WIOA performance reports for State and Local Areas, development of recommendations for additional measures, and negotiation of levels of performance/adjustment factors;
- DORS and the other WIOA Core Programs will establish base-line or benchmarking data in the first year of data collection for the new Common Performance measures;
- In order to secure wage data for DORS consumers working in other States, DORS will explore strategies with DLLR to access Wage Record Interchange System wage reporting system;
- DORS will review data sharing agreement with the WIOA Partners as described within this plan for possible revisions to have better access to wage data; and,
- Federal employment data is available through FEDES, which is operated by the University of Baltimore, Jacob France Institute under contract with DLLR and the U.S. Department of Labor. DORS will work with WIOA Partners to review existing agreement and take appropriate actions to ensure access to federal wage records.

## **7. Strategies for assisting other components of the statewide workforce development system in assisting individuals with disabilities.**

- DORS is collaborating with its WIOA Partners, including those within the American Job Centers throughout the State, on office space. As leases expire, DORS will look for opportunities to expand the co-location of DORS and other WIOA Partners, in an effort to assist in better serving individuals with disabilities;
- DORS will collaborate with WIOA Partners to offer cross-training on disability awareness, customized employment, assistive technology, and other disability-specific topics;
- DORS Business Service members will collaborate with WIOA Partner Business Service teams to leverage business contacts, share resources and expertise, and coordinate services that are beneficial to businesses and promote the employment of individuals with disabilities; and,
- DORS will coordinate with WIOA Partners, including WIOA Business Services Team and American Job Centers in recruitment events and job fairs.

## **8. How the agency's strategies will be used to:**

### **A. achieve goals and priorities by the State, consistent with the comprehensive needs assessment;**

DORS has developed a Strategic Plan for 2014-2017. In order to achieve the best employment outcomes for students and adults

with significant disabilities, DORS is committed to assuring a responsive, accountable agency structured to meet consumer needs, to support staff, to develop leadership, to enhance partnerships, and to take full advantage of the technology and resources of today and tomorrow. Strategic goals of the plan include the following: • Goal 1. Organization structure evolves in supporting the success of consumers in a manner that reflects statutory and regulatory requirements, respect for consumer, and equitable working conditions for staff; • Goal 2. Information technology further enhances administration of the Vocational Rehabilitation and Supported Employment programs, provisions of services, and achievement of employment for students and adults with significant disabilities; • Goal 3. Partnerships with Community Rehabilitation Providers are improved through enhanced monitoring practices and payment systems and rates; and, • Goal 4. Future agency leaders are recognized and developed.

## **B. support innovation and expansion activities; and**

DORS has developed a Strategic Plan for 2014-2017. In order to achieve the best employment outcomes for students and adults with significant disabilities, DORS is committed to assuring a responsive, accountable agency structured to meet consumer needs, to support staff, to develop leadership, to enhance partnerships, and to take full advantage of the technology and resources of today and tomorrow. Strategic goals of the plan include the following: • Goal 1. Organization structure evolves in supporting the success of consumers in a manner that reflects statutory and regulatory requirements, respect for consumer, and equitable working conditions for staff; • Goal 2. Information technology further enhances administration of the Vocational Rehabilitation and Supported Employment programs, provisions of services, and achievement of employment for students and adults with significant disabilities; • Goal 3. Partnerships with Community Rehabilitation Providers are improved through enhanced monitoring practices and payment systems and rates; and, • Goal 4. Future agency leaders are recognized and developed.

Strategies will be used to support innovation and expansion activities as follows:

- Expanding pre-employment transition services to students with disabilities by providing financial support for the development of pre-employment transition services in the community, in partnership with local school systems and community rehabilitation programs.
- Supporting the funding of the Maryland State Rehabilitation Council activities to enhance services to students, youth, and adults in Maryland with significant disabilities.
- Creating new Project SEARCH sites in diverse locations throughout the state. New sites will focus strictly on students with disabilities who are transitioning from high school.
- Expanding Autism services at the Workforce and Technology Center (WTC) for consumers diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder and who are referred to WTC from local field offices.
- Providing grant support, technical assistance, and monitoring to the Statewide Independent Living Council.
- Expanding and developing innovative pre-employment transition services to students with disabilities by creating personnel positions dedicated solely to providing PETS to students with disabilities while they are enrolled in high school.
- Developing innovative pre-employment transition services at the Workforce and Technology Center.
- Expanding the Workforce and Technology Center's Rehabilitation Technology Services to provide more assistive technology to transitioning students, youth, and adults with significant disabilities, enhancing their education, training, and employment experiences.

## **C. overcome identified barriers relating to equitable access to and participation of individuals with disabilities in the State VR Services Program and the State Supported Employment Services Program.**

The following strategies will be used to overcome barriers relating to equitable access to and participation of individuals in the State VR Services Program and the State Supported Employment Services Program:

- Interpreter services at the Workforce Technology Center (WTC) are expanding to better meet the needs of consumers who are deaf, hard of hearing, or deaf-blind and who have been referred from local VR field counselors for assessment, training, educational supports, and assistive technology services at WTC.
- DORS is piloting a Rehabilitation Communication Specialist service model to enhance communication and services to individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing.
- DORS has a stronger presence at American Job Centers throughout the State. The agency is collaborating with local Workforce Investment Boards to expand opportunities for workforce partners to co-locate for the purpose of providing superior customer service to job seekers, including those with significant disabilities. Accessibility of all American Job Center facilities and programs is a priority of the State.
- The agency's Multi-Cultural Committee has been reinstated to provide education and support to staff on cultural issues. The

committee will explore methods of reaching out to unserved and underserved individuals with disabilities from various ethnic backgrounds.

- The 2016 Statewide Needs Assessment will identify areas of need related to unserved or underserved populations and to the availability of vocational rehabilitation services statewide.
- DORS will collaborate with other WIOA partners to provide seamless services to individuals with disabilities receiving assistance from the State's Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation, Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning; Temporary Aid for Needy Families (TANF); ex-offenders re-entering the workforce; and veterans.
- DORS is collaborating with the State's Behavioral Health Administration to develop evidence based practice in providing employment services to youth with psychiatric disabilities and to develop pre-employment transition services and VR services to youth experiencing first episode psychosis.

## **p. Evaluation and Reports of Progress: VR and Supported Employment Goals**

Describe:

**1. An evaluation of the extent to which the VR program goals described in the approved VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan for the most recently completed program year were achieved. The evaluation must:**

**A. Identify the strategies that contributed to the achievement of the goals.**

**Goal 1: Assure high-quality employment outcomes for individuals with significant and most significant disabilities in Maryland through the vocational rehabilitation program.**

**Objective 1.1 Provide rehabilitation services in partnership with local education agencies that lead to successful outcomes in post-secondary education and employment for students with disabilities.**

Strategies: DORS will

1. Ensure that VR counselors and staff work with student (including those in special education, or with 504 plans or severe medical conditions), families, school personnel and community partners to help students achieve employment and self-sufficiency.
2. Continue to emphasize and implement evidence-based transition practices, including work-based experiences such as Project Search, internships and summer employment to promote long-term career success and leadership, including expanding transitioning services at the Workforce & Technology Center (especially for consumers not planning to attend college).
3. Provide training and support to DORS transition counselors through the Transition Specialists Group and other meetings, the Transition Conference and training programs. Training shall help counselors identify and develop tools and resources related to post-secondary education, and best practices in working with families and transitioning students. Collaborate with DDA and clarify procedures to ensure seamless transition for individuals receiving DDA assistance.

Performance Measures by September 30, 2015:

- a. The number of transitioning individuals served will match or exceed those served in the previous year, including an increase in the number of students with 504 plans compared with the previous year

9,049 transition youth were provided VR services, including 181 students with 504 plans (FY 14: 134). Compared to FY 14, during which 9,303 transition youth were served, this is an overall decrease of 3%, reflecting the 14.5% increase in transition youth on the waiting list for VR services from 611 in FY 14 to 700 in FY 15. In addition, the Division began using a new case type in AWARE to provide pre-employment transition services to students who were either potentially eligible or who had been found eligible and were on the waiting list for VR services. By the end of FY 15, the Division had opened 14 cases for these students and implemented pre-employment transition services plans for five of them. The Division continues its on-going commitment to transition youth in Maryland by planning to hire 6 additional counselors in FY 16, who will be dedicated to providing pre-employment transition services.

b. There will be an increase in transitioning students who achieve employment compared with the previous year.

831 transitioning students achieved employment; up 2% from FY 14 during which 815 transitioning students achieved employment.

c. Grants and funding will be provided to support leadership programs for youth with disabilities.

Per agreement with Independence Now, Inc., DORS contributed \$9,730 in financial support for the Maryland Youth Leadership Forum in which 7 DORS students participated.

d. The DORS Transition Specialists Group will meet at least semiannually and include staff training on pertinent topics, and will identify, develop and disseminate tools and resources for transitioning students related to post-secondary education and Skills2Compete.

During FY 15, the Transition Specialist Group met for training on October 1, 2014, February 25, 2015, and July 30, 2015. In October, training topics included presentations by the Development Disabilities Administration and Resource Coordination on Medicaid waiver eligibility and services as well as targeted case management; the Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation on transition initiatives as a result of WIOA; and opportunities available as part of the Maryland Apprenticeship & Training Program. In February, the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene provided training on suicide prevention, signs and symptoms to recognize, and resources available; the DORS Program Income Unit discussed Social Security benefits and pertinent info related to transitioning youth; and a representative from the Job Corp presented on training programs available through that program. The July meeting was devoted to new procedures related to DORS Pre-Employment Transition Services, and this training was immediately followed by an Administrative Instruction and a Program Directive released in August on this topic. Finally, in September 2015, the Pre-Employment Transition Services Fact Sheet was disseminated to DORS staff as a tool to explain these services to students and families

## **Objective 1.2 DORS will provide high quality services and outcomes for individuals with disabilities served by the Office of Field Services (OFS)**

Strategies: DORS will

1. Provide high quality comprehensive services to eligible individuals with significant disabilities in keeping with the Rehabilitation Act and Federal Regulations, the Code of Maryland regulation, and DORS Policy.
2. The newly hired Business Services Representatives in each region will assist with identifying and implementing strategies to assist consumers in achieving middle-skill (Skills2Compete) as well as professional, managerial and technical positions and higher earnings (Needs Assessment Rec. 1 and 10).
3. The newly hired Business Services Representatives in each region will assist with enhancing linkages with businesses and employers to include customized training, use of OJT and internships, education and disability awareness.
4. Continue to enhance relationship with community rehabilitation programs through increased participation from OFS management in conjunction with the Staff Specialist for Community Rehabilitation Programs (Needs Assessment Rec. 2).

Performance Measures by September 30, 2015:

Meet or exceed federal performance indicators for VR services.End-Year:

Standard 1.1: Number of closed cases with an employment outcome

Current Year 2015: 2,559

Previous Year 2014: 2,545

2015 DORS Objective: 2,560

Standard 1.2: Of closed cases that received services, percentage with an employment outcome.

Current Year 2015: 59.65%

Previous Year 2014: 59.09%

2015 Objective: 55.8%

Standard 1.3: Of closed cases with an employment outcome, percentage that have a wage greater than or equal to the minimum wage.

Current Year 2015: 95.38%

Previous Year 2014: 95.09%

2015 Objective: 72.6%

Standard 1.4: Of closed cases with an employment outcome that have a wage greater than or equal to minimum wage, percentage that have significant disabilities.

Current Year 2015: 100%

Previous Year 2014: 100%

2015 Objective: 62.4%

Standard 1.5: Ratio of average state wage to the average wage of closed cases with employment outcome that have wages greater than or equal to minimum wage.

Current Year 2015: .44

Previous Year 2014: .42

2015 Objective: .52

Standard 1.6: Difference between the percentage of closed cases with employment outcomes that have wage greater than or equal to minimum wage that are self-support at application and the percent of closed cases with employment outcomes that have a wage greater than or equal to the minimum wage that are self-support at closure.

Current Year 2015: 68.60%

Previous Year 2014: 67.69%

2015 Objective: 53.0%

Standard 2.1: Ratio of minority service rate to non-minority service rate.

Current Year 2015: .894

Previous Year 2014: .842

2015 Objective: .80

DORS met five of the six primary standards and indicators, and achieved 99.96% of its aspirational rehabilitation goal (2,560). DORS has a pattern of not achieving Standard 1.5, due to the state's high per capita income.

a. OFS will achieve at least 85% consumer satisfaction.

83% customer satisfaction achieved. Goal unmet due to dip in overall customer satisfaction with timeliness of services (FY 14: 86% to FY 15: 75%)

OFS will achieve 2360 employment outcomes. 2,386 employment outcomes achieved (FY 13: 2,377).

b. Achieve at least 90% in presumption of eligibility in SSI and SSDI cases.

88.94% presumption of eligibility timeliness achieved. Eligibility timeliness dipped below 90% during this timeframe in part due to numerous vacancies experienced statewide. Strategies to increase management oversight in FY 16 are being considered.

c. Consumers will achieve an increase in average hourly earnings from the previous year.

\$10.84 (FY 14: \$10.50)

d. More consumers will achieve professional, technical and managerial positions than in the previous year.

280 (FY 14: 259)

e. Will continue to report middle-skill career achievement related to Skills2Compete required by the governor's office.

S2C Metric Numbers for State Year 2014 reported on October 15, 2014 at the request of the Governor's Workforce Investment Board.

### **Objective 1.3**

#### **DORS will provide high-quality services and outcomes for individuals who are blind and vision impaired (B/VI).**

Strategies: DORS will

1. Provide high quality comprehensive services to eligible individuals who are blind and vision impaired in keeping with the Rehabilitation Act and Federal Regulations, the Code of Maryland regulation, the Randolph Shepard Act and DORS Policy.
2. Provide independent living services to older individuals who are blind through (1) direct services of DORS rehabilitation teachers and (2) grants to community organizations.
3. Collaborate with WTC in assuring that Blind and Visually Impaired consumers have equal access to all programs available at WTC.
4. Enhance linkages with businesses and employers to include customized training, education and disability awareness, work site AT services and mentoring/internship activities, raising awareness and expectations for competitive employment for consumers who are blind/visually impaired.
5. Increase services and outreach to individuals who are deaf-blind and provide technical assistance to staff serving this population (Needs Assessment Rec. 7).
6. Recruit and train Maryland Business Enterprise Program for the Blind vendors.

Performance Measures by September 30, 2015:

- a. Meet or exceed federal performance indicators for services for blind/vision impaired.

End-Year:

Standard 1.1: Number of closed cases with an employment outcome

Current Year 2015: 173

Previous Year 2014: 166

(2015 DORS Objective: 180)

Standard 1.2: Of closed cases that received services, percentage with an employment outcome.

Current Year 2015: 73.62%

Previous Year 2014: 69.42%

2015 Objective: 55.8%

Standard 1.3: Of closed cases with an employment outcome, percentage that have a wage greater than or equal to the minimum wage.

Current Year 2015: 58.38%

Previous Year 2014: 63.10%

2015 Objective: 72.6%

Standard 1.4: Of closed cases with an employment outcome that have a wage greater than or equal to minimum wage, percentage that have significant disabilities.

Current Year 2015: 100%

Previous Year 2014: 100%

2015 Objective: 62.4%

Standard 1.5: Ratio of average state wage to the average wage of closed cases with employment outcome that have wages greater than or equal to minimum wage.

Current Year 2015: .67

Previous Year 2014: .72

2015 Objective: .52

Standard 1.6: Difference between the percentage of closed cases with employment outcomes that have wage greater than or equal to minimum wage that are self-support at application and the percent of closed cases with employment outcomes that have a wage greater than or equal to the minimum wage that are self-support at closure.

Current Year 2015: 54.455%

Previous Year 2014: 56.604%

2015 Objective: 53.000%

Standard 2.1: Ratio of minority service rate to non-minority service rate.

Current Year 2015: 1.045

Previous Year 2014: .933

2015 Objective: .800

Standards achieved for 5 of the 6 indicators, and 96% of aspirational goal (180) achieved. Standard 1.3 missed this year due to an 11% increase in the number of homemaker outcomes between FY 14 and FY 15.

b. OBVS will achieve 180 employment outcomes.

173 outcomes achieved, despite numerous vacancies throughout the year.

c. The Business Enterprise Program will recruit/train/license three new managers and establish new vending sites where available.

BEP trained and licensed 4 vendors in FY 2015, including 1 new facility located at the National Cancer Institute (NCI).

d. Establish a baseline of ILOB outcomes in light of programmatic/service modifications and anticipated funding reductions.

In FY2015, 846 consumers were served under the ILOB program.

e. An increased number of consumers who are blind/vision impaired or deaf-blind will be referred to the WTC compared with the previous year.

?349 (312 blind/vision impaired and 37 deaf/blind) consumers served; down 3.5% from the previous year (362). Incorrect coding of the consumers' Deaf/Blind disability may have contributed to this decline. Efforts are underway to ensure that Deaf/Blind consumers are properly coded. A turnover in WTC staff also affected the number of consumers served. ?

f. Achieve a consumer satisfaction rate of 85%.

85% customer satisfaction achieved for SY15, ending June 30, 2015.

## **Objective 1.4**

### **Provide effective employment services at the Workforce & Technology Center using state-of-the-art interdisciplinary strategies.**

Strategies:

1. Provide high quality comprehensive services to individuals with significant disabilities to facilitate successful employment outcomes.
2. Develop relationships with employers utilizing agency staff who specialize in underserved populations to address service needs; as well as, issues and trends related to the employment of underserved disability populations.
3. Enhance linkages between employers, the business community, DORS Business Services staff, and community partners.
4. Explore strategies for WTC staff to collaborate with OFS to assist with workload issues, enhance consumer services, increase referrals to WTC, and contribute to successful employment outcomes.

Performance Measures by September 30, 2015:

a. Increase the number of consumers achieving employment outcomes compared to the previous year.

556 consumers achieved employment outcomes; previous year 572.? This is a 3% decline. A decrease in referrals to training programs contributed to the decline.

b. Increase the number of consumers in special populations (blind, deaf, deaf-blind, Autism) who will receive services compared to the previous year.

?172 consumers in special populations achieved employment after receiving WTC services in FY2015 or in previous years; down .58% from FY2014 (173). In FY2015, 753 consumers in special populations were served.

c. Increase the number of customized and/or partnership trainings from the previous year.

In FY 15, WTC provided ?10 customized and partnership trainings, compared to 8 customized and partnership trainings provided in FY 14.. FY 15 trainings included ?Art's Automotive, ATR Kennels, CCBC Auto Detailing 1 & 2, CCBC Childcare, CCBC PAWS, CCBC Refinishing, CCBC Security Guard, CCBC Warehouse x2, & Morgan State University Environmental Services.

d. Establish a division-wide work group which will develop a collaborative plan between OFS and WTC to enhance the Agency's delivery of effective and efficient consumer services.

?After collaboration with Field staff, it was decided that the WTC would assist Field Services by identifying and implementing various strategies which allows the WTC to assume responsibility for routine procedures. WTC has streamlined the required referral documentation for training programs. WTC now completes vendor authorizations for vendor services provided at WTC. WTC completes the entire process for ordering uniforms for training programs. WTC also completes the entire process for On-The-Job Training for WTC training graduates. Finally, WTC orders assistive technology equipment as needed to expedite the ordering and receipt of equipment and software applications.

Goal 2: This goal focuses on a non-Vocational Rehabilitation program (Disability Determination Services) that is outside of WIOA and not applicable to the WIOA State Plan

### **Goal 3: Partner and collaborate with public agencies, private organizations, employers, community groups**

**and individuals to advance the employment and independence of individuals with disabilities.**

**Objective 3.1 Enhance/expand services provided to individuals in special populations, within the capacities of the agency.**

Strategies:

1. Continue to provide staff resources and staff training to support Evidence-Based Practice Supported Employment (EBPSE) and consumers who receive Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) services (Needs Assessment Rec. 1).
2. Continue strategic activities that will enhance DORS capacity to meet the unique needs of individuals with autism spectrum disorders preparing for employment (Needs Assessment Rec. 4).
3. Enhance utilization of the Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) program and continue regularly scheduled meetings with ABI VR Specialists, to include Transitioning Youth VR Specialists, as appropriate.
4. Continue collaboration with DDA to implement *Employment First*.
5. The DORS multi-cultural workgroup will continue to develop and publicize specialized resources for minority groups, focusing on Hispanic and Asian consumers (Needs Assessment Rec. 5).
6. DORS will assure that liaison relationships are in place with Community Rehabilitation Programs, Community Colleges, Local Education Agencies, MANSEF Schools, and other organizations to enhance effectiveness and establish promising practices and procedures (Needs Assessment Rec. 2).
7. Pilot the Rehabilitation Communication Specialists (RCS) for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing in at least one region (Needs Assessment Rec. 6).

Performance Measures by September 30, 2015:

- a. An increased number of consumers will be served through EBPSE and ACT sites compared with the previous year.

2,783 served; up 21% from FY 14: (2,302)

- b. An increased number of consumers will be served in the Governor's Transition Youth Initiative compared with the previous year.

1,046 served; down 8% from FY 14 (1,139).

- c. Increase the number of Asian and Hispanic consumers served by DORS, compared with the previous year.

650 Asian consumers and 725 Hispanic consumers served; up 7% from the previous year of 607 (Asian) and .4% from the previous year of 722 (Hispanic).

- d. Increase the number of ABI consumers achieving employment compared with the previous year.

61 consumers with acquired brain injury achieved employment; down 16% from the previous year.

- e. Increase the number consumers with Autism served by DORS compared with the previous year.

2,150 consumers served; up 10.6% from the previous year (1,943).

- f. Assign a DORS staff person to contact and meet with each community college DDS office at least once per semester.

Staff assignments pending.

- g. Track and assess RCS pilot outcomes.

The Division is in the process of identifying interested vendors with the intention to begin the Rehabilitation Communication

Specialist (RCS) pilot in FY 16.

## Objective 3.2

### Enhance collaboration with and services to Maryland private and public employers.

Strategies: DORS will

1. Conduct at least quarterly meetings of Business Services Representatives and Business Services Specialists.
2. Participate in the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) national business network and bring national efforts and strategies, i.e., the Net, to Maryland.
3. Expand and increase internship opportunities, including QUEST; customized trainings; and On-the-Job Training opportunities for DORS consumers.

Performance Measures by September 30, 2015:

- a. Minutes of Business Services meetings and CSAVR national business network meetings will confirm activities and progress.

The new Program Manager of Business Relations was designated as the agency's CSAVR NET Point-of-Contact. She participated in NET POC Conference Calls as scheduled throughout the year with businesses and the National Employment Team, including the CSAVR Conference Employment Committee meeting and webinars on the Talent Acquisition Portal and Building Business Partnerships.

Business Services Representatives held conference calls to share regional updates and resources from October - February. The new Business Relations Branch began meeting monthly either in person or via conference call beginning April 2015.

- b. Trainings for all staff assigned to business services will be conducted on a regular basis.

The Business Services Representatives assigned to the Business Relations Branch as well as the Employment Specialists at the Workforce and Technology Center and the Office of Blindness and Vision Services met quarterly for training on AWARE documentation, building business relationships, collaborative efforts, labor market information and employer incentives, including usage of on-the-job training.

In addition, the regional Business Services Representatives participated in quarterly training with the Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation's business services representatives. Training agenda items focused on effective skills, strategies and collaboration for business outreach and quality services and real-time and projected labor market and economic development information.

- c. The number of internships, including QUEST, and On-the-Job Training opportunities will be tracked through the AWARE case management system.

During FY 15, DORS facilitated QUEST internships with Maryland state agencies for 46 consumers. In addition, 3 internships were developed for consumers with the Social Security Administration.

Of these 49 individuals who benefited from these work-based learning opportunities, 16 were closed successfully rehabilitated and 7 are in employed status, indicating 47% became employed after participation in the internship.

Training and promotion of using On-the-Job Training (OJT) as a hiring incentive resulted in 25 OJT agreements as documented via vendor authorization records, 20 more than the previous fiscal year.

Objective 3.3 DORS will provide support to the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) to maintain and enhance its leadership role in the oversight of vocational rehabilitation service delivery in Maryland.

Strategies:

1. DORS will ensure that it works with the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) in accordance with federal law and regulations and Council By-Laws.

2. Council members will review and comment on the annual agency program plan, DORS progress in meeting its performance goals, and DORS program accomplishments.

Performance Measures by September 30, 2015:

a. The Maryland SRC will conduct four (4) quarterly meetings including a meeting during the legislative session in Annapolis.

MSRC met on November 19, 2014, February 4, 2015 (legislative session), May 6, 2015, and September 9, 2015.

b. The Maryland SRC and DORS will conduct annual public meetings in preparation for developing the VR State Plan.

DORS and the Maryland State Rehabilitation Council (MSRC) held one statewide public meeting teleconference on April 15, 2015. Representatives from DORS' executive team, the MSRC, Office of Field Service (OFS), Office for Blindness and Vision Services (OBVS), Workforce & Technology Center (WTC), and Client Assistance Program (CAP), and DORS leadership development programs attended. 17+ individuals participated.

c. The Maryland SRC will submit its annual report to the Governor and RSA as required by law.

The MSRC 2014 Annual Report was submitted by December 31, 2014 as required.

#### Objective 3.4

Promote and enhance quality independent living outcomes for individuals with disabilities in Maryland through independent living programs.

#### Strategies

1. Provide grant support, technical assistance and monitoring to the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC).

2. Manage DORS grants to Centers for Independent Living (CILs), including providing technical assistance and monitoring regarding the IL program, the IL AT program, and fiscal responsibilities.

3. Participate as an IL Partner in implementation of the 2014-2016 State Plan for Independent Living.

4. Regional Directors and OBVS Supervisors will conduct an annual meeting with Executive Directors of CILs within their areas to discuss issues of mutual interest.

Performance Measures by September 30, 2015:

a. Annual reviews of grant performance will be conducted for each CIL with which DORS has a grant, and the Statewide Independent Living Council.

Due to loss of staff and scheduling conflicts, five out of the six FY 15 CIL reviews took place during the first quarter of FY 16, as follows: Monday, September 28, 2015 - Southern Maryland Center for IL; Friday, October 2, 2015 - Independence Now, Inc.; Friday, November 9, 2015 - Independent Marylander's Achieving Growth Through Empowerment, Inc.; Wednesday, October 14, 2015 - Bay Area Center for Independent Living; Tuesday, November 17 - Freedom Center, Inc.; Wednesday, November 23, Resources for Independence

b. Meeting minutes will confirm DORS staff attendance and participation in quarterly meetings of Maryland IL Partners.

Meeting minutes confirm attendance and participation at 3 (due to schedule conflicts) of the 4 quarterly scheduled meetings: June 29; October 23; and November 4.

c. DORS Regional/Program directors will confirm at least annual meetings with CIL Executive Directors.

During FY 15, the Regional Directors in Regions 3 and 5 met once and the Regional Director in Region 6 met routinely with the Executive Directors of CILs operating in their areas.

Goal 4: Provide Infrastructure to promote and support the accomplishment of the DORS mission.

Objective 4.1 Complete year 1 activities that support the goals and objectives of the DORS 2015-2018 Strategic Plan, in the areas of organizational structure, information technology, succession planning, and community partners.

Strategies: DORS will

1. Assign appropriate staff to work groups to see that strategic planning activities are carried out.
2. Assure that progress is made through presentations to the Executive Staff.

#### Objective 4.2

Staff training will be provided to assure that staff maintains current competencies in rehabilitation practice, special populations, and administrative issues; Leadership development programs will be offered (Needs Assessment Rec. 1).

Strategies:

1. Provide effective Vocational Rehabilitation training for all staff, to include but not limited to employment services, needs of and resources for targeted populations, and the role of the Counselor. (Needs Assessment Rec. 1).
2. Include Community Partners in DORS training and meetings as appropriate. (Needs Assessment Rec. 1).
3. Continue to expand on-line/web-based training modalities for training staff.
4. Plan and implement a Supervisor training series.
5. Provide leadership activities for staff and succession planning for the agency.
6. Provide training in current technologies.
7. Provide training to staff on changes to RSA federal reporting requirements.

Performance Measures by September 30, 2015:

- a. Staff training in rehabilitation topics, including special populations, will be available at least bi-monthly, to include community partners as appropriate.

?Rehabilitation Training which staff attended (DORS sponsored or other-wise) included topics related to: Autism (02 trainings), Vision Loss (14), Hearing Loss (13), Brain Injury (02), Mental Health (13), Transitioning Youth (07), Leadership/Management (20), Employment (14), and various trainings toward staff Professional Development (47). Community Partners were involved in 4 of the DORS sponsored trainings listed above.

- b. Staff will be trained on the new RSA federal reporting requirements.

?Staff were provided general instruction on the new RSA reporting requirements related to pre-employment transitioning services on July 30th, 2015.

- c. An increase in the provision of distance learning training opportunities for staff and community partners, as appropriate, will be demonstrated.

During FY 15, ?9 staff took on-line academic courses, and DORS supported or sponsored 22 on-line training events. Community Partners were not involved in any of the DORS sponsored on-line events.

- d. At least one multi-session leadership program will be offered annually.

During FY 15, 5 staff completed or participated in the National Rehabilitation Leadership Institute's: Executive Leadership program; and, 7 staff completed the DORS "Leadership Exploration and Agency Programs" program.

#### Objective 4.3

Enhance Quality Assurance

Strategies:

1. Beta test updated QA for the VR Program

Performance Measures by September 30, 2015:

- a. Beta testing of QA will be completed.

During FY 15, 24 out of 25 districts have been reviewed using the new Quality Assurance Review system, and the last remaining district is scheduled for review in November 2015.

b. Report of findings will be provided to Executive Staff.

Executive Staff were periodically updated on findings throughout the FY, and a number of policy and procedure updates suggested by the Quality Assurance team have already been implemented. Following the final district review, the core QA team will meet to prepare a final summary report with recommendations to be presented to Executive staff in the December 2015/January 2016 time frame.

#### Objective 4.4

Pending passage of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, including Title IV, Amendments to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and in consultation with the Rehabilitation Services Administration, the Maryland State Rehabilitation Council, and the Technical Assistance and Continuing Education program, implement changes required by the Act.

Strategies:

1. Establish a work group to review the Act and recommend changes in policy and practice accordingly.
2. Provide training to staff on changes in the Rehabilitation Act and implications for DORS policy and procedures. (Consider if the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act passes before we submit this in the State Plan.)

Performance Measures by September 30, 2015:

- a. DORS Rehabilitation Services Manuals will be updated consistent with changes in the Rehabilitation Act.

In progress, primarily pending final regulations.

- b. Training will be provided to DORS staff on changes resulting from the reauthorization of the Rehabilitation Act.

In July 2015, DORS staff were provided training on pre-employment transition services, related forms, and AWARE changes.

## **B. Describe the factors that impeded the achievement of the goals and priorities.**

### **Goal 1: Assure high-quality employment outcomes for individuals with significant and most significant disabilities in Maryland through the vocational rehabilitation program.**

**Objective 1.1 Provide rehabilitation services in partnership with local education agencies that lead to successful outcomes in post-secondary education and employment for students with disabilities.**

**Strategies: DORS will**

- 1. Ensure that VR counselors and staff work with student (including those in special education, or with 504 plans or severe medical conditions), families, school personnel and community partners to help students achieve employment and self-sufficiency.**
- 2. Continue to emphasize and implement evidence-based transition practices, including work-based experiences such as Project Search, internships and summer employment to promote long-term career success and leadership, including expanding transitioning services at the Workforce & Technology Center (especially for consumers not planning to attend college).**
- 3. Provide training and support to DORS transition counselors through the Transition Specialists Group and other meetings, the Transition Conference and training programs. Training shall help counselors identify and develop tools and resources related to post-secondary education, and best practices in working with**

families and transitioning students. Collaborate with DDA and clarify procedures to ensure seamless transition for individuals receiving DDA assistance.

**Performance Measures by September 30, 2015:**

a. The number of transitioning individuals served will match or exceed those served in the previous year, including an increase in the number of students with 504 plans compared with the previous year

9,049 transition youth were provided VR services, including 181 students with 504 plans (FY 14: 134). Compared to FY 14, during which 9,303 transition youth were served, this is an overall decrease of 3%, reflecting the 14.5% increase in transition youth on the waiting list for VR services from 611 in FY 14 to 700 in FY 15. In addition, the Division began using a new case type in AWARE to provide pre-employment transition services to students who were either potentially eligible or who had been found eligible and were on the waiting list for VR services. By the end of FY 15, the Division had opened 14 cases for these students and implemented pre-employment transition services plans for five of them. The Division continues its on-going commitment to transition youth in Maryland by planning to hire 6 additional counselors in FY 16, who will be dedicated to providing pre-employment transition services.

b. There will be an increase in transitioning students who achieve employment compared with the previous year.

831 transitioning students achieved employment; up 2% from FY 14 during which 815 transitioning students achieved employment.

c. Grants and funding will be provided to support leadership programs for youth with disabilities.

Per agreement with Independence Now, Inc., DORS contributed \$9,730 in financial support for the Maryland Youth Leadership Forum in which 7 DORS students participated.

d. The DORS Transition Specialists Group will meet at least semiannually and include staff training on pertinent topics, and will identify, develop and disseminate tools and resources for transitioning students related to post-secondary education and Skills2Compete.

During FY 15, the Transition Specialist Group met for training on October 1, 2014, February 25, 2015, and July 30, 2015. In October, training topics included presentations by the Development Disabilities Administration and Resource Coordination on Medicaid waiver eligibility and services as well as targeted case management; the Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation on transition initiatives as a result of WIOA; and opportunities available as part of the Maryland Apprenticeship & Training Program. In February, the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene provided training on suicide prevention, signs and symptoms to recognize, and resources available; the DORS Program Income Unit discussed Social Security benefits and pertinent info related to transitioning youth; and a representative from the Job Corp presented on training programs available through that program. The July meeting was devoted to new procedures related to DORS Pre-Employment Transition Services, and this training was immediately followed by an Administrative Instruction and a Program Directive released in August on this topic. Finally, in September 2015, the Pre-Employment Transition Services Fact Sheet was disseminated to DORS staff as a tool to explain these services to students and families

**Objective 1.2 DORS will provide high quality services and outcomes for individuals with disabilities served by the Office of Field Services (OFS)**

**Strategies: DORS will**

**1. Provide high quality comprehensive services to eligible individuals with significant disabilities in keeping with the Rehabilitation Act and Federal Regulations, the Code of Maryland regulation, and DORS Policy.**

2. The newly hired Business Services Representatives in each region will assist with identifying and implementing strategies to assist consumers in achieving middle-skill (Skills2Compete) as well as professional, managerial and technical positions and higher earnings (Needs Assessment Rec. 1 and 10).

3. The newly hired Business Services Representatives in each region will assist with enhancing linkages with businesses and employers to include customized training, use of OJT and internships, education and disability awareness.

4. Continue to enhance relationship with community rehabilitation programs through increased participation from OFS management in conjunction with the Staff Specialist for Community Rehabilitation Programs (Needs Assessment Rec. 2).

**Performance Measures by September 30, 2015:**

**Meet or exceed federal performance indicators for VR services.End-Year:**

**Standard 1.1: Number of closed cases with an employment outcome**

**Current Year 2015: 2,559**

**Previous Year 2014: 2,545**

**2015 DORS Objective: 2,560**

**Standard 1.2: Of closed cases that received services, percentage with an employment outcome.**

**Current Year 2015: 59.65%**

**Previous Year 2014: 59.09%**

**2015 Objective: 55.8%**

**Standard 1.3: Of closed cases with an employment outcome, percentage that have a wage greater than or equal to the minimum wage.**

**Current Year 2015: 95.38%**

**Previous Year 2014: 95.09%**

**2015 Objective: 72.6%**

**Standard 1.4: Of closed cases with an employment outcome that have a wage greater than or equal to minimum wage, percentage that have significant disabilities.**

**Current Year 2015: 100%**

**Previous Year 2014: 100%**

**2015 Objective: 62.4%**

**Standard 1.5: Ratio of average state wage to the average wage of closed cases with employment outcome that have wages greater than or equal to minimum wage.**

**Current Year 2015: .44**

**Previous Year 2014: .42**

**2015 Objective: .52**

**Standard 1.6: Difference between the percentage of closed cases with employment outcomes that have wage greater than or equal to minimum wage that are self-support at application and the percent of closed cases with employment outcomes that have a wage greater than or equal to the minimum wage that are self-support at closure.**

**Current Year 2015: 68.60%**

**Previous Year 2014: 67.69%**

**2015 Objective: 53.0%**

**Standard 2.1: Ratio of minority service rate to non-minority service rate.**

**Current Year 2015: .894**

**Previous Year 2014: .842**

**2015 Objective: .80**

**DORS met five of the six primary standards and indicators, and achieved 99.96% of its aspirational rehabilitation goal (2,560). DORS has a pattern of not achieving Standard 1.5, due to the state's high per capita income.**

**a. OFS will achieve at least 85% consumer satisfaction.**

**83% customer satisfaction achieved. Goal unmet due to dip in overall customer satisfaction with timeliness of services (FY 14: 86% to FY 15: 75%)**

**OFS will achieve 2360 employment outcomes. 2,386 employment outcomes achieved (FY 13: 2,377).**

**b. Achieve at least 90% in presumption of eligibility in SSI and SSDI cases.**

**88.94% presumption of eligibility timeliness achieved. Eligibility timeliness dipped below 90% during this timeframe in part due to numerous vacancies experienced statewide. Strategies to increase management oversight in FY 16 are being considered.**

**c. Consumers will achieve an increase in average hourly earnings from the previous year.**

**\$10.84 (FY 14: \$10.50)**

**d. More consumers will achieve professional, technical and managerial positions than in the previous year.**

**280 (FY 14: 259)**

**e. Will continue to report middle-skill career achievement related to Skills2Compete required by the governor's office.**

**S2C Metric Numbers for State Year 2014 reported on October 15, 2014 at the request of the Governor's Workforce Investment Board.**

**Objective 1.3**

**DORS will provide high-quality services and outcomes for individuals who are blind and vision impaired (B/VI).**

**Strategies: DORS will**

- 1. Provide high quality comprehensive services to eligible individuals who are blind and vision impaired in keeping with the Rehabilitation Act and Federal Regulations, the Code of Maryland regulation, the Randolph Shepard Act and DORS Policy.**
- 2. Provide independent living services to older individuals who are blind through (1) direct services of DORS rehabilitation teachers and (2) grants to community organizations.**
- 3. Collaborate with WTC in assuring that Blind and Visually Impaired consumers have equal access to all programs available at WTC.**
- 4. Enhance linkages with businesses and employers to include customized training, education and disability awareness, work site AT services and mentoring/internship activities, raising awareness and expectations for competitive employment for consumers who are blind/visually impaired.**
- 5. Increase services and outreach to individuals who are deaf-blind and provide technical assistance to staff serving this population (Needs Assessment Rec. 7).**
- 6. Recruit and train Maryland Business Enterprise Program for the Blind vendors.**

**Performance Measures by September 30, 2015:**

- a. Meet or exceed federal performance indicators for services for blind/vision impaired.**

**End-Year:**

**Standard 1.1: Number of closed cases with an employment outcome**

**Current Year 2015: 173**

**Previous Year 2014: 166**

**(2015 DORS Objective: 180)**

**Standard 1.2: Of closed cases that received services, percentage with an employment outcome.**

**Current Year 2015: 73.62%**

**Previous Year 2014: 69.42%**

**2015 Objective: 55.8%**

**Standard 1.3: Of closed cases with an employment outcome, percentage that have a wage greater than or equal to the minimum wage.**

**Current Year 2015: 58.38%**

**Previous Year 2014: 63.10%**

**2015 Objective: 72.6%**

**Standard 1.4: Of closed cases with an employment outcome that have a wage greater than or equal to minimum wage, percentage that have significant disabilities.**

**Current Year 2015: 100%**

**Previous Year 2014: 100%**

**2015 Objective: 62.4%**

**Standard 1.5: Ratio of average state wage to the average wage of closed cases with employment outcome that have wages greater than or equal to minimum wage.**

**Current Year 2015: .67**

**Previous Year 2014: .72**

**2015 Objective: .52**

**Standard 1.6: Difference between the percentage of closed cases with employment outcomes that have wage greater than or equal to minimum wage that are self-support at application and the percent of closed cases with employment outcomes that have a wage greater than or equal to the minimum wage that are self-support at closure.**

**Current Year 2015: 54.455%**

**Previous Year 2014: 56.604%**

**2015 Objective: 53.000%**

**Standard 2.1: Ratio of minority service rate to non-minority service rate.**

**Current Year 2015: 1.045**

**Previous Year 2014: .933**

**2015 Objective: .800**

**Standards achieved for 5 of the 6 indicators, and 96% of aspirational goal (180) achieved. Standard 1.3 missed this year due to an 11% increase in the number of homemaker outcomes between FY 14 and FY 15.**

**b. OBVS will achieve 180 employment outcomes.**

**173 outcomes achieved, despite numerous vacancies throughout the year.**

**c. The Business Enterprise Program will recruit/train/license three new managers and establish new vending sites where available.**

**BEP trained and licensed 4 vendors in FY 2015, including 1 new facility located at the National Cancer Institute (NCI).**

**d. Establish a baseline of ILOB outcomes in light of programmatic/service modifications and anticipated funding reductions.**

**In FY2015, 846 consumers were served under the ILOB program.**

**e. An increased number of consumers who are blind/vision impaired or deaf-blind will be referred to the WTC compared with the previous year.**

**?349 (312 blind/vision impaired and 37 deaf/blind) consumers served; down 3.5% from the previous year (362). Incorrect coding of the consumers' Deaf/Blind disability may have contributed to this decline. Efforts are underway to ensure that Deaf/Blind consumers are properly coded. A turnover in WTC staff also affected the number of consumers served. ?**

**f. Achieve a consumer satisfaction rate of 85%.**

**85% customer satisfaction achieved for SY15, ending June 30, 2015.**

#### **Objective 1.4**

**Provide effective employment services at the Workforce & Technology Center using state-of-the-art interdisciplinary strategies.**

#### **Strategies:**

- 1. Provide high quality comprehensive services to individuals with significant disabilities to facilitate successful employment outcomes.**
- 2. Develop relationships with employers utilizing agency staff who specialize in underserved populations to address service needs; as well as, issues and trends related to the employment of underserved disability populations.**
- 3. Enhance linkages between employers, the business community, DORS Business Services staff, and community partners.**
- 4. Explore strategies for WTC staff to collaborate with OFS to assist with workload issues, enhance consumer services, increase referrals to WTC, and contribute to successful employment outcomes.**

#### **Performance Measures by September 30, 2015:**

**a. Increase the number of consumers achieving employment outcomes compared to the previous year.**

**556 consumers achieved employment outcomes; previous year 572. This is a 3% decline. A decrease in referrals to training programs contributed to the decline.**

**b. Increase the number of consumers in special populations (blind, deaf, deaf-blind, Autism) who will receive services compared to the previous year.**

**172 consumers in special populations achieved employment after receiving WTC services in FY2015 or in previous years; down .58% from FY2014 (173). In FY2015, 753 consumers in special populations were served.**

**c. Increase the number of customized and/or partnership trainings from the previous year.**

**In FY 15, WTC provided 10 customized and partnership trainings, compared to 8 customized and partnership trainings provided in FY 14. FY 15 trainings included Art's Automotive, ATR Kennels, CCBC Auto Detailing 1 & 2, CCBC Childcare, CCBC PAWS, CCBC Refinishing, CCBC Security Guard, CCBC Warehouse x2, & Morgan State University Environmental Services.**

**d. Establish a division-wide work group which will develop a collaborative plan between OFS and WTC to enhance the Agency's delivery of effective and efficient consumer services.**

**After collaboration with Field staff, it was decided that the WTC would assist Field Services by identifying and implementing various strategies which allows the WTC to assume responsibility for routine procedures. WTC has streamlined the required referral documentation for training programs. WTC now completes vendor**

authorizations for vendor services provided at WTC. WTC completes the entire process for ordering uniforms for training programs. WTC also completes the entire process for On-The-Job Training for WTC training graduates. Finally, WTC orders assistive technology equipment as needed to expedite the ordering and receipt of equipment and software applications.

**Goal 2:** This goal focuses on a non-Vocational Rehabilitation program (Disability Determination Services) that is outside of WIOA and not applicable to the WIOA State Plan

**Goal 3:** Partner and collaborate with public agencies, private organizations, employers, community groups and individuals to advance the employment and independence of individuals with disabilities.

**Objective 3.1** Enhance/expand services provided to individuals in special populations, within the capacities of the agency.

**Strategies:**

- 1. Continue to provide staff resources and staff training to support Evidence-Based Practice Supported Employment (EBPSE) and consumers who receive Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) services (Needs Assessment Rec. 1).**
- 2. Continue strategic activities that will enhance DORS capacity to meet the unique needs of individuals with autism spectrum disorders preparing for employment (Needs Assessment Rec. 4).**
- 3. Enhance utilization of the Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) program and continue regularly scheduled meetings with ABI VR Specialists, to include Transitioning Youth VR Specialists, as appropriate.**
- 4. Continue collaboration with DDA to implement *Employment First*.**
- 5. The DORS multi-cultural workgroup will continue to develop and publicize specialized resources for minority groups, focusing on Hispanic and Asian consumers (Needs Assessment Rec. 5).**
- 6. DORS will assure that liaison relationships are in place with Community Rehabilitation Programs, Community Colleges, Local Education Agencies, MANSEF Schools, and other organizations to enhance effectiveness and establish promising practices and procedures (Needs Assessment Rec. 2).**
- 7. Pilot the Rehabilitation Communication Specialists (RCS) for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing in at least one region (Needs Assessment Rec. 6).**

**Performance Measures by September 30, 2015:**

- a. An increased number of consumers will be served through EBPSE and ACT sites compared with the previous year.**

**2,783 served; up 21% from FY 14: (2,302)**

- b. An increased number of consumers will be served in the Governor's Transition Youth Initiative compared with the previous year.**

**1,046 served; down 8% from FY 14 (1,139).**

**c. Increase the number of Asian and Hispanic consumers served by DORS, compared with the previous year.**

**650 Asian consumers and 725 Hispanic consumers served; up 7% from the previous year of 607 (Asian) and .4% from the previous year of 722 (Hispanic).**

**d. Increase the number of ABI consumers achieving employment compared with the previous year.**

**61 consumers with acquired brain injury achieved employment; down 16% from the previous year.**

**e. Increase the number consumers with Autism served by DORS compared with the previous year.**

**2,150 consumers served; up 10.6% from the previous year (1,943).**

**f. Assign a DORS staff person to contact and meet with each community college DDS office at least once per semester.**

**Staff assignments pending.**

**g. Track and assess RCS pilot outcomes.**

**The Division is in the process of identifying interested vendors with the intention to begin the Rehabilitation Communication Specialist (RCS) pilot in FY 16.**

### **Objective 3.2**

**Enhance collaboration with and services to Maryland private and public employers.**

**Strategies: DORS will**

- 1. Conduct at least quarterly meetings of Business Services Representatives and Business Services Specialists.**
- 2. Participate in the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) national business network and bring national efforts and strategies, i.e., the Net, to Maryland.**
- 3. Expand and increase internship opportunities, including QUEST; customized trainings; and On-the-Job Training opportunities for DORS consumers.**

## **Performance Measures by September 30, 2015:**

**a. Minutes of Business Services meetings and CSAVR national business network meetings will confirm activities and progress.**

The new Program Manager of Business Relations was designated as the agency's CSAVR NET Point-of-Contact. She participated in NET POC Conference Calls as scheduled throughout the year with businesses and the National Employment Team, including the CSAVR Conference Employment Committee meeting and webinars on the Talent Acquisition Portal and Building Business Partnerships.

Business Services Representatives held conference calls to share regional updates and resources from October - February. The new Business Relations Branch began meeting monthly either in person or via conference call beginning April 2015.

**b. Trainings for all staff assigned to business services will be conducted on a regular basis.**

The Business Services Representatives assigned to the Business Relations Branch as well as the Employment Specialists at the Workforce and Technology Center and the Office of Blindness and Vision Services met quarterly for training on AWARE documentation, building business relationships, collaborative efforts, labor market information and employer incentives, including usage of on-the-job training.

In addition, the regional Business Services Representatives participated in quarterly training with the Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation's business services representatives. Training agenda items focused on effective skills, strategies and collaboration for business outreach and quality services and real-time and projected labor market and economic development information.

**c. The number of internships, including QUEST, and On-the-Job Training opportunities will be tracked through the AWARE case management system.**

During FY 15, DORS facilitated QUEST internships with Maryland state agencies for 46 consumers. In addition, 3 internships were developed for consumers with the Social Security Administration.

Of these 49 individuals who benefited from these work-based learning opportunities, 16 were closed successfully rehabilitated and 7 are in employed status, indicating 47% became employed after participation in the internship.

Training and promotion of using On-the-Job Training (OJT) as a hiring incentive resulted in 25 OJT agreements as documented via vendor authorization records, 20 more than the previous fiscal year.

Objective 3.3 DORS will provide support to the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) to maintain and enhance its leadership role in the oversight of vocational rehabilitation service delivery in Maryland.

### **Strategies:**

**1. DORS will ensure that it works with the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) in accordance with federal law and regulations and Council By-Laws.**

**2. Council members will review and comment on the annual agency program plan, DORS progress in meeting its performance goals, and DORS program accomplishments.**

## **Performance Measures by September 30, 2015:**

**a. The Maryland SRC will conduct four (4) quarterly meetings including a meeting during the legislative session in Annapolis.**

MSRC met on November 19, 2014, February 4, 2015 (legislative session), May 6, 2015, and September 9, 2015.

**b. The Maryland SRC and DORS will conduct annual public meetings in preparation for developing the VR**

## **State Plan.**

**DORS and the Maryland State Rehabilitation Council (MSRC) held one statewide public meeting teleconference on April 15, 2015. Representatives from DORS' executive team, the MSRC, Office of Field Service (OFS), Office for Blindness and Vision Services (OBVS), Workforce & Technology Center (WTC), and Client Assistance Program (CAP), and DORS leadership development programs attended. 17+ individuals participated.**

**c. The Maryland SRC will submit its annual report to the Governor and RSA as required by law.**

**The MSRC 2014 Annual Report was submitted by December 31, 2014 as required.**

### **Objective 3.4**

**Promote and enhance quality independent living outcomes for individuals with disabilities in Maryland through independent living programs.**

#### **Strategies**

- 1. Provide grant support, technical assistance and monitoring to the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC).**
- 2. Manage DORS grants to Centers for Independent Living (CILs), including providing technical assistance and monitoring regarding the IL program, the IL AT program, and fiscal responsibilities.**
- 3. Participate as an IL Partner in implementation of the 2014-2016 State Plan for Independent Living.**
- 4. Regional Directors and OBVS Supervisors will conduct an annual meeting with Executive Directors of CILs within their areas to discuss issues of mutual interest.**

#### **Performance Measures by September 30, 2015:**

**a. Annual reviews of grant performance will be conducted for each CIL with which DORS has a grant, and the Statewide Independent Living Council.**

**Due to loss of staff and scheduling conflicts, five out of the six FY 15 CIL reviews took place during the first quarter of FY 16, as follows: Monday, September 28, 2015 - Southern Maryland Center for IL; Friday, October 2, 2015 - Independence Now, Inc.; Friday, November 9, 2015 - Independent Marylander's Achieving Growth Through Empowerment, Inc.; Wednesday, October 14, 2015 - Bay Area Center for Independent Living; Tuesday, November 17 - Freedom Center, Inc.; Wednesday, November 23, Resources for Independence**

**b. Meeting minutes will confirm DORS staff attendance and participation in quarterly meetings of Maryland IL Partners.**

**Meeting minutes confirm attendance and participation at 3 (due to schedule conflicts) of the 4 quarterly scheduled meetings: June 29; October 23; and November 4.**

**c. DORS Regional/Program directors will confirm at least annual meetings with CIL Executive Directors.**

**During FY 15, the Regional Directors in Regions 3 and 5 met once and the Regional Director in Region 6 met routinely with the Executive Directors of CILs operating in their areas.**

**Goal 4: Provide Infrastructure to promote and support the accomplishment of the DORS mission.**

**Objective 4.1 Complete year 1 activities that support the goals and objectives of the DORS 2015-2018 Strategic Plan, in the areas of organizational structure, information technology, succession planning, and community partners.**

## **Strategies: DORS will**

- 1. Assign appropriate staff to work groups to see that strategic planning activities are carried out.**
- 2. Assure that progress is made through presentations to the Executive Staff.**

## **Objective 4.2**

**Staff training will be provided to assure that staff maintains current competencies in rehabilitation practice, special populations, and administrative issues; Leadership development programs will be offered (Needs Assessment Rec. 1).**

## **Strategies:**

- 1. Provide effective Vocational Rehabilitation training for all staff, to include but not limited to employment services, needs of and resources for targeted populations, and the role of the Counselor. (Needs Assessment Rec. 1).**
- 2. Include Community Partners in DORS training and meetings as appropriate. (Needs Assessment Rec. 1).**
- 3. Continue to expand on-line/web-based training modalities for training staff.**
- 4. Plan and implement a Supervisor training series.**
- 5. Provide leadership activities for staff and succession planning for the agency.**
- 6. Provide training in current technologies.**
- 7. Provide training to staff on changes to RSA federal reporting requirements.**

## **Performance Measures by September 30, 2015:**

- a. Staff training in rehabilitation topics, including special populations, will be available at least bi-monthly, to include community partners as appropriate.**

**?Rehabilitation Training which staff attended (DORS sponsored or other-wise) included topics related to: Autism (02 trainings), Vision Loss (14), Hearing Loss (13), Brain Injury (02), Mental Health (13), Transitioning Youth (07), Leadership/Management (20), Employment (14), and various trainings toward staff Professional Development (47). Community Partners were involved in 4 of the DORS sponsored trainings listed above.**

- b. Staff will be trained on the new RSA federal reporting requirements.**

**?Staff were provided general instruction on the new RSA reporting requirements related to pre-employment transitioning services on July 30th, 2015.**

- c. An increase in the provision of distance learning training opportunities for staff and community partners, as appropriate, will be demonstrated.**

**During FY 15, 29 staff took on-line academic courses, and DORS supported or sponsored 22 on-line training events. Community Partners were not involved in any of the DORS sponsored on-line events.**

- d. At least one multi-session leadership program will be offered annually.**

**During FY 15, 5 staff completed or participated in the National Rehabilitation Leadership Institute's: Executive Leadership program; and, 7 staff completed the DORS "Leadership Exploration and Agency Programs" program.**

### **Objective 4.3**

#### **Enhance Quality Assurance**

#### **Strategies:**

- 1. Beta test updated QA for the VR Program**

#### **Performance Measures by September 30, 2015:**

- a. Beta testing of QA will be completed.**

**During FY 15, 24 out of 25 districts have been reviewed using the new Quality Assurance Review system, and the last remaining district is scheduled for review in November 2015.**

- b. Report of findings will be provided to Executive Staff.**

**Executive Staff were periodically updated on findings throughout the FY, and a number of policy and procedure updates suggested by the Quality Assurance team have already been implemented. Following the final district review, the core QA team will meet to prepare a final summary report with recommendations to be presented to Executive staff in the December 2015/January 2016 time frame.**

### **Objective 4.4**

**Pending passage of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, including Title IV, Amendments to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and in consultation with the Rehabilitation Services Administration, the Maryland State Rehabilitation Council, and the Technical Assistance and Continuing Education program, implement changes required by the Act.**

## **Strategies:**

- 1. Establish a work group to review the Act and recommend changes in policy and practice accordingly.**
- 2. Provide training to staff on changes in the Rehabilitation Act and implications for DORS policy and procedures. (Consider if the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act passes before we submit this in the State Plan.)**

## **Performance Measures by September 30, 2015:**

- a. DORS Rehabilitation Services Manuals will be updated consistent with changes in the Rehabilitation Act.**

**In progress, primarily pending final regulations.**

- b. Training will be provided to DORS staff on changes resulting from the reauthorization of the Rehabilitation Act.**

**In July 2015, DORS staff were provided training on pre-employment transition services, related forms, and AWARE changes.**

**2. An evaluation of the extent to which the Supported Employment program goals described in the Supported Employment Supplement for the most recent program year were achieved. The evaluation must:**

### **A. Identify the strategies that contributed to the achievement of the goals.**

State strategies that contributed to the achievement of Supported Employment goals are as follows:

- During FY 2013 through FY 2015, DORS' Agency Program Plan included the goal to increase the overall number of individuals served by community rehabilitation programs providing Evidence-Based Practice Supported Employment. The numbers of EBPSE individuals served rose 51% from 1,841 in FY 2013 to 2,783 in FY 2015.
- During FY 2013 through FY 2015, DORS' Agency Program Plan also included the goal to increase the overall number of transition students served using Governor's Transition Youth Initiative funding for supported employment. The number of GTYI students served decreased 12% from 1,199 in FY 13 to 1,046 in FY 15, during which DORS ceased to use the Governor's Transition Youth Initiative Fund with the Youth Supported Employment Fund when preparing authorizations for services.
- DORS utilized Title I funds to supplement Title VI, Part B funds to ensure that mental health Supported Employment needs were met in the State and to meet the goal of increasing the overall number of individuals served by community rehabilitation programs providing Evidence-Based Practice Supported Employment.
- In FY 2015, DORS issued and paid authorizations for Supported Employment services for 2,356 consumers whose Supported Employment plans began during or prior to FY 2015. To date, approximately \$3.4 million has been paid from those authorizations. In FY 2015, the number of plans initiated exceeded the goal of increasing the number of plans initiated from the previous year.
- DORS has maintained a variety of Supported Employment providers throughout the State: Developmental Disabilities Administration - 81 providers, Behavioral Health Administration - 13 Evidence-Based Practice providers using the Milestone Payment System and 18 Non-Evidence-Based Practice providers. The strong collaboration with the providers assisted in increasing the number of consumers whose plans included supported employment services.

### **B. Describe the factors that impeded the achievement of the goals and priorities.**

The achievement of Supported Employment goals and priorities was impeded by the following factors:

- The Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH), which includes the Behavioral Health Administration and the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA), experienced a change in leadership. DDA also had a change in leadership. These changes in leadership impeded finalization of the MOU with DDA and impeded a larger increase in the number of consumers who received supported employment services.
- Currently, Maryland has 81 DDA Supported Employment providers statewide; however, the availability of such resources varies throughout the State. Underserved areas of the State include Western Maryland, Southern Maryland, and Northeast Maryland. Inconsistencies of supported employment services throughout the State also exist due to a lack of consistent leadership and a funding structure that does not incentivize employment outcomes. These factors impeded achievement of a larger increase in the number of consumers with most significant disabilities who received supported employment services.
- Over the past several years, DORS has lost staff positions due to State employee positions reductions, resulting in fewer DORS staff to serve consumers in need of Supported Employment services thus impeding the goals of increasing access to supported employment services statewide and increasing even further the number of individuals with most significant disabilities who received supported employment services.

### **3. The VR program's performance on the performance accountability indicators under section 116 of WIOA.**

DORS is working with the Maryland WIOA Core Partners, other partners in the Maryland Combined State Plan, and the Maryland Workforce Investment Board to establish a baseline for each of the performance accountability measures under section 116 of WIOA.

### **4. How the funds reserved for innovation and expansion (I&E) activities were utilized.**

In FY 2015, funds reserved for innovation and expansion activities were utilized as follows:

- The agency's organizational structure was adjusted to create a Business Services Branch for the purpose of expanding direct engagement with businesses, with the ultimate goal of developing employment opportunities for DORS' consumers. The branch includes a Director and 5 Business Services Representatives located in regions statewide. The newly hired Business Services Representatives in each region assist with enhancing linkages with businesses and employers to include customized training, use of OJT and internships, education, and disability awareness. The branch also uses State labor market information to identify possible career pathways.
- DORS provided grant support, technical assistance, and monitoring to the Statewide Independent Living Council. The agency also participated as an Independent Living Partner in the implementation of the 2014-2016 State Plan for Independent Living. Annual meetings were held with the Director of the Centers for Independent Living in the State and DORS Regional/Program Directors.
- The Workforce and Technology Center's Rehabilitation Technology Services expanded services such as Driver's Education for individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing and for individuals diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder.
- DORS expanded Autism services at the Workforce and Technology Center (WTC) for consumers diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder and who are referred to WTC from local field offices. The Division expanded the Pathways Program for individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders beyond the Community Colleges of Baltimore County into Montgomery and Prince George's Counties.
- DORS continued to support the Employment First initiative in Maryland in collaboration with the Maryland Department of Mental Health and Hygiene's Developmental Disabilities Administration.
- DORS began planning for pre-employment transition services for students with disabilities, in collaboration with school systems and community rehabilitation programs. A need for pre-employment transition services in communities throughout the State was identified, and DORS is working with community partners to develop innovative services to students with disabilities.

### **q. Quality, Scope, and Extent of Supported Employment Services.**

Include the following:

## **1. The quality, scope, and extent of supported employment services to be provided to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities.**

The quality, scope, and extent of supported employment services are consistent with the definition of supported employment as it is contained in the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. As required by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014, 50 percent of the total Supported Employment Allotment will be utilized to provide supported employment services, including extended services, to youth with the most significant disabilities.

The quality of supported employment services is assured through the Division's case review process. Records are reviewed in terms of eligibility, Individualized Plan for Employment, service delivery, case closure, and expenditures. The review emphasizes technical compliance with the Title I and Title VI-B regulations. DORS uses case review findings to identify policies that may require modification or clarification and to identify staff training needs. DORS also conducts periodic onsite reviews of supported employment providers to assure compliance with established policy and procedure and regularly updates cooperative agreements with these facilities.

Supported employment means competitive work in integrated work settings, or employment in integrated work settings. Individuals with the most significant disabilities are working toward competitive work consistent with their strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice. These are persons including youth with the most significant disabilities:

- For whom competitive employment has not traditionally occurred or for whom competitive employment has been interrupted or intermittent as a result of a significant disability; and,
- Who, because of the nature and severity of a disability, need intensive supported employment services from the designated State unit, DORS, and extended services after transition in order to perform this work.

The scope of supported employment services is contained in DORS' Rehabilitation Services Manual II, Section 800. DORS provides ongoing training to counselors about supported employment policy and best practices, including to new staff at the Quality Rehabilitation Training Program conducted at least twice a year.

Supported employment services are defined in the regulations as ongoing support services and other appropriate services needed to support and maintain an individual with the most significant disability in supported employment.

In recognition of the time required to develop employment opportunities and place individuals with the most significant disabilities in employment, DORS policy permits payment of job development and placement as discrete activities within "job coaching". Supported employment services are any services that assist an individual in entering or maintaining integrated, competitive employment. They also include services necessary to establish and maintain a supported business enterprise. They may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Development of and placement in jobs or businesses in integrated settings for the maximum number of hours possible based on the unique strengths, resources, interests, concerns, abilities, and capabilities of individuals with the most significant disabilities;
- Intensive on-site job skills training and other training provided by skilled job trainers, coworkers, and other qualified individuals;
- Off-site supports to address issues and concerns;
- Follow-up services, including regular contact with employers, trainers, parents, guardians, or other representatives of trainees, and other suitable professional and informed advisors to reinforce and stabilize the job placement;
- Other services specified in the regulations needed to achieve and maintain job stability; and/or,
- Discrete post-employment services following transition that are unavailable from an extended services provider and that are necessary to maintain the job placement.

All supported employment services are available to all individuals, including youth with the most significant disabilities, determined eligible to receive supported employment services. Individuals are eligible if:

- The individual is eligible for vocational rehabilitation services;
- The individual is determined to be an individual with a most significant disability;
- A comprehensive assessment of rehabilitation needs of the individual, including an evaluation of rehabilitation, career, and job needs, identifies whether or not supported employment is the appropriate rehabilitation objective; and
- If Supported Employment is not found to be appropriate at the time of comprehensive assessment, DORS will reassess annually.

## **2. The timing of transition to extended services.**

Time-limited Phase (DORS) Supported employment services are provided by DORS for a period not to exceed 24 months, unless under special circumstances the eligible individual and the rehabilitation counselor jointly agree to extend the time in order to achieve the rehabilitation objectives identified in the Individualized Plan for Employment. Services must occur at least twice monthly to

assess the employment situation at the job site; at the request of the consumer, they may be conducted off-site. Service providers coordinate and provide intensive services, at or away from the job site, that are needed to maintain employment stability. Following transition, these services are only provided by DORS as post-employment services that are unavailable from an extended services provider and that are necessary to maintain or regain the job placement or advance in employment.

Extended Phase (Extended Service Provider) Transition to extended services occurs when all objectives on the Individualized Plan for Employment and any amendments to the plan have been met, and the need for support has been reduced or faded to approximately 25 percent or less. This will occur on an individual and mutually agreed upon basis between the rehabilitation counselor, the consumer, and the provider. In the extended phase, ongoing support services and other appropriate services are defined as extended services. The provision of extended services in supported employment is made possible with cooperative agreements. Extended services include any service(s) needed for an individual to maintain integrated, competitive employment after the individual has transitioned from time-limited support provided by DORS. Such services are based on the needs of an eligible individual as specified in an Individualized Plan for Employment, which includes a statement of the source of the extended services.

Funding The supported employment services, made possible by the anticipated State allotment, means that hundreds of individuals with the most significant disabilities will have an opportunity for competitive employment. An allotment of funds to provide supported employment services will be met with similar increases in other agencies' ongoing funds to maintain supported employment services when the DORS time-limited services are completed.

Evidence-based Supported Employment DORS has a strong partnership with Maryland's mental health system related to Evidence-based Practice in Supported Employment. This is based on overwhelming evidence that supported employment is the most effective route to competitive employment for consumers with severe mental illness. The partnership is characterized by streamlined access to Vocational Rehabilitation services through guest access of Vocational Rehabilitation counselors into the Behavioral Health Administration's, Administrative Service Organization's case management system; presumption of eligibility for Vocational Rehabilitation services for individuals determined eligible for Supported Employment through the Behavioral Health Administration; and adherence to principles of Evidence-based Practice in Supported Employment. These principles include:

- Competitive employment is the goal;
- Eligibility for Evidence-Based Practice is based on consumer choice. Consumers are considered work ready when they say they want to work;
- Job search starts soon after a consumer expresses interest in working;
- Supported employment is integrated with treatment. Employment specialists have frequent meetings with the treatment team to integrate supported employment with mental health treatment. (DORS staff participation is critical to success.);
- Follow-along supports are continuous. Employment supports are never terminated unless the consumer directly requests it;
- Consumer preferences are important. Consumer preference plays a key role in determining the type of job that is sought, the nature of supports provided, and the decision about disability disclosure;
- Employment specialists practice systematic job development, based on consumer work preferences and face-to-face meetings with consumers, and gather information about job opportunities and assess whether they may be a good job fit for an individual. Employment specialists continue to make periodic visits to promote networking and achievement of employment; and,
- Personalized benefits planning is provided. Evidence Based Practices in Supported Employment are funded using a braided model in which the Behavioral Health Administration pays for pre-placement services, Vocational Rehabilitation funds job development, the Behavioral Health Administration funds placement, and Vocational Rehabilitation funds intensive supports at the onset of employment. This effectively makes use of both systems' resources, allowing hundreds of consumers to receive Evidence Based Practices in Supported Employment.

Employment First DORS is a partner with other State agencies, including WIOA Partner DLLR, and Community Rehabilitation Programs in implementing Employment First, a national effort to assure that all individuals with significant disabilities consider competitive, integrated employment on a preferred basis in planning for their lives. Employment First is consistent with DORS' belief that individuals with disabilities, even the most significant disabilities, can work in meaningful positions in integrated settings when provided with adequate, appropriate supports. Supported employment is appropriate for individuals in Employment First and is the means to assure the best chance for success in employment. Benefits planning is an important part of services for individuals served through Employment First.

## Certifications

Name of designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate **Maryland Division of Rehabilitation Services**

Name of designated State agency **Maryland Department of Education**

Full Name of Authorized Representative: **Suzanne R. Page**

Title of Authorized Representative: **Assistant State Superintendent, Division of Rehabilitation Services**

**States must provide written and signed certifications that:**

1. The **designated State agency or designated State unit (as appropriate) listed above** is authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan under title 1 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Rehabilitation Act), as amended by WIOA\*, and its supplement under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act.\*\* Yes
2. As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of VR services, the **designated State agency listed above** agrees to operate and administer the State VR Services Program in accordance with the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan , the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations , policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available under section 111 of the Rehabilitation Act are used solely for the provision of VR services and the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan; Yes
3. As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act for supported employment services, the designated State agency agrees to operate and administer the State Supported Employment Services Program in accordance with the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan\* , the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations , policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available under title VI are used solely for the provision of supported employment services and the administration of the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan;\*\* Yes
4. The designated State agency and/or the designated State unit has the authority under State law to perform the functions of the State regarding the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement; Yes
5. The State legally may carry out each provision of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement. Yes
6. All provisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement are consistent with State law. Yes
7. The **Authorized Representative listed above** has the authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement; Yes
8. The **Authorized Representative listed above** has the authority to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and the supplement for Supported Employment services; Yes
9. The agency that submits the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan and its supplement. Yes

**Footnotes**

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**Certification 1 Footnotes**

\* Public Law 113-128.

\*\* Unless otherwise stated, "Rehabilitation Act" means the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA, signed into law on July 22, 2014.

**Certification 2 Footnotes**

\* All references in this plan to "designated State agency" or to "the State agency" relate to the agency identified in this paragraph.

\*\* No funds under title 1 of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

\*\*\* Applicable regulations, in part, include the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 76,77,79,81, and 82; 2 CFR part 200 as adopted by 2 CFR part 3485; and the State VR Services Program regulations.

### **Certification 3 Footnotes**

\* No funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

\*\* Applicable regulations, in part, include the citations in \*\*\* under Certification 2 footnotes

## **Additional Comments on the Certifications from the State**

### **Certification Regarding Lobbying — Vocational Rehabilitation**

Certification for Contracts, Grants, Loans, and Cooperative Agreements The undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

(1) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of an agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.

(2) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions.

(3) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly. This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

### **Statement for Loan Guarantees and Loan Insurance**

The undersigned states, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions. Submission of this statement is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required statement shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

Applicant's Organization     **Maryland Division of Rehabilitation Services**

Full Name of Authorized Representative:     **Suzanne R. Page**

Title of Authorized Representative:     **Assistant State Superintendent**

SF LLL Form – Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (only if applicable) (<http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html>). If applicable, please print, sign, and email to [MAT\\_OCTAE@ed.gov](mailto:MAT_OCTAE@ed.gov)

### **Certification Regarding Lobbying — Supported Employment**

Certification for Contracts, Grants, Loans, and Cooperative Agreements The undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

(1) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of an agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.

(2) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions.

(3) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly. This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

## Statement for Loan Guarantees and Loan Insurance

The undersigned states, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions. Submission of this statement is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required statement shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

Applicant's Organization    **Maryland Division of Rehabilitation Services**

Full Name of Authorized Representative:    **Suzanne R. Page**

Title of Authorized Representative:    **Assistant State Superintendent**

SF LLL Form – Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (only if applicable) (<http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html>).

## Assurances

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate and identified in the State certifications included with this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, through signature of the authorized individual, assures the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), that it will comply with all of the requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, as set forth in sections 101(a) and 606 of the Rehabilitation Act. The individual authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement makes the following assurances:**The State Plan must provide assurances that:**

### 1. Public Comment on Policies and Procedures:

The designated State agency assures it will comply with all statutory and regulatory requirements for public participation in the VR Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, as required by section 101(a)(16)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act.

### 2. Submission of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and Its Supplement:

The designated State unit assures it will comply with all requirements pertaining to the submission and revisions of the VR services

portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement for the State Supported Employment Services program, as required by sections 101(a)(1), (22), (23), and 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act; section 102 of WIOA in the case of the submission of a unified plan; section 103 of WIOA in the case of a submission of a Combined State Plan; 34 CFR 76.140.

### **3. Administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan:**

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures it will comply with the requirements related to:

**a. the establishment of the designated State agency and designated State unit, as required by section 101(a)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act.**

**b. the establishment of either a State independent commission or State Rehabilitation Council, as required by section 101(a)(21) of the Rehabilitation Act.**

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as applicable **(B) has established a State Rehabilitation Council**

**c. consultations regarding the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(16)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act.**

**d. the financial participation by the State, or if the State so elects, by the State and local agencies, to provide the amount of the non-Federal share of the cost of carrying out the VR program in accordance with section 101(a)(3).**

**e. the local administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act.**

The designated State agency allows for the local administration of VR funds **No**

**f. the shared funding and administration of joint programs, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act.**

The designated State agency allows for the shared funding and administration of joint programs: **No**

**g. statewideness and waivers of statewideness requirements, as set forth in section 101(a)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act.**

Is the designated State agency requesting or maintaining a waiver of statewideness for one or more services provided under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan? See Section 2 of this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan. **No**

**h. the descriptions for cooperation, collaboration, and coordination, as required by sections 101(a)(11) and (24)(B); and 606(b) of the Rehabilitation Act.**

**i. all required methods of administration, as required by section 101(a)(6) of the Rehabilitation Act .**

**j. the requirements for the comprehensive system of personnel development, as set forth in section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act.**

**k. the compilation and submission to the Commissioner of statewide assessments, estimates, State goals and priorities, strategies, and progress reports, as appropriate, and as required by sections 101(a)(15), 105(c)(2), and 606(b)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act.**

**l. the reservation and use of a portion of the funds allotted to the State under section 110 of the Rehabilitation Act for the development and implementation of innovative approaches to expand and improve the provision of VR services to individuals with disabilities, particularly individuals with the most significant disabilities.**

**m. the submission of reports as required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act.**

#### **4. Administration of the Provision of VR Services:**

The designated State agency, or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures that it will:

**a. comply with all requirements regarding information and referral services in accordance with sections 101(a)(5)(D) and (20) of the Rehabilitation Act.**

**b. impose no duration of residence requirement as part of determining an individual's eligibility for VR services or that excludes from services under the plan any individual who is present in the State in accordance with section 101(a)(12) of the Rehabilitation Act .**

**c. provide the full range of services listed in section 103(a) of the Rehabilitation Act as appropriate, to all eligible individuals with disabilities in the State who apply for services in accordance with section 101(a)(5) of the Rehabilitation Act?**

Agency will provide the full range of services described above      **No**

**d. determine whether comparable services and benefits are available to the individual in accordance with section 101(a)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act.**

**e. comply with the requirements for the development of an individualized plan for employment in accordance with section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act.**

**f. comply with requirements regarding the provisions of informed choice for all applicants and eligible individuals in accordance with section 102(d) of the Rehabilitation Act.**

**g. provide vocational rehabilitation services to American Indians who are individuals with disabilities residing in the State, in accordance with section 101(a)(13) of the Rehabilitation Act.**

**h. comply with the requirements for the conduct of semiannual or annual reviews, as appropriate, for individuals employed either in an extended employment setting in a community rehabilitation program or any other employment under section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, as required by section 101(a)(14) of the Rehabilitation Act.**

**i. meet the requirements in sections 101(a)(17) and 103(b)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act if the State elects to construct, under special circumstances, facilities for community rehabilitation programs**

**j. with respect to students with disabilities, the State,**

**i. has developed and will implement,**

**A. strategies to address the needs identified in the assessments; and**

**B. strategies to achieve the goals and priorities identified by the State, to improve and expand vocational rehabilitation services for students with disabilities on a statewide basis; and**

**ii. has developed and will implement strategies to provide pre-employment transition services (sections 101(a)(15) and 101(a)(25)).**

## **5. Program Administration for the Supported Employment Title VI Supplement:**

**a. The designated State unit assures that it will include in the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan all information required by section 606 of the Rehabilitation Act.**

**b. The designated State agency assures that it will submit reports in such form and in accordance with such procedures as the Commissioner may require and collects the information required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act separately for individuals receiving supported employment services under title I and individuals receiving supported employment services under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act.**

**c. The designated state unit will coordinate activities with any other State agency that is functioning as an employment network under the Ticket to Work and Self-Sufficiency program under Section 1148 of the Social Security Act.**

## **6. Financial Administration of the Supported Employment Program:**

**a. The designated State agency assures that it will expend no more than 2.5 percent of the State's allotment under title VI for administrative costs of carrying out this program; and, the designated State agency or agencies will provide, directly or indirectly through public or private entities, non-Federal contributions in an**

amount that is not less than 10 percent of the costs of carrying out supported employment services provided to youth with the most significant disabilities with the funds reserved for such purpose under section 603(d) of the Rehabilitation Act, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(G) and (H) of the Rehabilitation Act.

b. The designated State agency assures that it will use funds made available under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act only to provide supported employment services to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including extended services to youth with the most significant disabilities, who are eligible to receive such services; and, that such funds are used only to supplement and not supplant the funds provided under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act, when providing supported employment services specified in the individualized plan for employment, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(A) and (D), of the Rehabilitation Act.

## **7. Provision of Supported Employment Services:**

a. The designated State agency assures that it will provide supported employment services as defined in section 7(39) of the Rehabilitation Act.

b. The designated State agency assures that:

- i. the comprehensive assessment of individuals with significant disabilities conducted under section 102(b)(1) of the Rehabilitation Act and funded under title I of the Rehabilitation Act includes consideration of supported employment as an appropriate employment outcome, in accordance with the requirements of section 606(b)(7)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act
- ii. an individualized plan for employment that meets the requirements of section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act , which is developed and updated with title I funds, in accordance with sections 102(b)(3)(F) and 606(b)(6)(C) and (E) of the Rehabilitation Act.

## **Additional Comments on the Assurances from the State**

## **VII. Program-Specific Requirements For Combined State Plan Partner Programs**

States choosing to submit a Combined State Plan must provide information concerning the six core programs—the Adult Program, Dislocated Worker Program, Youth Program, Wagner-Peyser Act Program, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Program, and the Vocational Rehabilitation Program— and also submit relevant information for any of the eleven partner programs it includes in its Combined State Plan. When a State includes a Combined State Plan partner program in its Combined State Plan, it need not submit a separate plan or application for that particular program.\* If included, Combined State Plan partner programs are subject to the “common planning elements” in Sections II and III of that document, where specified, as well as the program-specific requirements for that program (available on [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov) for public comment). The requirements that a State must address for any of the partner programs it includes in its Combined State Plan are provided in this separate supplemental document. The Departments are not seeking comments on these program-specific requirements, which exist under separate OMB control numbers and do not represent requirements under WIOA. For further details on this overall collection, access the Federal eRulemaking Portal at <http://www.regulations.gov> by selecting Docket ID number ETA-2015-0006.

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\* States that elect to include employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Act

(42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.) under a Combined State Plan would submit all other required elements of a complete CSBG State Plan directly to the Federal agency that administers the program. Similarly, States that elect to include employment and training activities carried by the Department of Housing and Urban Development and programs authorized under section 6(d)(4) and 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 that are included would submit all other required elements of a complete State Plan for those programs directly to the Federal agency that administers the program.

## Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

States that include TANF in the Combined State Plan must outline how the State will meet the requirements of section 402 of the Social Security Act including how it will:

**(a) Conduct a program designed to serve all political subdivisions in the State (not necessarily in a uniform manner) that provides assistance to needy families with (or expecting) children and provides parents with job preparation, work, and support services to enable them to leave the program, specifically cash assistance, and become self-sufficient (section 402(a)(1)(A)(i) of the Social Security Act).**

Overview of TANF Programs TANF Programs are designed around four main purposes: 1. Provide assistance to needy families so that children can be cared for in their own homes; 2. Reduce the dependency of needy parents by promoting job preparation, work, and marriage; 3. Prevent and reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies; and, 4. Encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.

The State of Maryland's Department of Human Resources (DHR) Family Investment Program provides temporary assistance to needy families with children while preparing program participants for independence and self-sufficiency. In Maryland, the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program is called Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA). The Family Investment Program assistance consists of services and cash assistance to eligible individuals. The assistance program components under Family Investment Program include TCA, Welfare Avoidance Grants, Child Care and Medical Assistance, as well as a full range of programs targeted at special issues and populations.

The TANF Federal Block Grant funds are allocated to Maryland's 24 local jurisdictions recognizing that the local jurisdictions are able to accurately target resources, programs, and services needed by their customers. Each local department submits a plan defining the program for their jurisdiction which includes the core program components. The requirements and procedures may be tailored to fit the unique population of the jurisdiction.

Financial and technical eligibility criteria are the same for all programs, including those funded by state maintenance of effort, unless otherwise noted in program descriptions. The financial (income and resource) eligibility criteria for the Family Investment Program core components are found in the Code of Maryland Regulations section 07.03.03. Unless otherwise stated in their program descriptions, Family Investment Program non-core programs that are described as serving needy families have income criteria but do not have resource criteria. TANF Partnership with WIOA for Enhanced Workforce Development Services Currently, Maryland's TCA workforce programs are built on connecting individuals to work participation activities that will ultimately result in permanent employment. Local departments of social services (LDSS) workforce programs are operated through pay-for-performance vendors, vendors, or the LDSS themselves. This allows the LDSS to achieve the federal TANF performance measure of 50 percent for work participation rate. DHR will continue to deploy an "employment first" model, but with TANF's new mandated partnership in the WIOA system, DHR can leverage the myriad of opportunities that the WIOA Partners will offer to improve upon the employment and training trajectories of TCA recipients in Maryland. Over the first four years of our WIOA Combined Plan, DHR will begin to integrate TANF into the WIOA system as a full partner, thus increasing meaningful access to WIOA services for TCA work eligible individuals (WEI) who are determined to be ready, supported, and eligible. A few WIOA Priority of Service populations, within the WEI TCA group, may include: work ready TCA recipients, TCA recipients between the ages of 18-24 who may be able to take advantage of the new focus on older, out-of-school youth services, individuals receiving or who have exhausted unemployment insurance and may need TCA, and non-custodial parents. All of these groups fit into Maryland's overall list of targeted populations for Priority of Service. A complete list of Maryland's WIOA Target Populations and additional details on Priority of Service can be found on pages 51-53. In addition, TCA will be able to offer potential services and supports to other eligible customers within the WIOA system, thus providing value to the entire system on the whole.

DHR, in partnership with the 24 LDSS and the WIOA Partners, will implement this partnership using a phased-in approach over the four year period of the Plan in all of Maryland's 12 local workforce development areas. This will allow for strategic and thoughtful roll-out, flexibility based on crucial local needs and input, evaluation, and ability to change course as needed. Additionally, it is

imperative that from a state perspective, DHR leaders serve on the WIOA Alignment Group to ensure an ongoing active TANF voice. Further, the WIOA Partners will discuss in the Alignment Group created under this Plan to ensure that high level leaders from the LDSS, and other decision makers from partnering agencies, have adequate representation on Local Workforce Development Boards. This will ensure local TCA representation for alignment, effective operations, compliance, evaluation, and partnership purposes.

To assist Maryland with this phased in approach of TANF integration within the WIOA system, DHR, the LDSS, and other WIOA Partners, are actively participating in the Health and Human Services Office of Family Assistance (OFA) Systems to Family Stability National Policy Academy (the Academy). Maryland will leverage the Academy's resources, tools, and subject matter experts to:

- Assess the current status of LDSS and local workforce area partnerships;
- Select the local workforce areas and corresponding LDSS to phase-in the TANF/WIOA partnership over four years, in active partnership with the LDSS and local development areas;
- Provide direct technical assistance and guidance to the areas selected to phase in first. Areas will be offered a variety of technical assistance options through the Academy to work towards a meaningful, operational partnership;
- Monitor the progress of the partnership plans and provide ongoing technical assistance; and,
- Set up evaluation criteria, to measure the effectiveness of the partnership.

As a general framework, based on a strong individualized assessment, TCA recipients will receive appropriate services through one of three portals: (1) the LDSS only; (2) through a combined effort between the LDSS and WIOA system; or, (3) through the WIOA system only.

All services delivered to TCA recipients should focus on: (1) meeting the work participation rate by placing TCA recipients in federally countable work activities for sufficient hours each week; and, (2) achieving the WIOA performance measures, as applicable. The ultimate goal is for TCA recipients to achieve employment that leads to long-term independence from public assistance. Throughout participation in these activities, the LDSS will provide supportive services that may include: child care, medical assistance, transportation, food assistance, emergency assistance, clothing assistance, and employment retention services. Through the WIOA system, TCA recipients may:

- Receive labor market information, recruitment, job development, and placement services through WIOA, in partnership with LDSS business services staff;
- Participate in training programs such as short term credentialing training programs, work based learning programs, on-the-job training programs, DLLR's EARN industry-led training programs, Career Pathways training programs, and/or apprenticeships; and/or,
- Participate in Adult Basic Education (ABE), Adult Secondary Education (ASE), or English Language Acquisition (ELA).

In order to achieve this partnership, DHR will:

- Consider co-location of LDSS and/or WIOA Partners at AJCs or LDSS, depending on the nature of local partnerships and operations to:
  - o Monitor the progress of TCA WEI and keep them countable for the federal WPR;
  - o Become an integrated part of the WIOA Partners and serve customers collaboratively;
  - o Become an integrated member of the WIOA Partners Business Services teams (refer to "Business as WIOA Customers" section of the Plan, pages 54-55) in order to engage with the business community collaboratively and provide the best customer service to businesses and jobseekers alike;
  - o Develop common intake and assessment strategies; and,
  - o Braid and blend funding as appropriate.
- Leverage existing financial and in-kind contributions to the WIOA system:
  - o Analyze existing LDSS vendor contracts with the WIOA System and possibly re-tool to create more meaningful access and integration into the WIOA system;
  - o Explore partnership models that leverage existing funding to increase TCA recipients' participation in WIOA system programs;
  - o Analyze existing co-location contracts or consider co-location of staff or shared space;
  - o Provide training and access to DHR's online benefits application and access system, myDHR; and,
  - o Offer TCA and other LDSS services as needed.
- Contribute outcomes data to the WIOA system:
  - o Provide and report on performance data for some of the proposed WIOA Common Measures; and,
  - o Use the data to evaluate the TANF/WIOA partnership.
- Participate in Statewide WIOA Partners activities:
  - o Serve on the statewide WIOA Alignment Group;
  - o Participate in the planning of Maryland's WIOA Convening; and,
  - o Contribute to the Jobseeker Advisory Groups to ensure the inclusion and participation of TANF recipients on the Advisory Groups

Maryland will leverage both the Health and Human Services Office of Family Assistance (OFA) Systems to Family Stability National Policy Academy and DHR's research partner to research, track, and evaluate the TCA partnership with the WIOA system throughout the life of this first WIOA Combined Plan. As Maryland rolls out the partnership regionally and statewide, the research partner can provide the WIOA Partners with the data and recommendations of how the partnership is working regarding such components as performance, types of WIOA services for TCA recipients, collaborative policies and procedures, shared funding, administration, alignment of program missions, and cross-program staff training and knowledge. Current TANF Workforce Programs DHR, through the local departments, provides workforce related services and referrals to all applicants or recipients of TANF assistance. The local

departments have the responsibility and some flexibility, within State and Federal guidelines, to develop the systems, processes, and programs necessary to implement the work requirements of the Act specific to their local jurisdiction.

Annually, the local departments submit their local plans called the Partnership for Achieving Self-Sufficiency (PASS) Plans. These plans describe the activities that local departments will operate to implement the work requirements of the TANF law. Plan goals include:

- Maintain current TCA Work Program goals: o A minimum Work Participation Rate (WPR) of 50 percent – This goal is important because WPR is a key benchmark that the federal government uses to evaluate the effectiveness of Maryland's TCA program; o Universal Engagement (All TANF recipients must be engaged in a federal or State defined activity unless otherwise exempted); and, o Job placements at prevailing minimum wage (federal, state or local) Job placements in \$10/hour jobs;
- Improve outcomes for all workforce development vendor contracts;
- Develop meaningful partnerships that advance DHR goals, to include partnership with the WIOA system; and,
- Leverage local, State, and federal resources to assist individuals with moving towards self-sufficiency.

The Local PASS Plans also include the State-defined work activity of substance abuse treatment for the purposes of section 402(a)(1)(A)(ii) of the TANF law as well as any additional locally defined work activities that are also incorporated as state defined activities for the purposes of that section of the law. As long as the individual is participating with substance abuse requirements and is not able to participate in a work activity, the substance abuse treatment is considered the individual's activity for a specified length of time.

In order to monitor and ensure that TANF recipients are engaging in work activities, DHR uses a key tool, the PASS Scorecard (FY 2014 and FY 2015 performance included in the Plan) to obtain a snapshot view of a local departments' performance. The Scorecard posts three critical metrics that indicate the overall levels of performance local departments made in engaging TANF recipients in work activities and moving them into employment. These measures include: the universal Work Participation Rate; clients placed in employment; and clients placed in full-time employment paying \$10 per hour or more. Other TANF Program Descriptions In addition to workforce development, Maryland's TANF program provides a broad range of other services. The Department's Family Investment Administration formed partnerships with other administrations within DHR, including the Child Support Enforcement and Social Services divisions, and with other State agencies and community organizations. DHR's Family Investment Administration works with these partners to promote DHR's goal to protect children by assisting their families to become independent through work, personal and family responsibility, and community involvement. The Department expanded its goal to include support for low income working families. This new edition to the TANF portion of Maryland's Combined State Plan continues to strengthen those partnerships by empowering staff in offices across the State to work together to provide employment and training activities, supportive services, and benefits that enable customers to get jobs and improve their economic circumstances. Additionally, Maryland is committed to providing targeted services to customers facing multiple barriers to employment, including limited English proficiency and disabilities.

This Plan includes a full range of programs targeted at special problems and needy populations in every jurisdiction throughout the State. These programs are:

**Core Family Investment Program Components** Eligible individuals may be referred to one or more program components during the application process. The Family Investment Program core components all have the same eligibility criteria mentioned above, unless noted in the component description. They are funded out of TANF, TANF-MOE or Commingled Funds as appropriate and as reported in Maryland's fiscal reports.

**Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA)** Individuals may apply for TCA when available resources and referrals do not fully address their families' needs. Applicants must satisfy child support requirements before their applications for TCA are approved. Medical Assistance eligibility is determined in a separate determination and system for each member of an active TCA assistance unit.

To assist refugees and asylees in meeting the Refugee Cash Assistance work requirements, DHR contracted with two vendors who are qualified to implement TANF/workforce programs for refugees and/or asylees: the International Rescue Committee and the Ethiopian Community Development Center. In order to qualify as a provider for refugee services, vendors must be authorized through the Department of Homeland Security, Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services, and the United States Department of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration.

**Diversion Programs** Maryland operates a diversion program, the Welfare Avoidance Grant (WAG). A local department may offer a WAG according to criteria described in a local plan approved by DHR. A WAG is a one-time only, short-term cash benefit to a family with children, which is paid based on an agreement signed by the applicant or recipient and the local department. Following the intent of §407 of the Social Security Act, WAG is a non-assistance TCA diversion program that provides for a specific family crisis or family episode of need, rather than a chronic or continuing situation. A WAG payment is not intended to cover a family's on-going needs. Applicants or recipients may not receive TCA during any period covered by a WAG. An application for TCA is denied during the period covered by the WAG. Any on-going TCA case would be closed. This program provides non-assistance.

**Alternative Programs** An alternative program is an optional program, in addition to Family Investment Programs, which may be

developed and implemented by a local department to achieve the Family Investment Program goals. The program shall have the approval of the Secretary of DHR, is funded within the local department's allocated funds and any local supplement, and operates within Federal requirements. Local Department welfare diversion programs are included in this category.

**Emergency Assistance to Families with Children Maryland** elected to grandfather in its Emergency Assistance to Families with Children plan. The State uses Segregated Federal TANF funds to operate this program. Funds are allocated to local departments to meet emergencies for families with children. The financial eligibility criteria for this component differ from the other components, in that the family is needy if they have an emergency situation, as defined in the local plan, and do not have income or readily available liquid assets to meet that emergency. The family's income must be below 500 percent of the federal poverty level. The local plans provide help to needy families that meet one or more of the four purposes of the TANF Act. Since September 30, 1995, Maryland has elected to exercise its grandfathering authority of section 404(a)(2) of the Social Security Act to implement Emergency Assistance to Families with Children. While the grandfathering elected here covers items that might normally not be included under TANF, these programs also cover TANF purpose 1 and 4 providing assistance to needy families and to encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.

**Disaster Assistance** A disaster may be any natural or man-made event that disrupts the lives of families by destroying or disrupting all or part of their homes, possessions, sources of income, etc. In the fact of a particular disaster, Maryland may opt to relax its residency requirement for families, affected by such disaster, who have arrived from another State, even on a temporary basis. The ability to take this option is reserved for the Secretary of the Department of Human Resources. Title IV-A of the Act does not preclude a State from providing assistance or other benefits to eligible families or eligible individuals. Where feasible, and given the nature of the disaster, Maryland will contact the family's prior State of residence to learn the facts of their situation (e.g., for purposes of deciding onset of assistance or for purposes of the 5-year time limit for receipt of federally funded assistance).

In such a disaster, Maryland will first provide "non-recurrent, short term" benefits, outlined in 45 CFR 260.31(a)(3)(b)(1), which exclude from the definition of "assistance" benefits designed to deal with a specific crisis situation or episode of need, not intended to meet recurrent or ongoing needs, and will not extend beyond four months. In order to process people who have experienced such a disaster in the quickest and most cost-efficient manner, Maryland will provide these benefits through its existing TCA structure, including monthly payment levels. Because such benefits are not "assistance," they are not subject to a variety of TANF requirements such as work participation, time limits, child support assignment, and detailed data reporting.

Because the needs of families experiencing a disaster are comprehensive, they may go beyond these payments; these families may also be eligible for Welfare Avoidance Grants, Emergency Assistance to Families with Children, or on-going Temporary Cash Assistance as described elsewhere in this plan. Program Requirements The following section outlines requirement for the State's TCA Program.

**Assessment** The application for a Family Investment Program includes an assessment to consider the individual's reasons for applying for, or continued reliance on, assistance, educational level, job skills and readiness, identifying potential impairments, disabilities, and interests to enable evaluation for appropriate program activities, and any available personal and family resources to facilitate independence. Based on the assessment of needs, the local department offers supportive services to the individual which may include, but are not limited to:

- Child support services;
- Job services;
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP / Food Supplement Program) ;
- Medical Assistance;
- Social services;
- Referral to Family Planning and Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment Services;
- Child care;
- Transportation; and,
- Other appropriate services.

The applicant signs a Family Responsibility Plan with the local department specifying the requirement to comply with requests for cooperation, participation in work activities, and supportive services which the local department provides. The applicant's actions may include, but are not limited to, participating in child support activities, job search activities, employment activities, community service, and substance abuse treatment programs, if appropriate.

The State of Maryland elected the option to comply with the requirements of the Individual Responsibility Plan within 180 days after the effective date of the Act for recipients of TCA, and within 90 days for applicants of TCA.

**Application Decision** A decision on an application for any Family Investment Program component is made as promptly as possible, but no later than 30 calendar days from the date the signed application is received in the local department.

**Residence** The applicant and all recipients shall be residents of the State. A resident of the State is one who is living in the State voluntarily, and not for a temporary purpose, and has no immediate intention of moving from the State, and is not receiving assistance from another state.

**Citizenship Status** A Family Investment Program recipient must be a U.S. citizen or a qualified alien as defined in §8 USC 1611 et seq, as amended. A State program for other qualified legal immigrants who are not eligible under federal law has been developed

and is paid with 100 percent state maintenance of effort (MOE) funds.

**Employment and Education Requirements** Each adult in the assistance unit, and each child age 16 years or older in the assistance unit who is not enrolled full-time in school, must participate as requested in a work activity which is approved by the local department and is likely to result in unsubsidized employment. The participation requirement is based on the concept of immediate universal engagement and is compliant with the 24 month work rule found in §402(a)(1) A (ii) of the TANF law.

Exemptions from the work activity requirements are:

- A single custodial parent who is required to care for a child under age one who is a member of the assistance unit (This exemption applies for a cumulative total of 12 months for a parent's lifetime and does not apply to each child);
- Children under age 16;
- A teen parent (either head of household or included as a child on an adult's TCA case) who has not finished secondary school may not be exempt to care for a child younger than one year old;
- A caretaker relative in assistance unit with a child cared for by a non-parent relative who has demonstrated need, and has no dependent children of his or her own in the assistance unit; and/or,
- Immigrant, parent/caretaker relatives who are not eligible for federal TANF assistance, with the exception of adult only qualified immigrant households for which TCA eligibility is based on an unborn child.

Failure of any non-exempt adult to cooperate in a work requirement without good cause, including failure to accept offered employment, shall result in ineligibility for the entire assistance unit until the household cooperates.

**Work Requirements** The State of Maryland provides work-related services and referrals for services to all applicants or recipients of TCA. These referral services are initiated at the local departments. The local departments have the responsibility and limited flexibility, within State and Federal guidelines, to develop the systems, processes, and programs necessary to implement the work requirements of the Act specific to their local jurisdiction.

**Quitting a Job** When an adult voluntarily quits a job within 30 days of their TCA application date, the entire assistance unit is ineligible for TCA for 30 days after the quit. When a 16-17 year old child applicant who is not enrolled in school voluntarily quits a job within 30 days of the TCA application date, the child is ineligible and the child's incremental portion of the TCA grant is not paid. To be eligible, the adult or child must work at a new job or wait 30 days after the quit date to apply for TCA.

When an adult recipient voluntarily quits a job without good cause, the entire assistance unit is ineligible after conciliation and sanction procedures are applied. When a 16-17 year old child recipient who is not enrolled in school voluntarily quits a job without good cause that child is ineligible and the child's incremental portion of the TCA grant is not paid. Work sanctions are imposed on both adults and children over age 16 and must be cured before benefits are paid.

Good cause reasons are stated in the Code of Maryland Regulation at 07.03.03.07.

**Participation Rates** The State of Maryland elects to take the option to exempt individuals from work requirements and participation rates that are single custodial parents of a child under the age of 12 months. This exemption applies for a cumulative total of 12 months for a parent's lifetime and does not apply to each child.

**Child Support Requirements** As an eligibility condition for the Family Investment Program, the caretaker relative must file an application for child support enforcement services at the time of application for the Family Investment Program, and assign to the State the right to support for any child included in the Family Assistance Program assistance unit for the period of time the child receives Family Assistance Program assistance. The TANF policy and Maryland regulations were revised to address the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 changes to child support requirements. The caretaker relative must, unless exempt for good cause, cooperate in the establishment and enforcement of child support for each child in identifying and locating the absent parent of a child for whom assistance is requested, establishing the paternity of a child born out of wedlock for whom assistance is requested, and obtaining support payments or any other payments or property due to the caretaker relative or the child for whom assistance is requested. A determination of non-cooperation without good cause or adequate reason results in ineligibility of the entire assistance unit until the household cooperates.

**The Assistance Unit** The assistance unit includes parents or another caretaker relative acting as a parent, a minor child, or a pregnant woman. The degree of relationship for the caretaker other than a parent is not a factor. A minor child is under the age of 18 or expected to complete a program of secondary education or the equivalent level of vocational or technical training before the child turns 19. To encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families, one parent and two-parent assistance units are treated the same and follow the same regulations even though they have different funding sources.

The needs of the assistance unit when determining the amount of the TCA benefit may not include a child age 16 (not head of household) or older who is not a full-time student and who failed to comply with work requirements without good cause. The assistance unit may not include families with an adult head of household or spouse who has received 60 months of benefits under this Act, unless the individual lived in Indian Country as described in §408 of the TANF law or is included in the 20 percent of

caseload exception allowable under the TANF law. Nor may it include a teen parent who is not participating in educational activities directed at the attainment of a high school diploma or its equivalent. The needs of an individual failing to comply with substance abuse treatment requirements are removed from the grant. Also, an individual may not be included in the assistance unit for 10 years, if the individual misrepresented a residence in order to receive duplicate benefits. In addition, an individual who is a fugitive felon or parole and probation violator as described in §408 of the TANF law may not be included in the assistance unit.

The assistance unit does not include the caretaker relative in families with a child cared for by a non-parent relative who has demonstrated need and has no dependent children of his or her own in the assistance unit. The caretaker relative will receive a room and board payment for the child that is above scale. Families that include needy caretaker relatives who have dependent children of their own and other related children and who receive TCA are not part of this group. The assistance unit cannot include immigrant, parent/caretaker relatives who are not eligible for federal TANF assistance, with the exception of adult only qualified immigrant households for which TCA eligibility is based on an unborn child. Adult only legal immigrant households will be one of the Separate State Program TCA sub-populations. For the federal TANF funded families, a room and board payment is made for the children only. The adults are not included in the assistance unit. Any 100 percent federal TANF funded assistance unit with a dependent 19 year old student in a household that shows a demonstrated need will qualify for the room and board schedule of payments.

The assistance unit may include married same gender adults and their child/ren. The children must be related to both parents by birth/blood, marriage, or adoption for both parents to be eligible for TCA. In situations where only one parent in the marriage is related to the child/ren, the assistance unit will be treated as a stepparent case.

Maryland also serves families with a parent and/or child who has a disability which will last more than 12 months and who is required to apply for SSI, and the SSI application is approved, pending, or in the appeal stage with 100 percent TANF funds. This program includes services to assist the recipient adult/child apply for and pursue eligibility for SSI benefits.

**60-Month Time Limit** Families that reach their 60-month time limit and are granted a hardship exemption remain eligible for TCA. Families that reach their 60-month time limit and are not meeting one or more of the Family Investment Program requirements are not eligible for TCA. Criteria for granting a hardship exemption are stated in the Code of Maryland Regulation at 07.03.03.20. Penalties for not meeting Family Investment Program requirements are stated in Code of Maryland Regulation at 07.03.03.19. **Primary Prevention Initiative** As part of the plan to both reduce infant mortality and encourage children to remain in school, Maryland requires TCA recipients with children, age 7 and under to provide medical documentation of health checkups. TCA recipients with children age 7 and over must verify their children are registered in and attending school at least 80 percent of the time. Children not meeting either the health verification requirement or the school attendance requirement cause a TCA disallowance or reduction in the TCA benefit of \$25 per child, per month. When the child is back in compliance, the full benefit is reinstated.

**Families Served in a Separate State TCA Program** Because of their special circumstances, the State of Maryland will serve the following families in a Separate State TCA Program funded with 100 percent TANF Maintenance of Effort funds. The eligibility requirements are the same as for TANF/TANF-MOE funded families:

- Families where there are qualified immigrant adults (admitted to the country on or after August 22, 1996) who are not eligible under federal law, but meet all other TCA eligibility requirements and include a pregnant adult, but no other children. A separate State program will serve these families until the child is born;
- Families consisting of a parent (or parents) or a non-parent caretaker relative (or non-parent caretaker relatives) with the only child (or children) in the household who is a full time student in a secondary school or an equivalent program and expected to graduate in the year the child turns 19. Eligibility ends the month after the month of the child's graduation; and/or,
- Adult parents in families that are determined by the local department to be exempt for reason of hardship and who meet all other TCA technical and financial eligibility requirements, are not eligible under federal law because of the 20 percent hardship exemption limit.

**Families Served in a Segregated State TCA Program** Because of their special circumstances, the State of Maryland will serve the following families in a TCA Program funded with State funds segregated within the TANF program.

The eligibility requirements are the same as for TANF/TANF-MOE funded families:

- Families with at least one assistance unit member who is employed;
- Has countable earned income; and,
- Receives Maryland's 40 percent income disregard.

These families are not subject to the 60-month time limits but are subject to all other TCA requirements.

In 2013, the Maryland General Assembly required DHR to implement a three year pilot to study the effects of an enhanced earned income disregard on encouraging TANF applicants and recipients to gain employment more quickly and to retain employment longer. The pilot includes 100 families who did not receive TANF benefits from May 1, 2014 through September 30, 2014, who were not employed and applied for TANF after October 1, 2014. The enhanced disregard provides for a 100 percent disregard of wages

for the first three months of employment while receiving TCA, 60 percent disregard of wages for the subsequent months 4 through 9, and then finally reverting to the usual 40 percent disregard, as addressed in the previous paragraph.

Once there are no employed assistance unit members with countable income and the 40 percent disregard is applied, the family will be moved back into the regular TCA program.

Families Served in a Segregated Federal TCA Program Because of their special circumstances, the State of Maryland will serve the following families in a Segregated TCA Program funded with Federal TANF funds. Maryland will use TANF funds to provide adoption services (that do not constitute "assistance") to a needy family in which an unrelated adult is in the process of adopting a child. To qualify on the basis of income: • The annual adjusted gross income, as defined by the Internal Revenue Service, of the prospective adoptive family may not exceed 80 percent of the latest published figure for the median income for a family of that size for the State, as set forth in Schedule A under COMAR 07.02.04.11; • The adoptive child is included in determining the family size; • The annual adjusted gross income of the family shall be the latest figure that was reported to the Internal Revenue Service.

In this circumstance, Maryland cannot provide income support (i.e., assistance) to the family prior to adoption, because the family would not include a child living with a parent or adult relative. Maryland uses segregated Federal TANF funds to pay for the services because the family would not be an "eligible family" for Maintenance of Effort purposes. Funds used for this program are for services and are non-assistance, outside the purview of the IV-E (child welfare) program and meet the first purpose of TANF.

Families Served with State General Funds Not Counted Toward the TANF Maintenance of Effort Requirement Maryland opts to serve families with two able-bodied parents, including same gender married couples, in the assistance unit in a program with its own funds and will not count these funds toward its TANF Maintenance of Effort requirement. Such families are subject to the work requirements of the TCA program.

Minor Children Who Are Absent From the Home for a Significant Period States may opt out of paying TCA for a child who has been, or expected by a parent or other caretaker relative to be, absent from the home for a period of 45 consecutive days, or at the option of the State, a period of no less than 30 and not more than 180 consecutive days.

The State of Maryland elects the option to continue assistance for a child absent from the home fewer than 180 consecutive days. The State of Maryland elects the option to establish a good cause exception to allow children to exceed this 180 day limit: when the absence is for educational or treatment purposes, approved by the Secretary, the parent does not relinquish responsibility for the child, and the removal of the child from the assistance unit creates a hardship for the child's family.

Unmarried Minor who is a Parent or Pregnant When TCA is granted for a minor who is an unmarried parent or pregnant, the minor shall reside in the household of the minor's parent, legal guardian, other adult relative, or in a supportive living arrangement in order to receive assistance. The parent, legal guardian, or the adult supervisor in a supportive living arrangement is the authorized representative for the unmarried parent or pregnant minor.

Relative of a Minor Child who is Absent for a Significant Period of Time Assistance may not be provided for a period of three months, to a parent (or other caretaker relative) of a minor child, who fails to notify the local department of the absence from the home of the minor child, by the end of the 5-day period that begins with the date it becomes clear to the parent that the minor child will be absent longer than 180 days.

Child Care Allowance A disregard of out of pocket child care payments from earned, income may not exceed \$200 per month for the care of each child in the, assistance unit when the caretaker is employed 100 hours or more, or \$100 per child in the assistance unit when the caretaker works less than 100 hours per month.

Income Calculations The TCA income calculations are stated in the Code of Maryland Regulations at 07.03.13. Eligibility for benefits is measured against a payment standard at 07.03.03.17, which is reviewed each year. These income calculations apply to both members of an assistance unit and non-members whose income is countable to the assistance unit. Each member of the assistance unit is considered to be a recipient of the Family Investment Program, even though no cash assistance is paid. The income countable to TCA from a stepparent is determined by excluding income which falls below 50 percent of the official poverty level established under the Federal Community Services Block Grant, adjusted for family size, and counting as available to the TCA benefit, income which equals or exceeds 50 percent of the poverty level established under the Federal Community Services Block Grant, adjusted for family size. Benefit Amount • The local department determines the TCA benefit payment amount by deducting the net countable income, rounded down to the nearest dollar, from the allowable amount for the assistance unit size. The period of time covered by the TCA benefit is a calendar month. The assistance unit budget is determined for the length of the eligibility period or until there is a change in circumstances. At the end of the eligibility period, the family's eligibility for assistance is re-determined and the budget is re-calculated. The eligibility period is usually 4, 6 or 12 months, set by the local department based on the family's circumstances. • Room and Board Payments: Maryland opts to use its flexibility in determining assistance unit composition and benefit levels to pay a Room and Board Rate to certain families where either the adult or dependent 19 year old student is not in the assistance unit, yet the family as a whole has demonstrated need. This option recognizes that Maryland pays a benefit that

combined with the Food Supplement Program equals only 61 percent of the State's Minimum Living Level, and that the adults in these families do not have the resources themselves to meet the needs of the children in their care. These families are: o Families with a child cared for by a non-parent relative who has demonstrated need and has no dependent children of his or her own in the assistance unit where the non-parent caretaker relative is not eligible for assistance under this plan; o Families where there are qualified immigrant adults and children (admitted to the country on or after August 22, 1996) who are not eligible under federal law and meet all other TCA eligibility requirements where the adults would be eligible except for their immigration status; o A 19 year old child who is a full time student in a secondary school or an equivalent program and expected to graduate in the year the child turns 19 and whose family has demonstrated that their income is insufficient to meet the needs of the 19 year old dependent student. The child's eligibility for a room and board payment ends the month after the month of graduation.

Assets Effective May 1, 2010, the State of Maryland chose to exclude all assets for the financial determination of TCA benefits.

Medical Assistance Extensions Families determined eligible for TCA benefits are eligible for Medical Assistance coverage. Working families, who received TCA in at least 3 of the 6 months prior to their TCA case closing and are ineligible for a TCA benefit because of increased earned income, are eligible to receive medical assistance for an additional 4 months. At that time, their eligibility must be re-determined. They are also eligible for child care based on the caretaker relative's income, as long as the family has a child under age thirteen. Families who become ineligible for TCA solely because of increased collection of child support are eligible for 4 additional months of medical assistance. Legal Permanent Residents, who have not been in the U.S. for five years, are not eligible for the extension of medical assistance when their TCA ends. They may be eligible for coverage for the cost of emergency care on a case by case basis; or, if the immigrant is pregnant, they may be eligible for coverage for labor and delivery costs. This is a Medical Assistance category of assistance that is non-MOE and has no federal TANF money included.

In order to receive assistance, individuals convicted of drug-related felonies must agree to random drug testing and treatment if necessary. Individuals who fail to comply with drug testing or treatment are denied TCA and Food Supplement Program benefits. Individuals convicted of a drug felony involving possession or distribution after receiving assistance are ineligible for TCA and Food Supplement Program for one year from the date of conviction and are subject to substance abuse testing for a period of two years from the date of:

- Release from incarceration
- Completion of probation
- Completion of parole or mandatory supervision

Sanctions for Noncompliance with Program Requirements When an adult does not comply with program requirements, the entire assistance unit becomes ineligible. The Family Investment Program case manager investigates the reasons for noncompliance and helps the individual comply by sending a letter to schedule a conciliation conference, and following up through telephone or personal contact to the extent appropriate and feasible. The first sanction is not imposed less than 30 days from the start of the conciliation process. For noncompliance with any program requirement other than a work activity, TCA is resumed upon compliance with the program requirement.

When a 16-17 year old child, who is not enrolled in school, does not comply with a work activity, the child's needs are removed and the child remains a member of the assistance unit. The TCA grant for the family is therefore reduced by the child's incremental portion.

For noncompliance with a work activity, TCA is resumed immediately upon compliance in the first instance of noncompliance, after 10 days of compliance with the work activity in the second instance or after 30 days of compliance with the work activity in any future instance.

States may elect to allow Medical Assistance eligibility to adults who fail to comply with work requirements until compliance is met.

For noncompliance with the requirement for prohibited use of an electronic benefits transfer card for federally funded cash assistance programs, Maryland elects to warn recipients in violation the first time that their EBT card is in danger of being revoked. After a second instance of using the electronic benefits transfer card to access TCA benefits, it will be revoked.

Recipients whose electronic benefits transfer cards have been revoked will be required to either provide checking or savings account information for direct deposit of their assistance benefits, or accept a paper check.

Sanctions for Fraud An assistance unit is ineligible upon a finding of fraud by a court of law for a period of 12 months after the first finding of fraud or until full repayment of any overpayment of TCA benefits, 24 months after the second finding of fraud or until full repayment of any overpayment of TCA benefits, and permanently after the third finding of fraud. Allegations of potential TCA fraud must be reported by any individual or entity working with the TCA program.

Fraud Under Means-Tested Welfare and Public Assistance Programs If an individual's benefits under Federal, State, or local law relating to a means-tested welfare or a public assistance program are reduced because of an act of fraud by the individual under the law or program, the individual may not, for the duration of the reduction, receive an increased benefit under any other means-tested

program.

Other Sanctions Maryland elects to sanction a family, which fails to ensure that minor dependent school age children attend school, and minor dependent preschool children receive preventive health care. The sanction is \$25 per child not meeting the attendance or health care requirement.

Transitional Assistance After termination of TCA, transitional assistance may be available to assistance units in which an adult is not in compliance with a work requirement to the extent that nonprofit organizations are available to administer the benefit. Upon a determination that transitional assistance is provided, the TCA that would have been paid to the assistance unit is paid to a nonprofit organization on behalf of the recipient for a period not to exceed 3 months. This benefit is assistance.

Timely Notice of Termination or Reduction The local department mails or hand delivers advance, written notice at least 10 calendar days before the date of reduction, termination, or suspension action.

Local Department Waivers Any Local Department of Social Services may submit a request for a waiver of Family Investment Program regulations to the Secretary of DHR. The waiver(s) may be granted for up to two years if the Secretary determines that the waiver:

- Promotes more efficient, effective, and appropriate management and delivery of Family Investment Program services and benefits;
- Improves opportunities for Family Investment Program customers to gain self-sufficiency;
- Provides more flexibility to the LDSS in administering the Family Investment Program; and,
- Remains cost neutral for the duration of the waiver.

A waiver that violates federal law or regulations may not be granted to any local department unless prior approval has been received from HHS. The Secretary has the authority to terminate a waiver by written notice to the LDSS 30 days prior to the effective date of the termination.

Demonstration Projects Demonstration projects are developed through grants to non-profit organizations in partnership with local departments and approved by DHR. The Department may also contract with non-profit organizations including charitable, private, and faith-based organizations, and institutions of post-secondary education to develop demonstration projects. Faith-based organizations may participate in the Family Investment Program demonstration projects on the same basis as any other non-governmental entity. The funds allocated to demonstration projects may not be used to further sectarian religious instruction or worship. An individual may not be required to accept assistance from a faith-based organization if acceptance would violate the individual's bona fide religious beliefs and practices. All demonstration projects are subject to prescribed outcomes consistent with the Department's mission, goals and objectives. All demonstration projects must meet specified performance measures as developed by the Department as prescribed by the State's Managing for Results guidelines.

The Secretary of DHR will award grants for these demonstration projects through a competitive bid process which includes the issuance of a request for a proposal in accordance with the requirements of the Human Service Article §5-319 Annotated Code of Maryland, and establishment of an evaluation panel to review competing proposals and to recommend to the Secretary of DHR those proposals which have the greatest programmatic and financial merit. Multi-year awards based on program performance may also be considered. The request for demonstration project proposals requires applicants to specify the ways in which the proposed demonstration projects create incentives for increased employment and job retention.

Cooperative Living Project A Cooperative Living Project will provide its participants on-site child care, communal dining facilities, job readiness programs, and other support services necessary to move participants toward economic self-sufficiency. A Cooperative Living Project may provide its participants living quarters, recreation programs, and individualized case-management. Participants in a Cooperative Living Project are chosen from volunteers eligible for TCA benefits. Participants enter into an agreement with the non-profit organization to attend at least one communal meal per day. While unemployed, participants share in responsibilities for meal preparation, and cleaning and maintaining demonstration project facilities. Participants also assist in providing child care for children of participants in the Cooperative Living Project, and work towards achieving economic self-sufficiency.

Formula for Disbursement of Funds While TCA cash assistance is distributed centrally through an Electronic Benefits Transfer system, the Department allocates funds to local departments for child care, work activities, welfare avoidance, emergency funds, administration, and other services that the Secretary of DHR deems appropriate for the program.

Displaced Workers Grievance Procedure Maryland has established and maintains grievance procedures to resolve complaints concerning the displacement of workers by an adult in a work activity associated with the Family Investment Program.

Non-Custodial, Non-Supporting Minor Parents Maryland does not currently provide activities for non-custodial, non-supporting minor parents within its TANF program. Individual Development Accounts Maryland elects to fund individual development accounts in accordance with local plans. The local department may use TANF money to fund individual development accounts.

Other options Maryland does not have Tribal Family Assistance as a category of assistance. PROGRAMS FUNDED BY COMMINGLED FUNDS Maryland has developed a broad array of services for families and children that are reasonably calculated to accomplish the first and second purposes of the TANF law. These are funded out of federal TANF and TANF Maintenance of Effort funds or other sources. Maryland has designed these programs to be as effective and efficient as possible. Using the flexibility in the statute and regulations, Maryland will report the exact amount of federal TANF and/or TANF Maintenance of Effort funds charged to these programs using the appropriate federal mechanisms. Unless otherwise noted, for the purposes of this Plan and federal reporting, eligibility for the following programs is generally limited to those families with incomes under 300 percent of the federal poverty level at the time of service delivery.

Substance Abuse Treatment for Non-Waiver Recipients Maryland has a IV-E (child welfare) waiver to use federal funds to provide substance abuse treatment services to the parents of children who are at risk of placement or have been placed in foster care and are eligible for IV-E (child welfare) funds. This program is designed to serve those ineligible for the waiver program. This substance abuse and treatment model focuses on intervening with families and breaking the substance abuse and child maltreatment cycle. The program's purpose is to help needy families, who have income within 300 percent of poverty, so that children may be cared for in their homes, and end the dependence of needy parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work and marriage. The program provides non-medical intensive case management and supportive services to caretaker relatives whose children are in foster care or at risk for being placed in foster care. One of three treatment options are available—a residential treatment up to 180 days with or without children, a 28-day intermediate care facility, and an intensive outpatient program (90 days to 9 months).

The program's design is shaped from a social services perspective and requires collaboration with health, drug treatment, education, and other essential service delivery entities. The intent is to provide the services of a gender-specific treatment program. The design: (1) provides drug treatment and support services to substance abusing parents and caretakers; (2) provides drug affected children the treatment and support services to overcome the trauma of physical abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect that can occur as a result of living with a substance abusing caretaker relative; and, (3) prevents unnecessary out-of-home placements or reduces the length of stay of children already placed in foster care. A unique program feature is a committed collaboration between State and local departments of social services, State and local health departments and the treatment provider. This program provides non-assistance.

Children in Need of Assistance – Drug-Addicted Babies (1997 Md. Laws, Chapter 367) The purpose of the SB 512 Program is to identify newborns exposed to heroin, cocaine, and crack cocaine, to refer the mothers to drug treatment, and to provide supportive services to the families. Hospitals assess mothers for risk of child abuse and neglect. When deemed high risk, the mother is referred to the local department of social services and to drug treatment. If the mother refuses drug treatment or does not successfully complete drug treatment, and if neither the mother nor the father is able to provide adequate care for the child, the local department of social services may file a Child In Need of Assistance and begin the process of termination of parental rights. The program serves up to 300 women who deliver newborns exposed or addicted to heroin, cocaine, or crack cocaine in seven jurisdictions statewide. Services are available to both TCA and non-TCA recipients who are within 300 percent of the poverty level. This program does not serve women whose parental rights have been severed. This program provides non-assistance.

DHR/SSA Model Demonstration Program at Tuerk House DHR has entered into contracts with the Baltimore City Health Department for the purpose of providing substance abuse treatment for Baltimore City parents receiving TCA for themselves and their children with an identified substance abuse problem. Those parents are provided access to seven substance abuse treatment beds at the Tuerk House substance abuse treatment program. Additionally, customers receive continuing treatment, as prescribed, parenting classes, and support in the community.

The primary objective is to demonstrate that a comprehensive family focused, community based, integrated substance treatment and support service delivery model reduces and prevents child maltreatment and other problems that jeopardize the health, safety, and independent survival of some families. The program also provides help to needy families, so that children may be cared for in their homes in an effort to end the dependence of needy parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work and marriage. Eligibility is limited to families with income below 300 percent of the federal poverty level. This program provides non-assistance.

Post-Entitlement Case Management Services Services are provided to former TCA customers within twelve months of leaving TCA. Case management services are provided to former TCA families for up to twelve months from the family's last TCA grant. These services are tailored to help the family stay off assistance by providing individualized support and referrals to the family. The purpose is to end dependence of needy parents by promoting job preparation, work, and marriage. Eligibility is limited to families with income within 300 percent of poverty and \$5,000 or less in assets. This program provides non-assistance.

Attendant Care Program The Attendant Care Program allows individuals, in needy families with children, with chronic or permanent physical disabilities, to maintain their independence, and live with their families in their own homes. This includes adults who are currently employed or seeking employment or enrolled in post-secondary or higher education. The program also serves adults who can be discharged from, or avoid placement in, a nursing home or similar institution to live at home with their family on the basis of receiving these benefits. However, Maryland will only claim expenditures made on behalf of eligible families.

The program provides financial reimbursement to adults who must rely on the services of attendants for help with bathing, dressing, eating, and transportation, in order for them to seek or maintain employment, participate in an educational or training program, or to prevent an institutional living arrangement. Eligibility is limited to families with income below 300 percent of the federal poverty level. Payment is calculated using a sliding scale based on annual gross income and family size. This program provides non–assistance.

**In–Home Aide Services Program (IHAS)** This program assists individuals in needy families with activities of personal care with nursing supervision, chore services, meal planning and preparation, transportation/escort services, respite care, training in self–care, and/or care taking skills (help with children or homemaking tasks). The program also offers family members training in care–giving skills, and guidance and support in coping with stress associated with care giving.

Another component of the program provides Parent Aides, who intervene to prevent child abuse and neglect by providing hands on service, help with children or homemaking tasks when parents are unable to perform these activities. As a result, the home remains a safe environment for the child and there are more opportunities for the parent to interact with the child. This program serves families under 300 percent of the poverty level. This program provides non–assistance.

**Job Skills Enhancement Pilot Program** The Jobs Skills Enhancement Pilot Program is in limited areas and targets newly employed, unskilled, and semiskilled, current TCA recipients. Former TCA recipients are also targeted as part of the post–entitlement continuing services package provided to families beyond cash assistance. Participants are provided with training to enhance existing skills, gain additional or alternative skills, or learn interpersonal communication and other related skills to retain their jobs and increase the potential for advancement beyond their entry–level positions. The pilot program is administered by the Local Departments of Social Services or through the State service delivery area system. This program provides non–assistance. Current TCA recipients are eligible for this program. Former recipients are eligible if they meet the criteria below:

- Former recipients' assets must not exceed \$5,000;
- Income cannot exceed 300 percent of the federal poverty level for a comparable family size; and,
- One vehicle for each employed family member is excluded.

**Job Skills Enhancement for Non–TCA Families Program** The Job Skills Enhancement for Non–TCA Families Program provides comprehensive job skills enhancement services to low–income working families whose employed members' lack of job skills consigns the family to inadequate income and little opportunity for improved earnings in the future. Such families are at risk of welfare dependence. By enhancing the job skills of these wage earners, this program improves participants' incomes and their capacity for long term financial self–sufficiency.

The Job Skills Enhancement for Non–TCA Families Program offers comprehensive workforce support services including, but not limited to, child care, transportation, skills training, and more. The program provides non–assistance services and not payments. Close interagency cooperation and extensive involvement of the business community, from whom skill enhancement services are procured, characterize the program. Participants, all of whom are voluntary, receive a menu of services tailored to meet their individual needs. Recruitment and orientation is followed by an individual assessment to assist program participants in defining skills, aptitudes, and interests.

Assessment results are used to identify and develop the participant's Individual Training Plan. The Individual Training Plan identifies the participant's goals, action steps, outcome measures, and specific time frames – not to exceed one year. This jointly developed plan outlines appropriate training and education to meet the states career objectives. Job skill enhancement activities may include experiential learning and/or formal training. In addition, the program's multi–agency configuration and its close links with the business community affords participants the opportunity to enroll in on–the–job training, job shadowing, career exploration, business tours, mentoring activities, and more. Information pertaining to job openings, industry projections, labor market analyses, and job skill demand are utilized to assist participants in developing their Individual Training Plan.

The program is a diversion program intended to assist Maryland families in avoiding welfare dependency by improving their job skills, and thus, their capacity for achieving long–term financial self–sufficiency. For program purposes, “family” also includes a pregnant woman or a parent with one or more minor children or a caretaker relative with one or more minor children.

Targeted customers are Maryland families whose adult wage earners have been employed for a minimum of six months for not less than 30 hours per week in entry–level and other positions with limited potential for advancement and whose income meets the program's eligibility criteria. Participant families are limited to those with an annual earned income up to 300 percent of the federal poverty guidelines, adjusted for family size and \$5,000 or less in assets. The program will also exclude one vehicle for each working person in the family. This program provides non–assistance.

**Family Preservation** Family Preservation represents a variety of programs available to families to provide supportive services to promote safety and well–being of children and their families. This includes families with identified stresses around family life, including disruption, child abuse and neglect issues, domestic violence, homelessness, substance abuse, mental health, physical health, and educational concerns, who are within 200 percent of the poverty level.

The principal purpose behind these programs is to enable children to continue to live and thrive in their home with their parents or relatives. Each program is child safety based, goal oriented, family focused, flexible, provided in the home or community, culturally relevant and sensitive, and designed to build on family strengths and unity. Manageable caseload sizes and a team approach of social worker and case associate are an integral part of all services. Each service has designated timeframes, with the possibility for limited extensions when service goals have not been realized. Employment and self-sufficiency are program goals and part of the mutually agreed upon family service agreement. This program provides non-assistance.

**The Housing Counselor Program** This program operates in several local jurisdictions. It is designed to assist low-income families who are homeless, or in imminent danger of becoming homeless, and have an income below 300 percent of the poverty level, to locate, secure, and maintain permanent housing. Counselors help these families establish adequate credit references and apply for subsidized housing. The counselors can also help access local public and private resources for the first and last month's rent, security deposits, utility payments, or donations of furniture. They develop and maintain relationships with landlords, often paving the way for people with credit or reference problems to obtain permanent housing. Other assistance may include helping families locate more affordable housing after a rent increase, or helping to find another apartment located near a bus route that is more suitable for a new place of employment. In many of these instances, people are able to remain in housing or to find new housing before being evicted, and as a result, public and private agencies do not have to make outlays for sheltering these households. This program is reasonably calculated to meet the first goal of the TANF statute. This program provides non-assistance.

**Individual Development Accounts** Maryland and/or local jurisdictions may elect to fund Individual Development Accounts for families under 300 percent of the poverty level, in accordance with local plans and budgets. Federal funds are not used for Individual Development Accounts. State General Funds or local funds may be used to fund these Individual Development Accounts. These programs provide non-assistance.

**The Homelessness Prevention Program** To prevent homelessness, this program provides funds to local jurisdictions to hire staff and work with families under 300 percent of the poverty level who are facing imminent eviction. The recipient of a grant must show that the grant will resolve the issue. This program provides non-assistance.

**The Homeless Women-Crisis Shelter Home Program** This program provides funds for short-term (less than four months) shelter, room and board, counseling, and referral services to homeless women and children under 300 percent of the poverty level. This program provides non-assistance.

**The Domestic Violence Program** This program offers services to victims of domestic violence and their families who have income less than 300 percent of the poverty level. Services include, but are not limited to safe accommodations for a period not to exceed four months, hotline counseling, advocacy, accompaniment, and abuser intervention. This program provides non-assistance.

**The Displaced Homemaker Program** This program provides a continuum of comprehensive services to help individuals, who have income less than 300 percent of the poverty level, enter or re-enter the workforce in order to become self-sufficient. Recipients must be: 35 years or older; experienced a loss of income through separation, divorce, disability or death; received assistance through care of a child on TCA and are no longer eligible or have received TCA for 24 or more months. This program provides non-assistance.

**The Maryland Emergency Food Program** This program provides cash grants to assist emergency food providers (including soup kitchens and food pantries) in purchasing food for needy families with income under 300 percent of the poverty level. This program provides non-assistance.

**Summer Youth Employment Program** The summer youth employment program is designed to provide work subsidies for work placements focused on basic skills enhancement and the opportunity to learn marketable work skills. These summer programs can operate in partnership with WIOA Partners, thus creating robust work experiences for youth. Program counselors help youth develop positive work habits and attitudes and can reinforce the relationship between the skills acquired on the job and what is learned in an educational setting. Transportation for youth to travel to and from the work site may also be provided. Summer youth employment programs reduce the risk of welfare dependency by improving the youths' capacity to obtain employment that leads to long-term financial self-sufficiency. This program serves youth ages 14 through 21 that are members of a family whose total family income is up to 300 percent of the federal poverty level. This program provides non-assistance.

**Refugee Employment Services** Refugee Employment Services provides employment and other services to families who are refugees/asylees, beyond those which can be paid for under other refugee/asylee assistance programs. This program serves those with income is under 300 percent of the federal poverty level and provides non-assistance.

**Informal Kinship Care Services** These services are provided to children who live with their relatives through an informal arrangement made within the family. The child is not in the care, custody, or guardianship of the local Department of Social Services. Both the child and the relative caregivers receive informal kinship care support services including information and referral through local departments of social services and the Kinship Care Resource Center funded by the Department of Human Resources and entities

such as the Brookdale Foundation. The children's income must be within 300 percent of poverty. This program provides non-assistance.

**Post Adoption Services** Post Adoption Services provide supportive services to adoptive parents and children with income under 300 percent of the poverty level. Services provided include, but are not limited to: individual and group support, child or family mentoring, marriage support, information and referral, crisis intervention, community and recreational services, and educational support, such as tutoring and educational plan development. Benefits under this program meet the definition of non-assistance under the TANF program. This program is reasonably calculated to meet the first goal of the TANF statute.

**Independent Living Program – Kinship Care Families** The Independent Living Program is a part of a continuum of foster care services administered by the Social Services Administration and delivered by the 24 local departments of social services. The purposes of the program are to: (1) end the dependence of needy parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work, and marriage; (2) prevent and reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies, and establish annual numerical goals for preventing and reducing the incidence of these pregnancies. The program provides a wide range of services designed to enable families to live independently.

The goal of the program is to prepare older foster care youth for self-sufficiency by their 18th birthday or upon completion of high school. The youth may remain in foster care up to age 21 if in school, in training or disabled. Eligibility for this program's services is based on receipt of foster care maintenance payments paid to the kinship care family on behalf of the child and on assessment outcomes.

The financial and eligibility criteria for the foster care maintenance payment are in the Code of Maryland Regulations at 07.02.11.26 and the schedules against which payments are measured are at 07.02.11.34. The program provides non-assistance.

**Kinship/Foster Care Maintenance Payment** This program serves children who are full time students, under age 19, who are not eligible for Foster Care IV-E (child welfare) funds and who can no longer reside in their home of origin because of abuse or neglect. These children were determined to be a Child in Need of Assistance through the court system, committed to a local department of social services, and placed in the home of a relative. The targeted population is relative caregivers of needy children committed to a local department of social services and the Child in Need of Assistance children living with that relative who is a licensed foster parent. The purpose of the program is to provide assistance to needy families so children may live with their relatives.

Relative caregivers in this program are local department-approved foster parents of the kin child. The children for whom payment is made must have income below 300 percent of the poverty level. The complete financial and eligibility criteria for the foster care maintenance payment are in the Code of Maryland Regulations at 07.02.11.26 and the schedules against which payment is measured are at 07.02.11.34. Foster care maintenance payments are made to the caregiver on behalf of the child. This program provides assistance.

**Local Programs Administered by the Local Departments of Social Services** This include a wide variety of programs that have funds in them coming from a wide variety of sources, such as county and local governments, contributions from churches and other non-profit organizations, and philanthropic entities. Because of the nature and history of the service delivery system in Maryland, many of these groups view their local department of social services as the best vehicle to deliver help to low-income families beyond that available through the principal programs administered by the Department. These programs are sometimes stand-alone and at other times supplement some of the programs mentioned elsewhere in this Plan. They provide eligible families with income under 300 percent of the poverty level with the following kinds of services, which are all considered to be non-assistance for TANF purposes:

- Emergency Food Programs;
- Local supplemental funding for welfare to work programs, including funding for additional space, staff, services, etc.;
- Family Counseling;
- Emergency relief services to help families attain safe and affordable housing, which include the provision of emergency shelter, relocation assistance, homeownership counseling, home repairs, utility restoration, or shut-off prevention;
- Information and referral;
- Medical supplies and services, of an emergency nature, that are not covered by medical assistance or for those ineligible for medical assistance (Only State funds are used for costs associated with this program.);
- Substance Abuse Services;
- Family Support Services, which are primarily community-based preventive activities designed to promote parents' ability to successfully nurture their children; enable families to use other resources and opportunities available in the community; and, create supportive networks to enhance the child-rearing abilities of parents;
- Family Preservation Services that help families alleviate crises that might lead to the out-of-home placement of children; maintain the safety of children; support families preparing to reunite; and assist families in obtaining services and other supports necessary to address their needs. They include, but are not limited to parent skill training and crisis intervention services;
- Transportation to work, training, job interviews or to access other needed services;
- Clothing to replace that which is lost in an emergency, is needed for work preparation, or which the family cannot afford because of their present circumstances, which includes such disposable items as diapers;
- Domestic Violence programs that offer services to victims of domestic violence and their families. Services include, but are not limited to: safe accommodations for a period of less than four months, hotline counseling, advocacy accompaniment and abuser intervention;
- Boys Club/Girls Club support;
- After school programs;
- Screening for local department services; and,
- Grants to Food Bank Services.

Assistance to Individuals with Disabilities Maryland provides assistance to individuals and families with disabilities applying for or receiving TANF. Maryland: (1) ensures equal access to people with disabilities; (2) reasonably modifies policies, practices, and procedures for people with disabilities where necessary; and, (3) ensures that methods of administration do not discriminate on the basis of disability. Applicants and recipients are provided special accommodations and auxiliary aids, such as interpreters for the hearing impaired, large type reading materials for visually impaired, and telephone interviews for those customers whose impairment prevents them from coming into the Department of Social Services.

English Language Learners This program's services provide language and other services needed by families with Limited English Proficiency in applying for or receiving TANF or TANF–MOE funded benefits. Examples of services include, but are not limited to interpreter services and English Language Acquisition classes. This program serves those with incomes under 300 percent of the federal poverty level and provides non–assistance.

Adoption Assistance Maryland provides adoption benefits that include a monthly payment and other non–financial services to needy parents of an adopted child who is not eligible for title IV–E (child welfare) adoption assistance. In this instance, the final adoption establishes a parental relationship even if no blood relationship exists.

To qualify on the basis of income, the annual adjusted gross income, as defined by the Internal Revenue Service, of the adoptive family may not exceed 80 percent of the latest published figure for the median income for a family of that size for the State, as set forth in Schedule A under COMAR 07.02.04.11. The adoptive child is included in determining the family size. The annual adjusted gross income of the family shall be the latest figure that was reported to the Internal Revenue Service. This program provides assistance.

Electric Universal Service Program The Electric Universal Service Program is an affordable electric service program authorized under the Electric Customer Competition and Choice Act of 1999 to help low–income, needy families afford electric service in the deregulated environment and to have safe and reliable electric service. The program provides a one–time–only payment that targets the elderly, working poor, disabled and families with children. Eligibility is limited to families with income up to 175 percent of the federal poverty guidelines. The program provides non–assistance.

Refundable Earned Income Tax Credit Refunds The Earned Income Tax Credit Refund Program provides a state paid earned income credit that is refundable to eligible low–income taxpayers with one or more dependents. “Eligible low income taxpayer” means an individual, or an individual and individual’s spouse if taxes are filed jointly, whose federal adjusted gross income does not exceed the applicable poverty income level. The “applicable poverty income level” is defined as the amount specified in the poverty income standard that corresponds to the number of exemptions to which the taxpayer is entitled to claim. Poverty income standard means the most recent poverty income guidelines published by HHS, as of July 1 in the taxable year. The EIC can be claimed against State and local income tax. In addition, EIC Support Services include, but are not limited to, Volunteer Tax Preparation, Public Awareness Campaigns, and a 24–Hour Hot Line. The purpose is to increase the income levels in low–income families and end dependence of low–income, needy parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work and marriage. This program provides non–assistance.

#### Transportation Assistance Program

The Transportation Assistance Program (TAP) empowers TCA families with financial challenges to achieve economic self-sufficiency and personal independence through car ownership. This program affords customers the ability to purchase a used Maryland state-inspected vehicle at or below the vehicle's market value through Vehicles for Change (VFC), a vendor that serves all of Maryland. FIA anticipates providing vehicles to 100-110 families per year at an estimated cost to FIA of \$4,000 per car. Further, customers contribute to the cost of the vehicle- the customer's portion cannot exceed 50% of the actual price to put the vehicle on the road or a maximum of \$1,000 - whichever is less. In order to be eligible for TAP, VFC applicants:

- Must be receiving TCA; or if no longer on TCA , must have been on TCA within the last 12 months; or a youth aging out of foster care; or a TCA-related non-custodial parent;
- Must be working a minimum of 30 hours per week or have a verifiable job offer;
- Must have a valid Maryland Drivers License;
- Do not have access to any other vehicles in the household; and
- Must not have an extensive number of points (>5) on their driving record

PROGRAMS FUNDED BY SEGREGATED FEDERAL TANF FUNDS Maryland has developed a broad array of services to families and children that are reasonably calculated to accomplish the third and fourth purposes of the TANF law. These programs are not means tested (Maryland has designed these programs to be as effective and efficient as possible. This has the effect that certain

specific services and/or beneficiaries of some of the services of some of these programs may not be eligible for federal TANF or MOE. Maryland will determine the exact amount using the appropriate federal mechanisms outlined in its Cost Allocation Plan.). These programs provide non-assistance.

**Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention** The Governor's Office for Children provides funding for initiatives and/or training throughout the State that focus on teen pregnancy prevention and/or intervention. The program's main goal is to prevent adolescent pregnancies, which will subsequently prevent and reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock births. The program includes initiatives that provide parenting skills and promote responsible fatherhood. The program serves pre-adolescents, teenagers, parents, educators, and counselors, according to specific program criteria. This program provides non-assistance.

**Maryland's Tomorrow** Maryland's Tomorrow is a statewide dropout prevention program operating in 70 high schools across the State (all jurisdictions are covered) and 23 middle schools in nine jurisdictions. The purposes of the program are to: (1) prevent and reduce out-of-wedlock pregnancies and improve the self-esteem, attendance, school performance, promotion rate, and behavior of at-risk students in grades six through twelve; and, (2) to motivate them to succeed in high school, make wise career choices, and continue their education and training.

Case managers visit elementary schools and identify students who meet at least one of the following criteria (there is no monetary criteria):

- Low achievement on standardized tests;
- Prior grade retention;
- Poor attendance; or
- A GPA of less than 2.0.

Programs are arranged during the summer between fifth and sixth grade. This approach is also used for eighth graders who are going into high school. Local school systems can choose different approaches. Services can include after school tutoring and computer assisted instruction, daily help with homework, student-operated businesses, jobs in the school community, weekly service learning, wellness activities, rewards, and incentives. Activities may involve families, businesses and communities. This program provides non-assistance.

**Home Visiting** This program provides home visitation and on-site services to families, such as parenting education, family planning, and employment services. The program's main goal is to reduce subsequent out-of-wedlock pregnancies among participants through family planning counseling. The program serves clients over age sixteen who are expecting their first child. Both parents must be involved in this program, which is also designed to prevent intergenerational welfare dependency. This program provides non-assistance.

**Family Support Center Network** Family Support Centers were developed to establish preventive supports for families during the early formative years and to encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families. The Family Support Centers are community-based programs that provide services to assist mothers and/or fathers with children age birth to three, particularly those in high-risk communities, raise healthy children and build productive futures. Comprehensive services are provided either on-site or through referral, and existing programs coordinate to benefit mothers and/or fathers and their children, and develop new resources to satisfy unmet needs. Services include parenting skills, outreach, peer support and recreational activities, infant and child stimulation, employability and literacy opportunities, health education, and referral for services. This program also includes services developed using this same, successful model. For example, the Family League of Baltimore has also developed a similar set of services based on this Family Support Center Model called "Success by Six," which also includes home visitors, many of whom are former TCA recipients.

There is no income criteria required to participate in the Family Support Center program, although a significant number of participants receive TCA. Others may need cash assistance, but choose not to receive TCA. There are also participants who are financially capable of attending to their basic daily life needs, but need Family Support Center services to enhance their parenting skills. The objective is to develop a cadre of services appropriate for each family. This program provides non-assistance.

**Collaborative Supervision and Focused Enforcement Initiative** The Collaborative Supervision and Focused Enforcement initiative is a statewide crime reduction strategy that promotes locally based, comprehensive planning in high-crime at-risk neighborhoods for youth and adults. The program is based on strategies implemented by neighborhoods and nonprofit advocacy groups that are successful in collaborating and engaging key community leaders in solving problems in the community. The program aims to develop locally based strategies to respond to the problems that interact at the neighborhood level and bring the justice system to the community, as opposed to bringing the community to the justice system. Many of the strategies include an after school program. These strategies are designed to enhance the motivation, performance, and self-esteem of youth and are thus reasonably calculated to achieve the third goal of the TANF law, the reduction of out of wedlock pregnancies.

The overall goal for the initiative is a 25 to 35 percent reduction in serious crime and quality-of-life improvements in communities that implement the comprehensive strategy. Each participating community surveys residents to measure whether there are improvements in the quality of life and changes in their sense of hopefulness and ability to make a difference. The program seeks to involve youth, as much as possible, in all phases of planning and implementation. This program provides non-assistance.

**Project Retain** This project supports welfare reform efforts in Maryland by assisting former and current TANF customers. Project Retain supports welfare reform and workforce development efforts in Maryland in two ways. First, the project enhances staff capacity in local departments by providing skills training on post-employment retention and advancement strategies to avoid high welfare recidivism rates for employed former and current customers. High-performance customer service also requires staff to learn about the career path for higher paying jobs and employers. Secondly, Project Retain assists employed customers with solving problems, removing barriers or resolving issues that place them at risk of termination or self-termination from employment. Project Retain services help TCA customers retain employment, work toward job advancement, and achieve and sustain self-sufficiency. These efforts reduce welfare rolls and interrupt the cycle of dependency. Additionally, Project Retain provides training to local departments of social services to build staff capacity. The training is conducted by internal staff, resulting in cost savings to local departments that would otherwise have to use outside contracts for retention and advancement services. This program provides non-assistance and is reasonably calculated to accomplish TANF purpose four. **Responsible Choices Projects** Responsible Choices Projects work with middle school age adolescents and high school age teens to promote abstinence. Of note is the Best Friends Program, which enlists peer support. Special efforts are also made to work with first-time teen parents, age 16 and older, in an effort to reduce the incidence of subsequent non-marital births using the Healthy Families America home visitation model. These programs provide non-assistance.

**Maryland Fatherhood/Motherhood Initiative** This initiative builds on Maryland's highly successful individually focused, location specific welfare to work program to serve the non-custodial parents of TCA children eligible either at present or in the past 12 months, or who owe a TCA related arrearage to the State. By supplementing existing welfare to work strategies and contracts for this population, this initiative is able to make the best use of limited resources to achieve, among other things, employment of the non-custodial parent, payment of child support, decreased recidivism if previously incarcerated, and engagement in the Department's other Healthy Marriage/Healthy Families initiatives. This program provides non-assistance.

**The Offender Workforce Transition Initiative** The Offender Workforce Transition Initiative prepares and supports inmates' efforts to re-integrate into the community, become productive wage earners, and lead personally satisfying and fulfilling lives. Collaboration with various federal, state, local, business, and community partners ensures that soon to be released inmates have the necessary career training, work habits, teamwork, conflict resolution skills, and interview techniques that will enable them to land and keep good jobs with a self-sustaining salary. Workforce development professionals and career development facilitators work with individuals on financial literacy and communication strategies. They support efforts to re-unify family members and encourage custodial and non-custodial parents to be "responsible" parents. Staff works with recommended offenders until job placement occurs and continues with post-employment follow-up. The goal is to encourage the ex-offenders' adjustment to living and working in a non-restrictive environment and to be competitively employed in an economically viable career pathway. The initiative reduces inmate recidivism and supports the formulation and maintenance of two-parent families. This program provides non-assistance.

**Block Grant Programs** Maryland provides an extensive array of services to families and children under its Social Services Block Grant, Community Action Block Grant, Title IV-B State Plan, the Child and Maternal Health Block Grant, and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Block Grant plans that are reasonably calculated to accomplish the third and fourth purposes of TANF. To the extent that the State expends state or local funds on these services that exceed available block grant funds, the State reserves the option to use TANF funds or TANF-MOE as appropriate and reported in the State's fiscal reports subject to federal limitations. The funds claimed for these will be for non-assistance.

**Maryland Higher Education Commission scholarship programs** These scholarships are eligible for TANF funding because post-secondary educational attainment by State residents decreases the incidence of out-of-wedlock births by raising the "opportunity cost" of having children outside of marriage. Studies also show that professional careers (often the product of higher education) delay fertility. These programs provide non-assistance.

**PROGRAMS FUNDED BY COMMINGLED FUNDS** Maryland has developed a broad array of services for families and children that are reasonably calculated to accomplish the third and fourth purposes of the TANF law. The changes brought by the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 allow these programs to be funded with federal TANF dollars or count toward the State's MOE requirement. Maryland has designed these programs to be as effective and efficient as possible. This has the effect that certain specific services and/or beneficiaries of some of the services of some of these programs may not be eligible for federal TANF or MOE. Maryland will determine the exact amount using the appropriate federal mechanisms outlined in its Cost Allocation Plan. These programs provide non-assistance. **Means Tested Program**

**Child First Authority Extended School Day Programs** This program provides extended school day activities from 3-6 p.m. to 1,100 children of low income families in ten Baltimore City public elementary/middle schools - 98 percent of the schools' student population is eligible for free or reduced lunch. The eligibility standard is 300 percent of the federal poverty level. Teachers and/or school principals in participating schools can refer a child to Child First Authority if the child is determined to be at risk of poor school performance and/or attendance. All parents of participating children must actively participate in nine hours of Child First Authority sponsored training or activities each school year.

The extended school day enriches children's lives and enables parents to work or attend school. Child First Authority programs focus on safety, self-esteem, motivation, performance, character development, and educational enrichment. Child First Authority programs provide additional educational experiences by conducting sessions in art, music, dance, history, reading, writing, and math. Many of the participating schools do not have "arts" activities as a part of their curriculum. The Annenberg Institute chose Child First Authority as one of nine successful initiatives nationally for School Reform. Child First Authority partners include the Maryland Historical Society, Maryland Institute of Art, numerous faith organizations, and parent volunteers. The purpose of the program is to enhance the motivation, performance, and self-esteem of youth and is thus reasonably calculated to achieve the third goal of the TANF law, the reduction of out of wedlock pregnancies. This program is not in any way a component of Maryland's system of free public schools. This program provides non-assistance.

**Substance Abuse Treatment and Services Program** The Welfare Innovation Act of 2000 and HB 1024 of the 2005 Session of the Maryland General Assembly required the hiring and placement of addictions specialists in local departments of social services to conduct screening, testing, assessments, referrals, and reporting for TCA adults and minor parents, and certain Food Supplement Program applicants and recipients (custodial and non-custodial parents who are convicted drug felons). The program requirements and possible sanctions for TCA adults and minor parents are mentioned above as part of the Family Investment Program Core Components. This program provides non-assistance to TANF eligible individuals and certain Food Supplement Program applicants and recipients whose income is less than 130 percent of the Federal Poverty Level.

**After School Programs** The basic after school program is available statewide for school age children in families at or below 300 percent of poverty. This also includes local programs that provide the same or similar services.

Vendors chosen to operate within the statewide program must incorporate features that will have a positive measurable impact on one or more of the conditions of well-being for children and youth identified by a report of Maryland results and indicators of child wellbeing. One of the results and indicators is "Babies Born Healthy," which includes a measure for "the rate of births to adolescents less than 18 years of age." Another is "Stable and Economically Self-Sufficient Families," which includes a measure of "the percent of single parent households."

Additionally, local providers offer a variety of after school opportunities to Maryland's youth using their own or combinations of State and local funds. Programs include those housed in local schools that have an academic focus in addition to traditional recreation programs and those based in the community, in a church, recreation center or similar facility, which stress academics, recreation, and artistic skill development equally as well as programs providing skill development activities around a particular artistic activity. Some pair older youth in a tutoring relationship with younger youth, an experience geared to preparation for the work world. Outcomes sought by these activities include: increased school attendance, increased school achievement, reduction in delinquent behavior, reduction in substance abuse, and reduction in teen pregnancy. Therefore, this program is reasonably calculated to achieve purposes three and four of the TANF statute. This program provides non-assistance.

**Howard P. Rawlings Program of Educational Excellence Awards** The State funds two need-based scholarships under this program: (1) the Guaranteed Access Program; and, (2) the Educational Assistance Grant. The Guaranteed Access Program is open to current high school seniors who will complete a college preparatory program or a student who graduated prior to the current academic year who provides written documentation explaining why they were unable to attend college within one year of graduating from high school. The income scale for the Guaranteed Access Grant program is below and annual updates can be found at: [http://www.mhec.maryland.gov/financialAid/ProgramDescriptions/prog\\_ga.asp](http://www.mhec.maryland.gov/financialAid/ProgramDescriptions/prog_ga.asp).

**2016 Guaranteed Access Grant: Family Income Requirements**

Family Size	130% of Poverty Level (New)	150% of Poverty Level (Renewal)
1	\$15,301	\$17,655
2	\$20,709	\$23,895
3	\$26,117	\$30,135
4	\$31,525	\$36,375
5	\$36,933	\$42,615
6	\$42,341	\$48,855
7	\$47,749	\$55,095
8	\$53,157	\$61,335

Each additional person \$5,408 \$6,240

The Educational Assistance Grant is open to Maryland residents who are full time undergraduate students. The awards are based on a financial need formula that relies on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). An Educational Assistance Grant is determined by student need. Need for an Educational Assistance Grant is determined using the following formula:

– College Cost of Attendance – Expected Family Contribution + or – Regional Cost Of Living Adjustment – Certain State scholarship awards (if awarded) – Federal Pell Grant (if eligible) = Financial Need

Both types of Rawlings scholarships provide non-assistance. Programs Funded and Administered by Entities Other than the Local Departments of Social Services This may include a wide variety of programs in receipt of funds from a wide variety of sources, such as county and local governments, contributions from churches and other non-profit organizations, and philanthropic entities. In accordance with Policy Announcement TANF-ACF-PA-2004-01, the State will claim as MOE only those expenditures made under agreements between the State and these third party entities that permit the State to count those expenditures toward its MOE requirement. These programs provide eligible families under 300 percent of the poverty level, with the following kinds of services which are all non-assistance for TANF purposes:

• Emergency Food Programs; • Local supplemental funding for welfare to work programs, including funding for additional space, staff, services etc; • Family Counseling; • Emergency relief services to help families attain safe and affordable housing, which include the provision of emergency shelter, relocation assistance, homeownership counseling, home repairs, utility restoration, or shut-off prevention; • Information and referral; • Medical supplies and services, of an emergency nature that are not covered by medical assistance or for those ineligible for medical assistance (Only State funds are used for costs associated with this program.); • Substance Abuse Services; • Family Support Services, which are primarily community-based preventive activities designed to: promote parents' ability to successfully nurture their children; enable families to use other resources and opportunities available in the community; and, create supportive networks to enhance the child-rearing abilities of parents; • Family Preservation Services that help families alleviate crises that might lead to the out-of-home placement of children; maintain the safety of children; support families preparing to reunite; and assist families in obtaining services and other supports necessary to address their needs. They include but are not limited to parent skill training and crisis intervention services; • Transportation to work, training, job interviews, or to access other needed services; • Clothing to replace that which was lost in an emergency, is needed for work preparation, or which the family cannot afford because of their present circumstances, which includes such disposable items as diapers; • Domestic Violence programs that offer services to victims of domestic violence and their families. Services include but are not limited to safe accommodations, hotline counseling, advocacy accompaniment, and abuser intervention; • Boys Club/Girls Club support; • After school programs; • Screening for local department services; • Grants to Food Banks; and, • Food Bank Services. Non-Means Tested Programs

**Responsible Fathers Programs** These programs provide services to custodial and non-custodial fathers such as parenting education, family planning, GED® instruction, job training, employment-search assistance, and self-esteem building. Sites throughout the State serve young fathers, age 16+, who have one or more children. The program's main goal is to reduce subsequent out-of-wedlock pregnancies among participants through family-planning counseling. Program objectives seek to increase parent-child interaction, emotional support, financial responsibility and the development of two parent families. These programs also encourage co-parenting for non-custodial fathers. Although participation in the program is voluntary, participants are required to comply with Child Support Enforcement, if not currently doing so.

Programs serve fathers who are initially unemployed. Though not a requirement of program enrollment, participant referrals are actively solicited from local departments of social services' TCA and child support enforcement rolls. This program provides non-assistance.

**The Maryland Healthy Marriage / Healthy Families Initiative** This initiative recognizes that children are more likely to thrive in the context of a two-parent family. The Maryland Healthy Marriage / Healthy Families Initiative has been established as the umbrella for several family focused programs. The purpose of the initiative is to build the capacity of participants, so that they are prepared for the responsibilities of parenting and marriage, and ultimately to enhance the lives of their children. The family focused programs target mothers, fathers, and youth, providing a continuum of services to strengthen and empower families. The programs include fatherhood and non-marital birth reduction initiatives and a marriage preparation curriculum.

The Maryland Healthy Marriage / Healthy Families Initiative focuses primarily on expectant and never married parents and fragile families in need of support services. The initiative connects participants with resources, information and services to strengthen and empower families. Some of the services offered include parenting skills enhancement, educational activities, employment development, job search and support, counseling, and anger management. The services are provided through a network of social service systems, educational systems, and community and faith based organizations. This program provides non-assistance.

**The Responsible Fathers, Healthy Marriage and Healthy Families Programs** These programs include activities that are enumerated in sections 403(a)(2)(A)(iii) and 403(a)(2)(C)(ii) of the Social Security Act. States may claim these pro-family expenditures for non-assistance benefits provided to or on behalf of an individual or family as MOE, regardless of financial need or family composition, unless a limitation, restriction or prohibition under 45 CFR 263 Subpart A applies.

There are instances when the following programs that are not means tested serve eligible families. The State will count these expenditures for services received by needy families as TANF-MOE expenditures only when an audit trail can be established that links the non-means tested service to needy families. One example is when a program supplies an enrollment list and it is matched to the TCA caseload. If the list shows that five percent of families served were needy, then five percent of the non-federal expenditures for that fiscal year may be claimed as TANF-MOE. The following commingled funded programs will use this or a similar methodology if TANF-MOE expenditures are claimed. Office of Work Opportunities Youth Operations' Youth Service Program The Youth Services Program is designed to deter youth from becoming TCA customers. The program provides opportunities for youth to look at careers and the world of work, linked closely to the local labor market and youth development, such as leadership through volunteer community service and connections between academic and occupational learning.

Through this program, youth learn early in their development how to access workforce services and continue to use those services throughout their working lives. The goal is to promote motivation, performance, and self-esteem of youth, prevent teen pregnancies and to develop career awareness, including the necessary academic, technical, and vocational skills to successfully transition into adulthood. This program provides non-assistance.

**Community Partnerships** These programs are locally defined and based on indicated needs to help families by providing family support through projects such as home visiting, after school programs and family preservation. The program objectives seek to reduce out-of-wedlock pregnancies, increase parent-child interaction, emotional support, and financial responsibility, and promote the development of two parent families. This program provides non-assistance.

**Safe and Stable Families** These are a variety of programs available to families to provide supportive services to promote safety and well-being of children and their families, promote stability and permanency, preserve family unity, and build empowerment, self-sufficiency and psychosocial well-being. This includes families with identified stresses around family life, including disruption, child abuse and neglect issues, domestic violence, homelessness, substance abuse, mental health, physical health, and educational concerns. These programs help families by providing: protective services or potential protective services to families; family support through projects such as parenting classes and after school programs; and family preservation, through grants for Interagency Family Preservation Services and through other means as appropriate, such as by counseling families in crisis, referring them to other existing services, and providing a wide range of service to the family to maximize the chances the children grow up in safe, stable and loving homes.

The programs include, but are not limited to, Families Now, Intensive Family Services, Continuing Protective Services, Services to Families with Children, Kinship Care, Parent Aide Services and those provided through Inter-Agency Agreements such as the Family Recovery Program. These programs prevent or reduce out-of-wedlock pregnancies and encourage the formation and maintenance of two parent families, since the ultimate goal of all of them is to provide a safe home for children in a stable, two-parent environment. These programs provide non-assistance.

**Baltimore City Public Schools After School Program** In an agreement between State and City officials, the Maryland After School Opportunity Fund Program was expanded for Baltimore City. As required by legislation, vendors chosen to operate the program must incorporate features that "will have a positive measurable impact on one or more of the conditions of well-being for Maryland children and youth identified by the Maryland Partnership for Children, Youth and Families." The Maryland Partnership for Children, Youth and Families has developed results and indicators of child wellbeing with assistance from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation. One of the results and indicators is "Babies Born Healthy," which includes a measure for "the rate of births to adolescents less than 18 years of age."

The programs support the Baltimore City Public Schools' efforts to provide quality after school experiences for at risk students enrolled in the City's public schools. Programs are designed to help children succeed in school, increase positive and healthy behaviors, and decrease negative behaviors such as juvenile crime, substance abuse, and teen pregnancy. This program provides supervision and activities for children of many low-income families and is reasonably calculated to achieve the third goal of the TANF statute. This program provides non-assistance.

**Juvenile Delinquency Prevention and Diversion Initiative** This initiative provides community based, multi-service prevention programs serving youth and families. Sites are incorporated non-profits with a Board of Directors, local governments, or state government. The youth served are those at risk of becoming delinquent because of their behaviors and circumstances, and youth who committed minor delinquencies.

Referrals are accepted from schools, parents, the Department of Juvenile Justice, police, the juvenile him or herself, other agencies, and friends. The purpose of the program is to enhance the motivation, performance and self-esteem of youth and is, thus, reasonably calculated to achieve the third goal of the TANF law, the reduction of out of wedlock pregnancies. This program provides non-assistance.

**Enhancement Grants for Local School Systems** These grants help local school systems provide full day, all year, early childcare and educational programs. Funds can be used to: provide before and after care services for public schools, preschools, pre-kindergarten or kindergarten programs; increase the number of child care programs that are open full day and year round; expand services to half day programs; and provide family support programs promoting parental involvement.

This program provides education and supervision for children of eligible families under 300 percent of the poverty level and promotes parental involvement in their children's learning. The program is reasonably calculated to achieve the first and second goals of the TANF statute. The program provides non-assistance.

Maryland will apply the following methodology for any MOE funds claimed from this program. An enrollment list from the program will be matched to the TCA caseload. If the list shows that X percent of families served were needy, then X percent of the non-federal expenditures for that fiscal year may be claimed as TANF-MOE.

**Department of Juvenile Services Programs that are TANF or TANF-MOE Eligible** Department of Juvenile Services Programs may be TANF or TANF-MOE eligible when serving families and children in the community related to Purpose Four of TANF. Among them are community services programs such as Drug Courts for youth, Functional Family Therapy, and Multi-systemic Therapy.

The latter two are evidenced-based, family focused interventions that are designed to improve family interaction and prevent re-arrest. Certain services offered by the Department of Juvenile Services residential facilities also serve families. Families are encouraged to participate in the treatment programs. One initiative, the After Care Program, offers behavioral health professionals that develop aftercare plans that link youth and their families with appropriate services once they return to the community. Families are encouraged to participate in aftercare planning while youth are in the facilities. These programs provide non-assistance.

Maryland State Department of Education Programs funded under the Bridge to Excellence Act The Bridge to Excellence Act is an “umbrella” funding mechanism that provides aid to local school districts for a variety of educational enhancements. A number of the funding streams within the Act can be TANF or TANF-MOE eligible, either for enhanced funding for schools in low income areas or for services to specific low-income populations. These programs provide non-assistance. SEPARATE STATE PROGRAMS FUNDED BY 100% TANF MAINTENANCE OF EFFORT Maryland has developed a broad array of services to families and children that are reasonably calculated to accomplish the first and second purposes of the TANF law. These are means tested and are funded out of 100 percent TANF Maintenance of Effort funds in a Separate State Program or other sources that are not federal TANF or TANF Maintenance of Effort. Maryland has designed these programs to be as effective and efficient as possible. This has the effect that certain specific services and certain specific beneficiaries of some of the services of some of these programs may not be eligible for federal TANF or that Maryland will not find it necessary to claim all of the TANF funds that could be claimed for the program because of its own substantial investment in it. Using the flexibility in the statute and regulations, Maryland will report the exact amount of state funds for MOE charged to these programs using the appropriate federal mechanisms. Unless otherwise noted, for the purposes of this Plan and federal reporting, eligibility for the following programs is limited to those families with incomes under 300 percent of the federal poverty level in effect at the time of service delivery.

Rental Assistance Program to Work The Rental Assistance Program to Work provides rental assistance to families currently receiving TCA, former TCA families who received TCA in the past year, and families who received a Welfare Avoidance Grant and who are employed or unemployed and in a work activity (as defined by the local department of social services). The families receive assistance from the Rental Assistance Program for up to 12 months. Six-month extensions may be granted if customers provide reasonable explanations of why they are not becoming self-sufficient. Eligibility is limited to families who receive income that is 30 percent or less than the statewide or area median income.

Rental assistance provides reasonable, stable housing to keep families working, enhance family income, and keep the family off TCA. In addition, rental assistance provides stable, low-cost housing to TCA families preparing for work or working at a low-wage job that will eventually move off TCA. This program provides assistance.

Judith P. Hoyer Early Child Care and Family Education Centers (Judy Centers) Judy Centers are unique early childhood learning centers that promote school readiness through an integrated approach. The centers, written into Maryland Law in May 2000, envision professional collaboration in integrating a wide spectrum of early childhood education programs and family support services for children from pre-birth to age six. The centers have a “one stop” approach eliminating fragmented services. Children and their families can visit a single location to access community-based organizations providing services such as health services, family support and family literacy, Head Start and the public library. The community-based services are in addition to the services provided by the Center, such as: early intervention services, health care (immunizations, vision and hearing tests, and pediatric care), professional family support, and student breakfast and lunch.

This program encourages eligible families with incomes under 300 percent of poverty to obtain the services they need to ensure their children are healthy and successful in school by making the services easily accessible. The program is reasonably calculated to achieve the first and second purposes of the TANF statute. The program provides non-assistance.

Adoption Benefits Funds This provides funds for adoption benefits to needy parents of an adopted child who is not eligible for title IV-E adoption assistance. Families are eligible if their annual adjusted gross income, as defined by the Internal Revenue Service, does not exceed 80 percent of the latest published figure for the median income for a family of that size for the State, as set forth in Schedule A under COMAR 07.02.04.11. The adoptive child is included in determining the family size. The annual adjusted gross income of the family shall be the latest figure that was reported to the Internal Revenue Service. Funds are available to pay for benefit payments. The final adoption establishes a parental relationship even if no blood relationship exists. This program is reasonably calculated to meet the first goal of the TANF statute. Benefits under this program meet the definition of assistance under the TANF program.

**(b) Require a parent or caretaker receiving assistance to engage in work (defined by the State) once the State determines the parent or caretaker is ready to engage in work, or once he or she has received 24 months of assistance, whichever is earlier, consistent with the child care exception at 407(e)(2) (section 402(a)(1)(A)(ii) of the Social Security Act)**

Each adult in the TCA assistance unit and each child age 16 years or older in the assistance unit who is not enrolled full-time in school must participate in a work activity approved by the local department that is likely to result in unsubsidized employment. Local departments follow the 12 approved core and non-core work activities set forth by the law (The participation requirement is based on immediate universal engagement and is compliant with the 24 month work rule found in §402(a)(1) A (ii) of the TANF law.).

Exemptions from the work activity requirements are: • A single custodial parent who is required to care for a child under age one who is a member of the assistance unit (This exemption applies for a cumulative total of 12 months for a parent's lifetime and does not apply to each child); • Children under age 16. • A teen parent (either head of household or included as a child on an adult's TCA case) who has not finished secondary school may not be exempt to care for a child younger than one year old. • A caretaker relative in an assistance unit with a child cared for by a non-parent relative who has demonstrated need and has no dependent children of his or her own in the assistance unit. • Immigrant, parent/caretaker relatives who are not eligible for federal TCA assistance, with the exception of adult only qualified immigrant households for which TCA eligibility is based on an unborn child.

Failure of any non-exempt adult to cooperate in a work requirement without good cause, including failure to accept offered employment, shall result in ineligibility of the entire assistance unit until the household cooperates.

### **(c) Ensure that parents and caretakers receiving assistance engage in work in accordance with section 407 (section 402(a)(1)(A)(iii) of the Social Security Act)**

To ensure that individuals receiving assistance are engaging in work, there is a sanctioning process in place for noncompliance. Refer to Section (a), on page 233, Sanctions for Noncompliance with Program Requirements. Also Section (a), page 224 refer to the TANF Workforce Development Programs description that discusses how LDSS workforce development activities are addressing employment and training services for individuals receiving assistance.

### **(d) Take such reasonable steps as the State deems necessary to restrict the use and disclosure of information about individuals and families receiving assistance under the program attributable to funds provided by the Federal Government (section 402(a)(1)(A)(iv) of the Social Security Act)**

To restrict the use and disclosure of information, the Secretary of DHR and the Executive Director of the Family Investment Administration, or their designees, develop partnership agreements for the exchange of information to assist in the verification of cash assistance eligibility. The agreements are in writing and include procedures for requesting, obtaining, and examining the information, and specify the Secretary's designee for requesting and receiving information by title or position. Additionally, customers sign a consent form to share information needed for the verification of cash assistance eligibility.

The State of Maryland elects the option to collect data on a monthly basis and report on a quarterly basis, a sample of the caseload as prescribed by the Secretary, to produce statistically valid estimates of the performance of the program. Sampling will be used only when the universe is large enough to comply with established sampling methodology.

### **(e) Establish goals and take action to prevent and reduce out-of-wedlock pregnancies, with special emphasis on teenage pregnancies (section 402(a)(1)(A)(v) of the Social Security Act)**

The State of Maryland developed a comprehensive approach to the adolescent pregnancy problem including:

- Improvements in education, such as providing sexuality education, access to contraceptives and other health promotion services to reach out-of-school adolescents;
- Community based programs, such as local multimedia promotion of responsible decision-making on sexual matters;
- Enhanced social services, such as physical and sexual abuse prevention at primary, secondary and tertiary levels;
- Employment development, such as school-to-work opportunities in partnership with private business and public agencies; and,
- Health initiatives, such as improved access to birth control counseling and services for sexually active adolescents and parenting classes for every pregnant teenager and her partner.

Programs and services for people in this age group will be improved or added, as needed.

**(f) Conduct a program designed to reach State and local law enforcement officials, the education system, and relevant counseling services, that provides education and training on the problem of statutory rape so that teenage pregnancy prevention programs may be expanded to include men (section 402(a)(1)(A)(vi) of the Social Security Act)**

The State of Maryland recognizes that effective campaigns to reduce incidences of statutory rape are needed. Both the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and the Maryland State Department of Education developed and implemented programs targeted to reducing teen pregnancy. The Statewide comprehensive plan includes the following:

- An awareness campaign targeted to reach the male population that is likely to commit these crimes;
- A program of education/training for law enforcement officials;
- A plan that increases awareness through public schools; and,
- Enhancement of existing programs that provide counseling to both adolescent females and males.

Maryland supports agencies and community groups that serve high risk populations that are in need of abstinence education. The goal is to prevent unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV/AIDS in youth ages 10–19 who meet the following criteria:

- Live in geographic areas with high teen birth rates;
- Youth in or aging out of foster care or the juvenile justice system;
- Homeless, runaway, or Out-of-School Youth;
- Pregnant or parenting youth; and,
- Youth with HIV/AIDS.

As part of the State's campaign to reduce infant mortality, the reduction of teen pregnancy means fewer infants are born who might die before they reach one year old. The goal is to reduce infant mortality by 10 percent by the end of calendar year 2017.

**(g) Implement policies and procedures as necessary to prevent access to assistance provided under the State program funded under this part through any electronic fund transaction in an automated teller machine or point-of-sale device located in a place described in section 408(a)(12), including a plan to ensure that recipients of the assistance have adequate access to their cash assistance (section 402(a)(1)(A)(vii) of the Social Security Act)**

Maryland's DHR operates an electronic benefits transfer system under agreement with the United States Department of Health and Human Services and pursuant to United States Department of Agriculture regulations. A TCA grant is typically paid via the electronic benefits transfer system. The Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012 (P.L. 112–96), provides that individuals and families who are receiving federally funded cash assistance may not use an electronic benefits transfer card for any purpose at a liquor store, adult entertainment venue, or gambling casino. The State of Maryland provides penalties for non-compliance with program requirements that include the suspension of the use of the cash access portion of the card for specific time periods.

Effective October 1, 2014, all TCA applicants and recipients are required to sign an acknowledgement that they understand the prohibition against using their electronic benefits transfer cards at an establishment whose primary purpose is gambling, the sale of liquor, or an adult entertainment venue where individuals or groups disrobe for an audience.

Customers who violate the prohibition against using their cards at unauthorized locations will receive a warning notice that a subsequent violation may result in the use of their electronic benefits transfer cards for cash assistance benefits being suspended. Customers who have twice violated Federal law and State policy prohibiting the use of EBT cards at unauthorized locations will no longer have their cash assistance payments put onto their electronic benefits transfer cards. While the cards will still be active for use at Food Supplement Program retailers for those recipients, DHR will deliver cash assistance payments by direct deposit, or check. Suspension of the card for cash benefits is for a minimum of one year for the second violation and permanently for a subsequent violation after electronic benefits transfer use has been reinstated.

**(h) Ensure that recipients of assistance provided under the State program funded under this part have the ability to use or withdraw assistance with minimal fees or**

**charges, including an opportunity to access assistance with no fee or charges, and are provided information on applicable fees and surcharges that apply to electronic fund transactions involving the assistance, and that such information is made publicly available (section 402(a)(1)(A)(viii) of the Social Security Act)**

Individuals and families may incur fees and charges when withdrawing funds from ATMs that are not in the State vendor's network. DHR will provide customers with recommendations on how to access funds in a way that minimizes ATM fees or additional surcharges, such as using ATMs that do not charge a usage fee, or using the ATMs from the State vendor who manages the electronic benefits transfer funds accounts. DHR will continue to explore additional methods of reducing fees for customers and provide them with notifications via the DHR website where a link to the information will be available. In addition, information will be provided in the local departments of social services. If families or individuals are unable to access TCA benefits due to card restrictions, DHR will advise them of other payment options available including mailing a paper check or direct deposit into the customer's checking or savings account.

**(i) Indicate whether it intends to treat families moving from another State differently from other families under the program, and if so how (section 402(a)(1)(B)(i) of the Social Security Act)**

Families moving into Maryland from another state will be treated no differently than any other family residing in Maryland. The number of months of TANF used by residents of another state who move to Maryland will be counted in the number of months of TCA received.

**(j) Indicate whether it intends to provide assistance to non-citizens, and if so include an overview of the assistance (section 402(a)(1)(B)(ii) of the Social Security Act)**

DHR's Citizenship Status policy for the Family Investment Program states that a Family Investment Program recipient must be a United States citizen or a qualified alien as defined in §8 USC 1611, et. seq., as amended. Qualified immigrants, including humanitarian entrants such as refugees, certified victims of trafficking, Cuban and Haitian parolees, and asylees, who meet the federal technical and financial TCA eligibility requirements, may be referred to one or more of the following Family Investment Program components when applying for assistance:

• Welfare Avoidance Grant; • Temporary Cash Assistance; • Emergency Assistance to Families with Children; and/or, • Disaster Assistance.

Local Departments may develop Alternative Programs tailored to fit the unique needs of that jurisdiction. To assist English Language Learners in meeting the TCA work requirements, DHR contracts with two vendors, International Rescue Committee (IRC) and Lutheran Social Services (LSS), who are qualified to implement TANF/workforce programs for refugees and or asylees. To qualify as a provider for refugee services, the vendor must be authorized through the Department of Homeland Security, Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration

**(k) Set forth objective criteria for the delivery of benefits and the determination of eligibility and for fair and equitable treatment, including an explanation of how it will provide opportunities for recipients who have been adversely affected to be heard in a State administrative or appeal process (section 402(a)(1)(B)(iii) of the Social Security Act)**

Refer to Section (a) for a description of Maryland's delivery of benefits and the determination of benefits eligibility.

Regarding fair and equitable treatment, Maryland uses a combined application and thus follows the guidelines established by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The local departments of social services, all vendors and contractors must also follow State and federal non-discrimination requirements. The local departments will provide

persons with disabilities individualized treatment and effective and meaningful opportunity to educational or employment activities as they are provided to others. The local department will make reasonable accommodations and provide auxiliary aids for persons with disabilities, such as but not limited to: interpreters, note takers, and materials in alternate formats to the extent that it does not cause a fundamental alteration with the program, or result in undue financial or administrative burden.

**Appeals and Complaints of Discrimination**— A Family Investment Program applicant or recipient may request an agency conference for an explanation of the reasons for proposed actions, and present information to show that the proposed action is incorrect. The local department gives each applicant or recipient written notification of the right to and procedures for requesting and obtaining a hearing as set forth in Code of Maryland Regulations 07.03.03.28 or 07.01.04. An applicant or recipient may file a written complaint by contacting the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The complaint must set forth the events and circumstances of alleged discrimination, if he or she thinks we have discriminated against them.

**Non-Discrimination Assurances** —The State of Maryland assures that the following provisions of law will apply to programs and activities funded under TANF: • The Age Discrimination Act of 1975 (42 U.S.C. §§ 6101 et seq.); • Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. § 794); • The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. §§ 12101 et seq.); and, • Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. §§ 2000d et seq.)

The State of Maryland assures that persons with disabilities will be provided with individualized treatment and effective and meaningful opportunity to the extent that it does not cause a fundamental alteration with the program or result in undue financial or administrative burden.

## **(I) Indicate whether the State intends to assist individuals to train for, seek, and maintain employment (Section 402(a)(1)(B)(v) of the Social Security Act)—**

- 1. providing direct care in a long-term care facility (as such terms are defined under section 1397j of this title); or**
- 2. in other occupations related to elder care, high-demand occupations, or occupations expected to experience labor shortages as, determined appropriate by the State for which the State identifies an unmet need for service personnel, and, if so, shall include an overview of such assistance.**

As a WIOA Partner, DHR is connected with the State's workforce system to stay informed about high-demand occupations. DHR accomplishes this in these ways:

- DHR's Secretary serves on the Governor's Workforce Investment Board (GWIB). This access to the GWIB provides DHR with knowledge about high-demand occupations, industry sector initiatives; and business workforce development needs;
- DHR's Bureau of Workforce Development has a team member that is tasked with business engagement through DHR's Hiring Agreements program, for both private and public employers. Companies contracted to provide services or goods to the State are required to sign Hiring Agreements which declare DHR as the "first source" in filling positions that may be created as a result of the contract. Further, companies work with DHR to develop specific training to equip eligible TCA customers to fill vacancies. In addition, this team member works closely with the WIOA Partners statewide business services team, thus integrating into the larger workforce development system's team that addresses business workforce development needs; and,
- The local department staff that work with businesses to place TCA customers in employment, internships or on-the-job training opportunities are also connected to the WIOA Partners business services teams. This creates a coordinated and integrated system of business engagement. Additionally, the local department staff will begin taking advantage of the quarterly WIOA Partners business services training.

Additionally, some local departments have contracts and Memoranda of Understanding with local community colleges to assist customers with vocational skills training and credentialing programs that will allow them to obtain employment at wages that will support their families. These programs include training in the healthcare related field, such as CNA, GNA, Medical Billing and Coding. The current demand for skilled workers in these positions is high. These positions will increase in demand as the population of "baby boomers" continues to age. The State will continue to support training for careers in elder care, as well as provide job search and job placement assistance for careers in the elder care field.

## **(m) Provide for all MOE-funded services the following information: the name of the**

**program benefit or service, and the financial eligibility criteria that families must meet in order to receive that benefit or service. In addition, for TANF MOE-funded services (co-mingled or segregated MOE) describe the program benefit provided to eligible families (SSP services do not have to include a description but the Department of Health and Human Services encourages it) (§263.2(b)(3) & §263.2(c) preamble pages 17826-7)**

Refer to Section (a) for detailed descriptions of MOE-funded services.

TANF OPTIONS SELECTED Maryland has opted for the following:

- The option to assist all legal immigrants who lived in the U.S. before August 22, 1996 in the same way U.S. citizens are treated;
- In 2000, the Maryland General Assembly chose to opt out of the PRWORA Section 115 requirement to disqualify custodial parents convicted of a drug-related felony involving possession, use, or distribution of a controlled substance on or after August 22, 1996 from receiving TCA or Food Supplement Program benefits. Mandatory and recurrent drug testing is a condition for receiving TCA and Food Supplement Program benefits for these custodial parents. The Department developed regulations in consultation with the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene regarding testing methods and intervals.
- The option to not require an individual who is a single custodial parent caring for a child who has not attained 12 months of age to engage in work.
- The option to disregard the single custodial parent exempt from work due to caring for a child under the age of 12 months in determining the participation rates for work requirements for not more than 12 months.
- The option to terminate assistance to a family where an individual receiving assistance refuses to engage in work requirements, subject to good cause.
- The option to deny assistance to a family where an individual is not cooperating with the establishment of paternity or obtaining child support.
- The option to exempt from the 60 month limitation a family by reason of hardship, not to exceed a total of 20 percent of the average monthly number of families to which assistance is provided.
- The option to continue assistance for a child absent from the home fewer than 180 consecutive days.
- The option to develop a family responsibility plan. The plan sets forth an employment goal and a plan for moving the individual immediately into private employment, sets forth the obligations of the individual which may include a requirement to attend school, keep school aged children in school, immunize children, attend parenting and money management classes, set other requirements which will result in unsubsidized employment, and describe the services the State will provide to assist the individual to attain self-sufficiency.
- The option to comply with the above option within 180 days after the effective date of this part for a recipient of assistance, and within 90 days after the effective date of this part after the individual is determined to be eligible for assistance.
- The option to apply a full-family sanction to a family that includes an individual who fails, without good cause, to meet the individual responsibility plan.
- The option to use a sampling method using the procedures the Secretary deems to be necessary to produce statistically valid estimates of the performance of State programs funded under this part.
- The option to administer and provide services through contracts with charitable, religious, or private organizations, and provide beneficiaries of the services with vouchers, certificates, or forms of disbursement which are redeemable with such organizations, or used as a means of providing assistance.
- The option to sanction a family that fails to ensure that minor dependent school-age children attend school and minor dependent pre-school children get preventive health care.
- The option to screen and identify victims of domestic violence. Refer such individuals to counseling and supportive services. Waive, pursuant to a determination of good cause, other program requirements outlined in Section 402 (a), (7), (A), (I), (ii), and (iii) of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996.
- The option to exempt a family from the 60 month limitation when a family includes an individual who has been battered or subject to extreme cruelty.
- The option to establish good cause reasons for a minor to be absent from the home for longer than 180 consecutive days.
- The option to screen recipients of assistance for use of controlled substances or sanction recipients who test positive for controlled substances.

TANF OPTIONS NOT SELECTED AT THIS TIME Maryland has elected to opt out of the following options at this time:

- The option to require a parent or caretaker receiving assistance under the program who, after receiving such assistance for 2 months is not exempt from work requirements and is not engaged in work, to participate in community service employment.
- The option to sanction a family that includes an adult who is older than 20 and younger than 51 if such adult does not have, or is not working toward attaining, a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent unless certain exceptions are met.
- The option to reduce the amount of assistance otherwise payable to a family pro rata with respect to any period during a month in which an individual receiving assistance refuses to comply with work requirements.
- The option to deduct from the assistance that would otherwise be provided to a family of an individual who is not cooperating in the establishment of paternity or obtaining child support 25 percent of the amount of such assistance.
- The option to not use any part of the grant to provide assistance for a minor child who has been, or is expected to be absent from the home for a period of 45 consecutive days.

## TANF Certifications

States that include TANF in the Combined State Plan must provide a certification by the chief executive officer of that State, that during the fiscal year, the State will:

Operate a child support enforcement program under the State Plan approved under part D. (section 402(a)(2) of the Social Security Act) Yes

Operate a foster care and adoption assistance program under the State Plan approved under part E, and that the State will take such actions as are necessary to ensure that children receiving assistance under such part are eligible for medical assistance under The Unified or Combined State Plan under title XIX. (section 402(a)(3) of the Social Security Act) Yes

Specify which State agency or agencies will administer and supervise the program referred to in paragraph (1) for the fiscal year, which shall include assurances that local governments and private sector organizations (section 402(a)(4) of the Social Security Act)—have been consulted regarding the plan and design of welfare services in the State so that services are provided in a manner appropriate to local populations; Yes

Specify which State agency or agencies will administer and supervise the program referred to in paragraph (1) for the fiscal year, which shall include assurances that local governments and private sector organizations (section 402(a)(4) of the Social Security Act)—have had at least 45 days to submit comments on the plan and the design of such services Yes

Provide each member of an Indian tribe, who is domiciled in the State and is not eligible for assistance under a tribal family assistance plan approved under section 412, with equitable access to assistance under the State program funded under this part attributable to funds provided by the Federal Government. (section 402(a)(5) of the Social Security Act) Yes

Establish and enforce standards and procedures to ensure against program fraud and abuse, including standards and procedures concerning nepotism, conflicts of interest among individuals responsible for the administration and supervision of the State program, kickbacks, and the use of political patronage. (section 402(a)(6) of the Social Security Act) Yes

(optional) Establish and Enforcing standards and procedures to (section 402(a)(7) of the Social Security Act).— screen and identify individuals receiving assistance under this part with a history of domestic violence while maintaining the confidentiality of such individuals; Yes

(optional) Establish and Enforcing standards and procedures to (section 402(a)(7) of the Social Security Act).— refer such individuals to counseling and supportive services; Yes

(optional) Establish and Enforcing standards and procedures to (section 402(a)(7) of the Social Security Act).—waive, pursuant to a determination of good cause, other program requirements such as time limits (for so long as necessary) for individuals receiving assistance, residency requirements, child support cooperation requirements, and family cap provisions, in cases where compliance with such requirements would make it more difficult for individuals receiving assistance under this part to escape domestic violence or unfairly penalize such individuals who are or have been victimized by such violence, or individuals who are at risk of further domestic violence Yes

## Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)

There are no program-specific state planning requirements for TAA. If the state includes TAA in a Combined State Plan, the state must incorporate TAA in its responses to the common planning elements in sections II, III, IV, and V of the WIOA State Plan requirements instrument.

Has the state incorporated TAA into the sections indicated above? Yes

## Jobs for Veterans' State Grants

The Jobs for Veterans' State Grants (JVSG) are mandatory, formula-based staffing grants to (including DC, PR, VI and Guam). The JVSG is funded annually in accordance with a funding formula defined in the statute (38 U.S.C. 4102A (c) (2) (B) and regulation and operates on a fiscal year (not program year) basis, however, performance metrics are collected and reported (VETS-200 Series Reports) quarterly (using four "rolling quarters") on a Program Year basis (as with the ETA-9002 Series). Currently, VETS JVSG operates on a five-year (FY 2015-2019), multi-year grant approval cycle modified and funded annually.

In accordance with 38 U.S.C. § 4102A(b)(5) and § 4102A(c), the Assistant Secretary for Veterans' Employment and Training (ASVET) makes grant funds available for use in each State to support Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialists and

Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVER) staff. As a condition to receive funding, 38 U.S.C. § 4102A(c)(2) requires States to submit an application for a grant that contains a State Plan narrative, which includes:

## **(a) How the State intends to provide employment, training and job placement services to veterans and eligible persons under the JVSG**

To meet the training and employment needs of Veterans, DLLR answers to two USDOL agencies—the Veterans Employment and Training Service (VETS) and the Employment and Training Administration (ETA). Through collaboration with VETS, DLLR administers the Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JSVG) Program, which allows for Veterans with significant barriers to employment to receive tailored employment and training services. DLLR also administers important ETA programs, such as Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Programs, and Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Services. These programs are universally accessible to all eligible job seekers. Pursuant to Title 38 of the United State Code and rules and regulations issued by USDOL, Veterans and eligible spouses, including widows and widowers as defined in applicable law, receive Priority of Service for all programs or services for workforce preparation, development, or delivery that is directly funded, in whole or in part, by USDOL.

Both VETS- and ETA-administered programs are offered through the American Job Center system. Through the American Job Center system, DLLR connects employers with work-ready Veterans and provides Veterans with comprehensive employment and training services. Partner agencies interested in connecting Veterans with employment services are encouraged to contact their nearest American Job Center.

DVOP specialists provide intensive services and facilitate placements to meet the employment needs of Veterans. Pursuant to 38 U.S.C. 4103A, “special disabled Veterans,” “other disabled Veterans,” and “other eligible Veterans” receive priority in the provision of intensive services in accordance with priorities determined by the U.S. Secretary of Labor. In any event, maximum emphasis must be placed in meeting the employment needs of veterans who are economically or educationally disadvantaged, including homeless Veterans and those with barriers to employment.

LVERs conduct outreach to local employers to assist Veterans in gaining employment. This includes conducting seminars for employers, job search workshops, and facilitating employment training and placement services offered to Veterans in the State.

Both staff positions, each with their own distinct duties, are integrated into the American Job Center funds and are tasked to serve Veterans exclusively, other eligible persons, transitioning service members, their spouses and, indirectly, employers. Maryland maintains a continued emphasis on transitioning Veterans, their spouses, and other eligible persons to the workforce.

Statewide, there are seventeen (17) LVERs and twenty-two (28) DVOPs, many of whom are themselves Veterans. Staff manages the process of how veterans make use of their priority services including:

- Finding a job;
- Enrolling in training or applying for educational assistance (credential attainment);
- VRAP/Gold Card Services; and
- Connecting to resources/information on immediate needs such as housing/food/mental health services.

Once enrolled at the American Job Center, DVOPs work with Veterans to encourage them to attend an orientation session, and register with the Maryland Workforce Exchange (MWE). Within the MWE is the Mil2FedsJobs portal, which is designed to help transitioning military personnel find jobs for which their service experience and training would make them a qualified and attractive candidate. The portal uses military occupations to identify matches in public sector industries.

The following efforts have been taken to ensure the strategic development of the JVSG program:

- Local workforce area directors are trained to increase familiarity with program and priority of service requirements, and to discuss integration strategies with the Veterans Program Manager and the DLLR Office of Workforce Development director. Local workforce directors are also listed to receive additional training from the National Veterans' Training Institute.
- Local Areas have been encouraged to include Veterans' staff in American Job Center workgroups and organizational teams. Local Veterans Employment Representatives, whose responsibilities include working with employers on behalf of Veterans, receive integrated Business Services training, as well as becoming an integral part of each American Job Center's Business Services Team.
- Maryland continues to look at employment and training opportunities that have previously been underutilized by veterans, including apprenticeships and on-the-job training.

## **(b) The duties assigned to DVOP specialists and LVER staff by the State; specifically implementing DVOP and LVER duties or roles and responsibilities as outlined in 38**

## **U.S.C. § 4103A and 4104. These duties must be consistent with current guidance;**

DLLR recognizes that all American Job Center staff plays a critical role in serving transitioning service members, Veterans, and their families by providing resources to assist and prepare them for meaningful careers.

In Maryland, the JVSG program provides funding for three key positions to ensure program success – Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialists, Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVERs) and a Veterans Program Manager. In addition to functionally managing and overseeing the JVSG program, the Veterans Program Manager must also ensure that up-to-date signage, handouts and webpages are available.

Both DVOPs and LVERs play critical, specific roles. To meet the specific needs of Veterans, particularly Veterans with Significant Barriers to Employment (SBE), DVOP and LVER staff are thoroughly familiar with the full range of available job development services and training programs.

DVOP specialists provide intensive services to eligible Veterans and eligible spouses who face significant barriers to employment and therefore necessitate DVOP services to obtain or maintain employment. Intensive services include comprehensive and specialized assessments of skill levels and service needs; development of an individual employment plan to identify the employment goals, appropriate achievement objectives and appropriate combination of services for the participant to achieve the employment goals; group counseling; individual counseling and career planning; and short-term prevocational services that may include development of learning skills, communication skills, interviewing skills, punctuality, personal maintenance skills, and professional conduct to prepare individuals for unsubsidized employment or training.

An eligible Veteran or spouse is determined to have a SBE if he or she attests to belonging to at least one of the 10 following categories: • A special disabled or disabled Veteran • A homeless Veteran • A recently separated service member, who at any point in the previous 12 months has been unemployed for 27 or more weeks • An offender who is currently incarcerated or has been released from incarceration • A Veteran who is lacking a high school diploma or equivalent certificate • A low-income Veteran • A Veteran between the ages of 18-24 • A wounded, ill or injured Armed Forces member, spouse, or caregiver • A service member who does not meet military services' Capstone Career Readiness Standards • An active duty service member being involuntarily separated through a Service reduction-in-force By limiting DVOP specialists' activities to assisting Veterans with one or more SBE, DVOPs are able to provide more concentrated, intensive services to those who are most in need. DVOPs' intensive services are designed to mitigate SBEs through comprehensive and specialized assessments of skill levels and needs. Services include case management, the development of an individual employment plan, group and individual career guidance and planning, referral to other service providers (e.g., The Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) Program offered by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)), job search assistance, and short-term instruction to augment skills development, such as interview and communication skills.

DVOP specialists are often located in the State's American Job Centers, but may be co-located with other service providers, such as the VA. DVOP staff is also prohibited from completing LVER duties. DVOP staff provides intensive services to veterans and eligible spouses only. When a DVOP staff member is not actively engaged with a full case-load, he/she should complete the following activities, in the following order:

- Review all open case files of Veterans with SBE and perform case management duties;
- Conduct relationship building, outreach and recruitment activities with other service providers in the Local Area to locate and enroll other Veterans with SBE in relevant services.

To ensure that correct Intensive Services are recorded, DVOP specialists must use DVOP Service Codes, which provides a list of applicable Services to be entered into the Maryland Workforce Exchange (MWE). DVOP staff must only report Services for activities provided. DVOP staff must record all relevant case notes.

The Department has issued a policy that lists basic case note guidelines and procedures. The Veterans Program Manager should ensure that staff is properly trained on acceptable case management practices.

Local Veteran Employment Representatives (LVERs) work to develop relationships with business to secure employment opportunities for Veterans. LVERs conduct employer outreach, engage in advocacy efforts, organize and facilitate job fairs, recruitments, and job clubs, and conduct pre-screening for hiring executives, local businesses, business associations, business groups, industry partners and community based organizations. This is done in an effort to increase employment opportunities for Veterans, encourage the hiring of disabled Veterans, and generally assist Veterans to gain and retain employment. LVERs conduct seminars for employers and job clubs for eligible Veterans and spouses who are seeking employment.

LVER staff is prohibited from completing DVOP specialists' duties. However, a LVER may meet with Veteran jobseekers recommended by American Job Center staff for referral to specific employment opportunities. The goal of these interactions is for

the LVER to assess the Veteran's suitability for referral, make connection between Veterans and a particular business, and develop feedback to the American Job Center system on best or promising practices to maximize successful Veteran employment.

LVERs play an important role in the development of Local Area service delivery strategies for Veterans. LVERs and Local Area staff must work together to educate partner staff on the roles of DVOPs and LVERs. All staff must support Veteran employment initiatives and programs.

Regional LVERs act as supervisors for JVSG staff. As supervisors, they must still perform the functions of a LVER. They will review and may approve additional activities as part of the local Veteran service delivery system. Supervisors must also review roles with JVSG staff and evaluate JVSG staff performance. Annually, LVERs must work with the Veterans Program Manager to create annual training plans for Local Areas. These plans help to ensure that all staff are updated and remain informed on current programs, staff roles, and policies.

### **(c) The manner in which DVOP specialists and LVER staff are integrated into the State's employment service delivery system or one-stop delivery system partner network;**

The Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation, recognizes that all Local Area staff, including American Job Center staff, are responsible for providing services to Veterans and eligible spouses. As JVSG Program staff, DVOP specialists and LVERs exist to supplement and not supplant the duties of the Local Area staff. All personnel are responsible for serving Veterans and eligible spouses with applicable programs and services.

During a Veteran's initial visit, American Job Center staff is responsible for assessing the Veteran to determine whether a significant barrier to employment exists. If a Veteran self identifies as having a significant barrier to employment, then American Job Center staff should use an eligibility checklist to document the Veteran's status. The checklist, which has been provided with Policy guidance issued by DLLR, should be used by the American Job Center staff as a way to lead a conversation concerning potential barriers; staff should not ask the Veterans to complete the form themselves. American Job Center staff should assess the Veteran for SBEs in a private area to allow the Veteran an opportunity to feel safe about providing sensitive information.

After the American Job Center staff's initial assessment and delivery of Basic Career Services, Veterans with a significant barrier to employment that require and will benefit from intensive services should be referred to the DVOP upon the Veteran's agreement. If a DVOP is requested and is unavailable, the self-attestation form should serve as a referral for DVOPs to follow-up. If the Veteran with a significant barrier to employment refuses DVOP services he or she can be provided with the applicable and available ETA-administered American Job Center services. LVER staff may not receive referrals, and are prohibited from providing these services. If a significant barrier to employment is not identified, then the Veteran should be provided with the applicable and available ETA-administered American Job Center services. If a Veteran without a significant barrier to employment indicates a preference to work with a Veteran's representative, Local Area staff should work with JVSG staff to ensure the Veteran job seeker understands DVOP specialists and LVER staff roles. Priority of Service must be given to all eligible Veterans and spouses.

As supervisors, Labor Exchange Administrators, with support from LVERs, must ensure that signage and handouts are visible in high-traffic areas of each American Job Center. Labor Exchange Administrators are also encouraged to participate in the military service's Capstone sessions by sending a staff member to Capstone activities, upon the request of a military service commander. The American Job Center staff member's role, if sent to a Capstone session, is to provide an overview of the services available via the American Job Center and the overall workforce system. Capstone sessions are offered by the military service to help transitioning service members make adequate preparations for post-military careers before they leave active duty. During Capstone sessions, service members are assessed by unit commanders on career readiness standards. For each transitioning service member, unit commanders evaluate and document readiness for transition to civilian employment on the DD-2958 Form, "Service Member CRS/Individual Transition Plan (ITP)." When a service member is assessed as not meeting career readiness standards (e.g., if a member does not have an adequate civilian resume), the commander then facilitates a "warm handover" of the service member to an American Job Center staff member or DVOP for intensive services.

### **(d) The Incentive Award program implemented using the 1% grant allocation set aside for this purpose, as applicable;**

The Governor's Salary Commission Report of January 2014 indicates that non-pay-for-performance bonuses were provided to employees during 2003-2014. Maryland's Department of Budget and Management has instructed the pay-for-performance bonuses should not be budgeted in FY 2015 and FY 2016. There has been no further information to indicate that pay-for-performance

bonuses will be budgeted in the out years.

**(e) The populations of veterans to be served, including any additional populations designated by the Secretary as eligible for services, and any additional populations specifically targeted by the State Workforce Agency for services from one-stop delivery system partners (e.g., Native American veterans; veterans in remote rural counties or parishes);**

Maryland is dedicated to serving Veterans, and in particular, Veterans with significant barriers to employment. As outlined above, those individuals include: • A special disabled or disabled Veteran • A homeless Veteran • A recently separated service member, who at any point in the previous 12 months has been unemployed for 27 or more weeks • An offender who is currently incarcerated or has been released from incarceration • A Veteran who is lacking a high school diploma or equivalent certificate • A low-income Veteran • A Veteran between the ages of 18-24 • A wounded, ill or injured Armed Forces member, spouse, or caregiver • A service member who does not meet military services' Capstone Career Readiness Standards • An active duty service member being involuntarily separated through a Service reduction-in-force The JVSG program, as a WIOA Partner, will also work to improve the quality of services provided to Veterans through the American Job Center system and looks forward to aligning the program with other WIOA Partner programs outlined above.

**(f) How the State implements and monitors the administration of priority of service to covered persons;**

In accordance with the Jobs for Veterans Act of 2002 and the Veterans' Benefits, Health Care, and Information Technology Act of 2006, DLLR offers covered Veterans and eligible spouses "Priority of Service." The purpose of Priority of Service is to give first consideration for program participation to covered Veterans and eligible spouses who also meet the eligibility criteria of a USDOL training, employment, or placement service in any workforce preparation program.

To receive Veterans Priority of Service for a specific program, a Veteran or eligible spouse must meet the statutory definition of a "covered person" and also must meet any other statutory eligibility requirement applicable to the program. Depending on the type of service or resource being provided, Priority of Service may mean:

- A covered person gains access to services or resources earlier than the non-covered persons;
- A covered person receives service or resources instead of a non-covered person when resources are limited;
- A covered person is placed at the top of a waiting list for the formation of a training class.

However, it is important to note that while a covered person is placed at the top of a waiting list for the formation of a training class, priority of service applies up to the point at which an individual is both (1) approved for funding; and, (2) accepted or enrolled in a training class. Priority of service is not intended to allow a Veteran or eligible spouse to "bump" the non-covered person from that training class.

Veterans Priority of Service should take precedence before applying WIOA Priority of Service for recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient.

For universal access programs, such as Wagner-Peyser services, covered persons must receive Priority of Service over all other program participants. However, for programs with specific eligibility criteria, such as the WIOA Title I Adult program, covered persons must first meet all statutory eligibility requirements for the program to receive Priority of Service. For programs that target specific populations without statutory mandate, covered persons must receive the highest priority for enrollment, similarly to the Priority of Service applied to universal access programs.

State and local program operators must understand that Priority of Service, as defined in this policy, must be followed. As established by statute, State and local operators do not have the discretion to establish further priorities within the overall Priority of Service; this right is reserved for the United States Secretary of Labor only.

Local Area Directors must ensure that Local Plans incorporate a Veterans Priority of Service policy that is consistent with the requirements of this State-issued policy and the law.

For WIOA Title I programs, Priority of Service is available to any Veteran who has served at least one day in the active military,

naval, or air service, and who was discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable, as defined by 38 U.S.C. 101(2).

Active military service includes full-time Federal service in the National Guard or a Reserve unit activated for Federal Service. Active service, however, does not include full-time duty performed strictly for training purposes (i.e., weekend or annual training), nor does it include full-time active duty performed by National Guard personnel mobilized by State rather than Federal authorities. For instance, a National Guard member mobilized by the State in response to a natural disaster would not be considered in active military service.

For Wagner–Peyster and JVSG programs, Priority of Service is available to any Veteran who has served at least 180 days in the active military, naval, or air service, and who was discharged and released under conditions other than dishonorable, as defined by 38 U.S.C. 4211(4)(A).

Priority of Service is also available to any “eligible spouse” of a Veteran. As defined by 38 U.S.C. 4215(a)(B)(i–iv), a spouse is eligible if he or she meets any of the following four categories:

- A spouse of any Veteran who died of a service-connected disability;
- A spouse of any member of the Armed Forces serving on active duty who, at the time of application for the priority, is listed in one or more of the following categories and has been so listed for a total of more than 90 days:
  - o Missing in action;
  - o Captured in the line of duty by a hostile force; or
  - o Forcibly detained or interned in the line of duty by foreign government or power.
- A spouse of any Veteran who has a total disability resulting from a service-connected disability, as evaluated by the Department of Veterans Affairs; or,
- A spouse of any Veteran who died while a disability was in existence.

A spouse whose eligibility is derived from a living Veteran or service member, as is the case with Category 2 and Category 3, would lose his or her eligibility if the Veteran or service member was to lose the status that is the basis for the eligibility (e.g. if a Veteran with a total service-connected disability were to receive a revised disability rating at a lower level). Similarly, a spouse whose eligibility is derived from a living Veteran or service member would lose that eligibility upon divorce from the Veteran or service member. However, a spouse who qualifies under Category 1 or Category 4 would not lose covered status through subsequent remarriage.

By way of example, a spouse of a service member who was killed in action, or who was married to a veteran who has a total disability and now is divorced would not be an “eligible spouse.”

The application of Priority of Service varies by program. For those workforce programs that operate or deliver services to the public as a whole, without targeting specific groups, Veterans and eligible spouses must receive Priority of Service over all other program participants. For WIOA Title I programs, and other “core” services delivered through the American Job Center system, Veterans and eligible spouses receive the first level of priority.

Veterans Priority of Service must take precedence before applying WIOA Priority of Service for recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient. In such instances, program operators must determine the status of each individual veteran or eligible spouse and apply priority of service as follows:

HIGHEST LEVEL PRIORITY — Veterans and eligible spouses who meet the mandatory priorities or spending requirements or limitation; SECOND LEVEL PRIORITY – Non-covered persons who meet the program’s mandatory priority or spending requirement or limitation; THIRD LEVEL PRIORITY – Veterans and eligible spouses outside the program-specific mandatory priority or spending; FOURTH LEVEL PRIORITY – Non-covered persons outside the program-specific mandatory priority or spending.

For programs with eligibility criteria that identify basic conditions a participant is required to meet, a Veteran or eligible spouse: • Must first meet any and all of the statutory eligibility criteria to be considered eligible for program enrollment; and, • Must receive priority for enrollment in the program; and, ultimately, priority of service.

For example, the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) requires that every participant be 55 years of age or over, meet a certain income level, reside in a designated area, and be considered “not job-ready.” To receive priority of service for this program, a Veteran or eligible spouse must meet all of the minimum requirements specific to the SCSEP program in order to obtain priority of service.

Studies indicate that Post–9/11 Veterans face persistently high unemployment rates. To help Post–9/11 Veterans to quickly transition back into the civilian labor market, the ETA and VETS agencies offer a joint effort Gold Card initiative. This initiative offers enhanced Priority of Service to Veterans who served in active military service on or after September 11, 2011.

Post–9/11 Veterans may print a Gold Card here: <http://www.dol.gov/vets/goldcard.html>. Eligible Veterans may present the Gold Card at any American Job Center. Gold Card Veterans with significant barriers to employment (as defined on page 10) should receive enhanced services from DVOPs, which could include:

- Personalized case management for a minimum of six months;
- Assessments;
- The development of an Individual Employment Plan (IEP);
- Career guidance through individual or group counseling to help Veterans in making training and occupational decisions;
- Evaluation of occupational skill transferability and resume development;
- Referrals to connect with employment opportunities and supportive services; and,
- Referrals to job-driven training, like On-the-Job Training (OJT) and Registered Apprenticeship programs.

DVOP staff, as appropriate, must ensure that eligible Post-9/11 Veterans receive this special type of Priority of Service. Gold Card Veterans without SBEs should receive enhanced services from American Job Center staff.

VETS, in partnership with the ETA, offers a resource page on Veterans' Priority for workforce practitioners, such as Local Area, JVSG and American Job Center staff, at: <http://veterans.workforce3one.org/page/priority-of-service>. The site is designed to assist staff by providing an easy to use source of information for the USDOL Veterans' employment and training programs. DWDAL encourages all staff to visit the site for updated tools and resources. Included on this resource page are:

- A list of relevant ETA guidance for serving Veterans;
- Information on the Gold Card;
- A Priority of Service page, which includes important guidance and technical assistance;
- Online tools including: My Next Move for Veterans, the Veterans Reemployment Portal, the Career One-Stop Business Center, and the eBenefits Veterans' Employment Center;
- Announcements regarding veterans employment; and,
- A collection of useful links and resources for serving veterans.

The State of Maryland acknowledges that the USDOL's VETS or ETA agencies may conduct annual monitoring of Maryland's employment services for Veterans. Prior to a VETS agency audit, the following information is typically requested for review:

- WIOA State Plan, Local Plans and policies;
- State policy letters pertaining to use of JVSG funded staff and services to Veteran customers;
- Position descriptions for JVSG Program Staff;
- Fiscal documentation;
- Links to state Veteran service websites operated by the State that are funded wholly or in part by USDOL;
- Training materials utilized at the state or local level pertaining to employment services for Veterans;
- Performance plans, individual performance standards, individual goals or other measures used to evaluate performance of JVSG funded staff;
- Pertinent ad hoc reports available in respective state;
- Materials that may assist with the audit process, including promotional materials, fact sheets, etc.

To ensure that policies are being followed and expectations are being met, Local Area directors and American Job Center administrators should also expect the Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation to conduct its own monitoring. Additionally, Regional LVERs will monitor the same audit items to find and fix discrepancies and to assist in the assurance that we are in compliance at all times.

## **(g) How the State provides or intends to provide and measure, through both the DVOP and one-stop delivery system partner staff:**

### **1. job and job training individualized career services,**

All staff must support Veteran employment initiatives and programs through the provision of services and through the recognition of the application of Priority of Service. Integration of the JVSG program into the American Job Center system ensures that Veterans obtain the employment training services they need.

DVOP specialists provide intensive services to eligible Veterans and eligible spouses who face significant barriers to employment and therefore necessitate DVOP services to obtain or maintain employment. Intensive services include comprehensive and specialized assessments of skill levels and service needs; development of an individual employment plan to identify the employment goals, appropriate achievement objectives and appropriate combination of services for the participant to achieve the employment goals; group counseling; individual counseling and career planning; and short-term prevocational services that may include development of learning skills, communication skills, interviewing skills, punctuality, personal maintenance skills, and professional conduct to prepare individuals for unsubsidized employment or training.

The measures the State is evaluated on address the outcomes experienced by eligible Veterans and spouses with significant barriers to employment, who are served by DVOP specialists. These measures are as follows:

- Intensive Services provided by DVOP specialists divided by the total veterans and eligible persons served by DVOP specialists;
- Total Veterans and eligible persons served by DVOP specialists in Maryland;
- Veterans' entered employment rate;
- Veterans' employment retention rate;
- Veterans' average earnings (six months);
- Disabled Veterans' entered employment rate;
- Disabled Veterans' employment retention rate;
- Disabled Veterans' average earnings (six months).

Additional measures seek to quantify the effectiveness of Maryland's employment service delivery system, as a whole, in meeting the needs of Veterans, transitioning service members, and other eligible persons who are seeking employment. The State's American Job Center system is evaluated on the following measures:

- Veterans' entered employment rate; • Veterans' employment retention rate; • Veterans' average earnings (six months); • Disabled Veterans' entered employment rate; • Disabled Veterans' employment retention rate; • Disabled Veterans' average earnings (six months).

## **2. employment placement services, and**

Similarly, JVSG and American Job Center Staff work together to ensure that Veterans obtain employment placement services. As noted in the State's Workforce Plan, Local Area and Business Services staff should work closely with DVOPs and LVERs, to establish effective linkages to ensure that veterans and their eligible spouses are aware of outreach activities, job fairs, and VA Stand Down events. Business Services staff, such as Business Services Representatives and Business Resource Representatives, should consider LVERs as active team members.

The measures the State is evaluated on address the outcomes experienced by eligible Veterans and spouses with significant barriers to employment, who are served by DVOP specialists. These measures are as follows:

- Intensive Services provided by DVOP specialists divided by the total veterans and eligible persons served by DVOP specialists; • Total Veterans and eligible persons served by DVOP specialists in Maryland; • Veterans' entered employment rate; • Veterans' employment retention rate; • Veterans' average earnings (six months); • Disabled Veterans' entered employment rate; • Disabled Veterans' employment retention rate; • Disabled Veterans' average earnings (six months).

Additional measures seek to quantify the effectiveness of Maryland's employment service delivery system, as a whole, in meeting the needs of Veterans, transitioning service members, and other eligible persons who are seeking employment. The State's American Job Center system is evaluated on the following measures:

- Veterans' entered employment rate; • Veterans' employment retention rate; • Veterans' average earnings (six months); • Disabled Veterans' entered employment rate; • Disabled Veterans' employment retention rate; • Disabled Veterans' average earnings (six months).

## **3. job-driven training and subsequent placement service program for eligible veterans and eligible persons;**

On-the-job training (OJT) is training conducted by an employer that occurs while a participant is engaged in productive work. OJT optimizes the resources available under workforce development initiatives to meet the needs of employers and job seekers. Employers generally pay a reduced OJT wage (generally 40-50 percent of wages) to employ participants, while they train for the job.

Registered Apprenticeship programs combine work-based learning and classroom training to help successful program completers obtain secure, full-time journeyman positions. DLLR's Apprenticeship and Training Program offers over 100 active apprenticeship programs.

The measures the State is evaluated on address the outcomes experienced by eligible Veterans and spouses with significant barriers to employment, who are served by DVOP specialists. These measures are as follows:

- Intensive Services provided by DVOP specialists divided by the total veterans and eligible persons served by DVOP specialists; • Total Veterans and eligible persons served by DVOP specialists in Maryland; • Veterans' entered employment rate; • Veterans' employment retention rate; • Veterans' average earnings (six months); • Disabled Veterans' entered employment rate; • Disabled Veterans' employment retention rate; • Disabled Veterans' average earnings (six months).

Additional measures seek to quantify the effectiveness of Maryland's employment service delivery system, as a whole, in meeting the needs of Veterans, transitioning service members, and other eligible persons who are seeking employment. The State's American Job Center system is evaluated on the following measures:

- Veterans' entered employment rate; • Veterans' employment retention rate; • Veterans' average earnings (six months); • Disabled Veterans' entered employment rate; • Disabled Veterans' employment retention rate; • Disabled Veterans' average earnings (six months).

## **(h) The hire date along with mandatory training completion dates for all DVOP specialists and LVER staff; and**

Denise Bice Hire Date 3/10/2010 Mandatory Completion Date 9/10/2011 LVER Mandatory Classes and Completion LES (3/11/2011), PPE (7/29/2011)

Harry Brooks Hire Date 10/18/2005 Mandatory Completion Date 4/18/2007 LVER Mandatory Classes and Completion PSD (10/6/1994), EO (6/5/2015)

Coy Brown Jr. Hire Date 5/29/2013 Mandatory Completion Date 11/29/2014 DVOP Mandatory Classes and Completion LES (1/17/2014), CM (3/7/2014)

Careatha Burton-Fuller 4/9/2014 10/9/2015 DVOP FVE (10/31/2014), IS (4/17/2015)

Jorge Cruz 8/7/2012 2/7/2014 LVER LES (6/10/2005), CM (9/30/2005), PPE (4/12/2013)

Mitchell Domm 12/19/2012 6/19/2014 DVOP LES (7/19/2013), CM (11/22/2013)

Deborah Edmonds 8/12/2009 2/12/2011 LVER LES (3/26/2010), PPE (5/28/2010)

Sharon Egerson 12/4/2013 6/4/2015 DVOP FVE (7/25/2014) IS (8/1/2014)

Tyrone Finney 5/30/2012 11/30/2013 LVER LES (3/30/2007), CM (2/8/2008), PPE (4/12/2013)

George Hawley 5/27/2015 11/27/2016 LVER FVE (12/11/2015), EO

Monique Hawley 10/16/2013 4/16/2015 DVOP FVE (7/18/2014), IS (8/15/2014)

Gregory Ingram 10/1/2014 4/1/2016 DVOP FVE (4/17/2015), IS (6/12/2015)

Tonya Johnson-Spratley 10/16/2013 4/16/2015 DVOP FVE (1/30/2015), IS (2/27/2015)

Orion Jones 4/12/2006 10/12/2007 DVOP LES (10/20/2006) CM (7/27/2007)

Roslyn Jones 10/1/2014 4/1/2016 LVER LES (6/28/2013), CM (5/24/2013), EO (6/5/2015)

Kimble Lee 8/13/2013 2/13/2015 LVER LES (4/15/2011), CM (6/24/2011), PPE (4/12/2013)

Lynnette Lynn-Horton 12/20/2004 6/20/2006 LVER LES (2/4/2005) EO (10/24/2014)

Kevin Madara 1/9/2013 7/9/2014 DVOP LES (6/28/2013) CM (11/22/2012)

James Marchinke 7/11/2007 1/11/2009 DVOP LES (3/14/2008) CM (8/29/2008)

Cordia McArthur 7/31/2001 1/31/2003 DVOP LES (11/2/2001) CM (8/26/2008)

Duane Mclean 5/2/2012 11/2/2013 DVOP LES (5/3/2013), CM (5/24/2013)

Howard Mitchell 8/5/2015 2/5/2017 DVOP FVE (2/26/2016), IS (4/29/2016)

Boyd Moore 8/26/1998 2/26/2000 DVOP LES (2/11/1999), CM (9/24/1999)

Michael Neil 9/10/2008 3/10/2010 LVER LES (VA) (4/13/1999), CM (VA) (8/27/1999), PPE (5/7/2010)

Robert Pelletier 6/17/2004 12/17/2005 LVER LES (8/3/2001), CM (6/28/2002), PPE (10/21/2005)

Mark Pindell 4/29/2015 10/29/2016 LVER FVE (12/18/2015), EO (4/15/2016)

Ronnette Purnell 9/1/2010 3/1/2012 LVER LES (7/31/2009), CM (9/4/2009), PPE (5/13/2011)

Joseph Salacki 5/14/2008 11/14/2009 DVOP LES (5/15/2009), CM (8/29/2008),  
Michelle Singleton 4/8/2015 10/8/2016 DVOP FVE (11/20/2015), IS (12/11/2015)  
Scott Stevens 10/15/2014 4/15/2016 DVOP FVE (5/1/2015), IS (7/17/2015)  
Lawrance Thomas 11/24/2009 5/24/2011 DVOP LES (4/25/2011), CM (6/24/2011)  
LeRoy Thomas 8/6/2014 2/6/2016 LVER LES (9/21/2012), CM (4/12/2013), EO (12/19/2014), FVE/SVC (7/17/2015)  
Feleisa Thompson 12/19/2012 6/19/2014 DVOP LES (7/19/2013), CM (11/22/2013)  
John Veney 7/29/2015 1/29/2017 DVOP FVE (12/18/2015), IS  
John Walker 5/30/2013 11/30/2014 DVOP LES (9/13/2013), CM (12/6/2013)  
Timothy Walker 6/18/2014 12/18/2015 DVOP FVE (10/31/2014), IS (4/24/2015)  
Christopher Watkins 5/13/2015 11/13/2016 LVER FVE (May 2016 (exact date is tentative)), IS (May 2016 (exact date is tentative))

**(i) Such additional information as the Secretary may require.**

The State is unaware of any additional information required by the Secretary, but stands ready to provide any additional information as needed.

**Reintegration of Ex-Offenders Program (RExO)**

*Note: Please note that the Department of Labor has updated the name of the RExO program. This program is now the Reentry Employment Opportunities Program (REO).*

There are no program-specific state planning requirements for RExO. If the state includes RExO in a Combined State Plan, the state must incorporate RExO in its responses to the common planning elements in sections II, III, IV, and V WIOA State Plan requirements instrument.

**Appendix 1. Performance Goals for the Core Programs**

Include the State's expected levels of performance relating to the performance accountability indicators based on primary indicators of performance described in section 116(b)(2)(A) of WIOA.

**Instructions: Performance Goals for the Core Programs**

Each State submitting a Unified or Combined Plan is required to identify expected levels of performance for each of the primary indicators of performance for the first two years covered by the plan. The State is required to reach agreement with the Secretary of Labor, in conjunction with the Secretary of Education on state adjusted levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of the plan.

**Table 1. Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)**

Program	PY 2016 Proposed/ Expected Level	PY 2016 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level	PY 2017 Proposed/ Expected Level	PY 2017 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level
Adults	70.00	72.00	70.00	72.00
Dislocated Workers	72.00	80.00	72.00	80.00
Youth	60.00	60.00	60.00	60.00
Adult Education	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Wagner-Peyser	55.00	55.00	55.00	55.00

Vocational Rehabilitation</	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
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User remarks on Table 1

## Table 2. Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)

Program	PY 2016 Proposed/ Expected Level	PY 2016 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level	PY 2017 Proposed/ Expected Level	PY 2017 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level
Adults	65.00	70.00	65.00	70.00
Dislocated Workers	70.00	75.00	70.00	75.00
Youth	65.00	60.00	65.00	60.00
Adult Education	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Wagner-Peyser	50.00	55.00	50.00	55.00
Vocational Rehabilitation	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline

User remarks on Table 2

## Table 3. Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)

Program	PY 2016 Proposed/ Expected Level	PY 2016 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level	PY 2017 Proposed/ Expected Level	PY 2017 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level
Adults	6,000.00	6,500.00	6,000.00	6,500.00
Dislocated Workers	7,500.00	7,800.00	7,500.00	7,800.00
Youth	2,300.00	Baseline	2,300.00	Baseline
Adult Education	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Wagner-Peyser	5,000.00	5,000.00	5,000.00	5,000.00
Vocational Rehabilitation	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline

User remarks on Table 3

## Table 4. Credential Attainment Rate

Program	PY 2016 Proposed/ Expected Level	PY 2016 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level	PY 2017 Proposed/ Expected Level	PY 2017 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level
Adults	55.00	57.00	55.00	57.00
Dislocated Workers	60.00	55.00	60.00	55.00
Youth	45.00	60.00	45.00	60.00
Adult Education	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Wagner-Peyser	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Vocational Rehabilitation	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline

User remarks on Table 4

## Table 5. Measureable Skill Gains

Program	PY 2016 Proposed/ Expected Level	PY 2016 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level	PY 2017 Proposed/ Expected Level	PY 2017 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level
Adults	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Dislocated Workers	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Youth	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Adult Education	36.00	36.00	37.00	37.00
Wagner-Peyser	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Vocational Rehabilitation	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline

User remarks on Table 5

## Table 6. Effectiveness in Serving Employers

Program	PY 2016 Proposed/ Expected Level	PY 2016 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level	PY 2017 Proposed/ Expected Level	PY 2017 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level
Adults	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Dislocated Workers	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Youth	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Adult Education	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Wagner-Peyser	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Vocational Rehabilitation	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline

User remarks on Table 6

## Table 7. Combined Federal Partner Measures

Measure	PY 2016 Proposed/ Expected Level	PY 2016 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level	PY 2017 Proposed/ Expected Level	PY 2017 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level

User remarks on Table 7

## Appendix 2. Other State Attachments (Optional)

Organizational charts for the WIOA Partner State Agencies can be found at:  
<http://www.dlr.maryland.gov/wdplan/wioastateplanappb.pdf>