
WIOA LOCAL INTEGRATED PLAN

2024-2028

Updated 2026

Southern Maryland Local Workforce Development Area

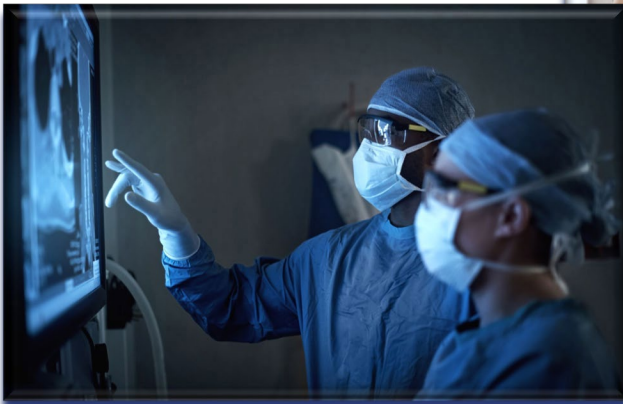


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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) is the federal law that governs Maryland's workforce system. WIOA is designed to integrate services to support both businesses and job seekers through strategic cross-sector partnerships. It envisions connecting workforce, education, human services, and economic development entities to ensure strategic leveraging of resources and optimum results. The law addresses the needs of customers through establishing a comprehensive system that provides access to employment, education, training and support services. Through the American Job Centers (AJCs), WIOA works to prepare a trained and competitive workforce to meet the demands of employers and the labor market. This plan represents the period 2024 thru 2028.

The Southern Maryland Workforce Development Area, named JobSource by the Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board, is a three-county Local Workforce Development Area including Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary's Counties and is part of the American Job Center national network. The Chief Elected Officials designated Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland as the Fiscal Agent and Administrative Entity. All governance, organizational, and system structure information previously submitted remains current and accurate. The one exception is the Chief Local Elected Official (CLEO) which changes yearly in January to the Chair of the Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland. As of this update, Gilbert (B.J.) Bowling serves as the CLEO.

The CLEO and the Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board are involved in plan development, review, and approval of the local plan and any modifications.

The Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board has crafted a plan to support the State's focus of increasing Maryland's economic competitiveness and advancing access to opportunity. The Board confirms its continued commitment to alignment with the state plan, coordination with regional strategies, and collaboration with required and additional partners. All governance, organizational, and system structure information previously submitted remains current and accurate.

The Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board's strategic vision for preparing an educated and skilled workforce inclusive of youth and individuals with barriers to employment in order to support the local area economic growth and economic self-sufficiency is *to guide the Southern Maryland workforce delivery system in developing a skilled workforce that meets the needs of businesses and strengthens the local economy.*

The Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board supports Maryland's overarching theme of ***Building Pathways to Work, Wages and Wealth***. Southern

Maryland will support the State's **Core Values** to focus on leaving no one behind through an aligned and coordinated system that delivers talent solutions to support a dynamic, inclusive, and competitive economy that creates opportunities for all businesses to thrive and for our citizens to access pathways to work, wages and wealth.

Maryland's Core Values and Core Strategic Pillars guide Southern Maryland's workforce systems in realizing the local and state vision supporting economic competitiveness and advancing access to opportunity.

Maryland's Core Values

- Be Innovative: Collaborate across agencies and stakeholders to identify and implement bold solutions.
- Be Data-Driven: Rely on data and experiences to inform our decisions.
- Move Urgently: Move quickly and diligently with a purpose.
- Challenge the Status Quo: It is okay to disagree and offer a new viewpoint.
- Be Outcomes-Focused: Spend each day focused on leaving no one behind.

Maryland's Core Strategic Pillars:

1. **Supercharge Key Sectors** - Setting statewide sector priorities, identifying skill needs, and driving industry leadership and partnership to shape and deliver workforce solutions.
2. **Advance Equity and Access** - Ensure equitable access to quality training and employment opportunities for all Marylanders.
3. **Prepare the Future Workforce** - Transform and expand career-connected learning opportunities to ensure every young person has access to a family-sustaining career pathway, regardless of their plans to obtain a college degree.
4. **Improve System Alignment and Accountability**- Revisit system-wide performance goals, expectations, coordination, accountability, and feedback loops to ensure workforce system partners are working together efficiently and effectively.

Southern Maryland's Strategic Goals that complement Maryland's Core Values and Strategic Pillars:

1. Create a workforce system that is relevant to business customers.
2. Establish a sector partnership and career pathway model to grow the talent pipeline of new and emerging in-demand industries and occupations.
3. Embrace a customer-centric methodology that serves diverse populations and informs improved processes and procedures.
4. Identify industries that have sustainable wage and career opportunities.
5. Support dynamic partner alignment and integration to better serve business customers and jobseeker clients.

6. Document evidence-based return on investment through a performance management dashboard to track employment, retention, wages, and educational attainment.

Sector partnerships is an important strategy in the Southern Maryland Workforce Development Area. Southern Maryland Workforce Development Area will focus its efforts on Construction, Health Care and Professional Services forecasted in-demand industries and occupations. In terms of having a comprehensive career pathways approach to building a talent pipeline for the in-demand occupations, Retail, particularly as it relates to Hospitality, will also be considered an existing in-demand industry that will provide a stepping-stone for upward movement into middle skill in-demand industries and occupations.

This plan demonstrates a strong partnership of funding streams, economic development leaders, chief elected officials, private business leaders, and community-based organizations that will work together to build a talent pipeline that meets the needs and expectations of business in the coming years. This Plan was a product of stakeholder engagement starting with robust leadership involvement. The Partner Convening Group comprised of core partners meets on a regular basis consisting of leaders from WIOA Title I, II, III, IV, TANF, and SNAP. The Partner Convening Group has initiated local procedures on outreach, recruitment, referrals, tracking, co-enrollments, sector strategies, and business services. The Partner Convening Group has been instrumental in advancing strategies for the local workforce system post-pandemic in regard to our biggest challenges including recruitment, system access, and transportation. This is especially noticeable with the local business services team that has considerable partner engagement and coordination with education, economic development, and business.

The Partner Convening Group will drive the efforts in enhancing existing initiatives and establishing new initiatives aligned with the State's Core Strategic Pillars. Examples:

- **Supercharge Key Sectors** – Southern Maryland will work with existing registered apprenticeship projects and the local Business Services Team will identify new registered apprenticeship opportunities. The Local Workforce Area will apply to be an apprenticeship sponsor to help make the process faster. We will explore ways to support the training process with tuition assistance and supportive services.
- **Advance Equity and Access** – The Partner Leadership Team is comprised of funding streams attracting diverse populations. Established referrals systems and tracking of referrals has been created that is web-based to communicate in real time a pool of potential applicants. The local Business Services Team will identify the needs and expectations of business and assist in reviewing available training options to ready jobseekers and youth with the skills and knowledge that employers are looking for. The Local Area will always follow State and Federal priority of service policies.
- **Prepare the Future Workforce** – Southern Maryland understands that the answer is not always a college degree and has an ongoing practice of identifying training opportunities to

meet the needs and expectations of business customers. These often entail vocational education and community college training options. Tracking will provide information on how the Local Area is investing its funding related to money expended for each of the identified demand industries. Training will include a career pathways approach to move individuals from entry level skills and knowledge up a career ladder to achieve a living wage.

- **Improve System Alignment and Accountability** – Partners in Southern Maryland are engaged at every level starting with leadership. A service mapping session was held that included front-line workers from all of the partner agencies where each shared performance requirements and how they can work to help each other and to coordinate services to benefit the jobseekers, youth, and business customers. Constant interaction with partners will continue to keep all in the loop of existing programs and activities as well as each communicating their needs.

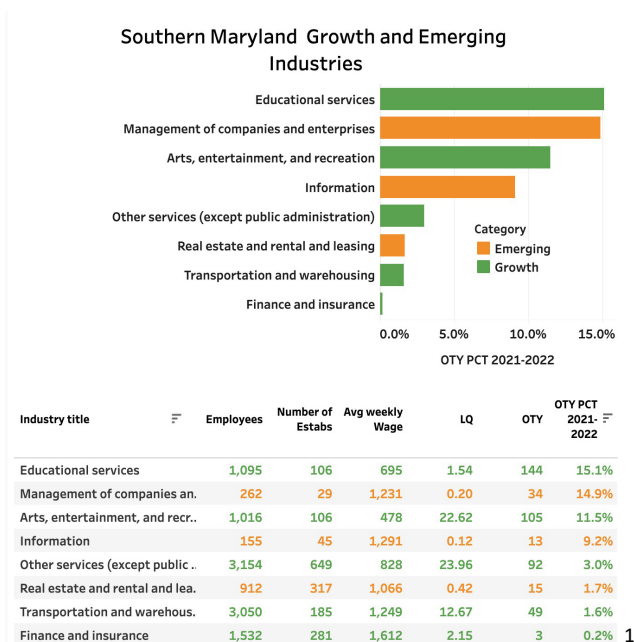
Local workforce system partners have agreed on a Memoranda of Understanding and Resource Sharing Agreements. The most recent documents approved for 2023-2025 can be found at https://southernmarylandjobsource.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Southern-Maryland-WIOA-MOU-RSA-Signed_FINAL.pdf

SECTION 1 - Economic Analysis

This section should include an analysis of economic elements consisting of the regional economic conditions, including existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations and the employment needs of businesses in those industry sectors and occupations. The analysis should also explain how the LWDB compares to the region and any unique contributors to or differentiating factors from the regional economic conditions and business needs described in your Regional Plan.

Southern Maryland Local Workforce Area is its own region, so data compares the overall area with each of the three (3) Counties including Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary's.

The Growth Industry Tool shows similar data compared to our experience with business and the industries that are requesting applicants. The Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board has selected Construction, Professional and Educational Services, Health Care and Social Assistance to focus career pathway efforts and to target for potential registered apprenticeship projects. In addition, due to the hard-to-serve population with barriers, Southern Maryland will use Accommodations and Food Service as an entry point into the workforce with the strategy of preparing for and choosing a career path that will pay a living wage.



¹ Source: Maryland Department of Labor, Growth Industry Tool (GIT), Southern Maryland. As checked July 22, 2026, Maryland's live Southern Maryland GIT page continues to display the 2021–2022 over-the-year dataset shown above.

Updated Growth and Emerging Industry Analysis

Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary's Counties | Current Local Plan Update

County	Current Economic Position	Key Industry Concentrations / Growth Opportunities	Current Classification / Interpretation
Calvert County	Diverse local economy strongly influenced by government, healthcare, construction, education, energy, retail, and service-sector employment.	Healthcare & Social Assistance; Construction & Skilled Trades; Government; Education; Energy; Professional & Business Services	Established & Emerging Opportunities — workforce strategies should address replacement demand in established sectors and expansion in healthcare, construction, professional services, and energy-related occupations.
Charles County	Growing population and proximity to the Washington, D.C. metropolitan economy support continued diversification of the employment base.	Healthcare & Social Assistance; Construction; Professional, Scientific & Technical Services; Government; Transportation & Logistics; Business Services	Emerging/Growth-Oriented — continued population and economic development create opportunities for expansion in healthcare, construction, professional services, logistics, and related sectors.
St. Mary's County	Highly specialized economy with significant concentrations in defense, aerospace, engineering, technology, and federal contracting.	Professional, Scientific & Technical Services; Defense & Aerospace; Information Technology/Cybersecurity; Engineering; Healthcare; Advanced Manufacturing	Specialized/Growth Industry Base — strong industry concentration associated with Naval Air Station Patuxent River creates high-skill workforce demand, while healthcare and technology provide additional diversification opportunities.
Southern Maryland Region	Regional economy combines federal/defense specialization with population-driven service industries and expanding technical and skilled-trade opportunities.	Healthcare; Professional/Technical Services; Defense & Aerospace; IT/Cybersecurity; Construction & Skilled Trades; Transportation/Logistics; Advanced Manufacturing; Energy	Mixed Growth & Emerging Economy — workforce investments should target industries demonstrating regional specialization, employment growth, projected demand, replacement needs, and quality career pathways.

Current Maryland methodology applies location quotients and Growth/Emerging/Other classifications to specific industries or occupations rather than assigning one location quotient to an entire county. The table therefore presents the counties' current economic position and key industry opportunities in a format appropriate for Local Plan narrative and analysis.

Current labor market information reflects a diverse and evolving economy across the Southern Maryland Local Workforce Area, which includes Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary's counties. Economic conditions and industry concentrations vary among the three jurisdictions, making it important to examine both employment growth and the concentration of specific industries when identifying existing and emerging workforce opportunities.

Charles County continues to demonstrate opportunities associated with population growth, economic diversification, and its proximity to the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area. Key areas of workforce opportunity include healthcare and social assistance, construction, professional and business

services, government, transportation and logistics, and other population-serving industries.

St. Mary's County has a highly specialized economic base anchored by defense, aerospace, engineering, information technology, cybersecurity, and professional, scientific, and technical services, particularly those associated with Naval Air Station Patuxent River and the surrounding federal contracting community. These established industry concentrations generate demand for highly skilled technical workers while healthcare and other sectors provide opportunities for continued economic diversification.

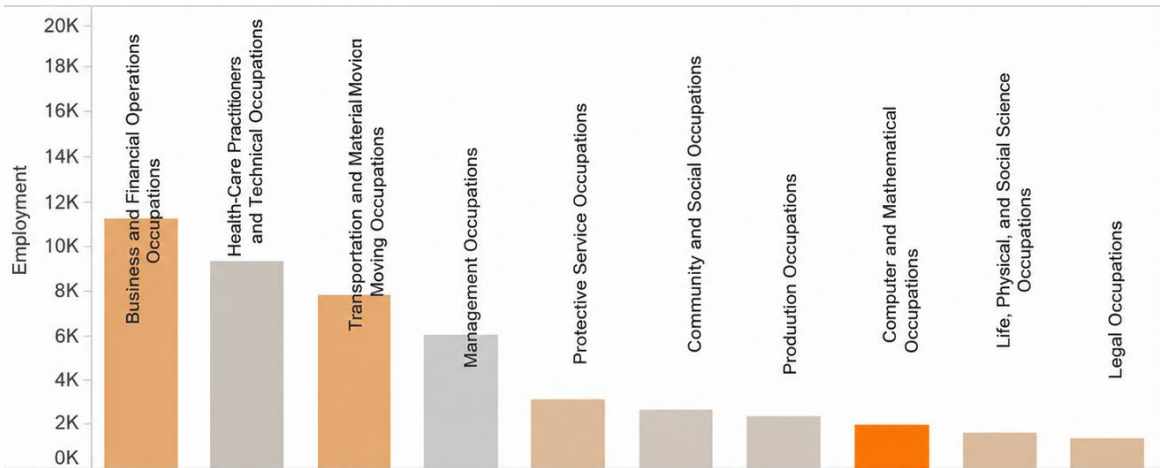
Calvert County's economy includes significant employment in healthcare, government, education, construction, energy, professional services, retail, and other population-serving industries. Healthcare, skilled trades, professional services, and energy-related activities represent important areas for workforce development and career pathway strategies.

Across the Southern Maryland region, priority workforce opportunities include healthcare and social assistance; professional, scientific, and technical services; defense and aerospace; information technology and cybersecurity; construction and skilled trades; transportation and logistics; advanced manufacturing; and energy-related industries. Workforce development strategies should consider not only short-term employment growth, but also industry concentration, projected occupational demand, replacement needs, employer demand, wages, and opportunities for sustainable career pathways.

Southern Maryland Workforce Region

Top 10 Growth Occupations

(Darker hue indicates higher over the year growth)



Occupation	Employment	Growth	LQ	Salary
Business and Financial Operations Occupations	11,432	9.23%	1.24	\$105,232
Health-Care Practitioners and Technical Occupations	9,402	11.52%	1.28	\$91,138
Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	7,825	8.17%	0.87	\$39,187
Management Occupations	6,136	6.45%	0.92	\$105,905
Protective Service Occupations	3,104	6.02%	0.86	\$55,492
Community and Social Service Occupations	2,602	4.33%	0.84	\$48,880
Production Occupations	2,317	3.27%	0.81	\$42,728
Computer and Mathematical Occupations	2,031	14.37%	1.11	\$99,616
Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations	1,627	10.05%	0.77	\$78,894
Legal Occupations	1,392	5.68%	0.63	\$89,229

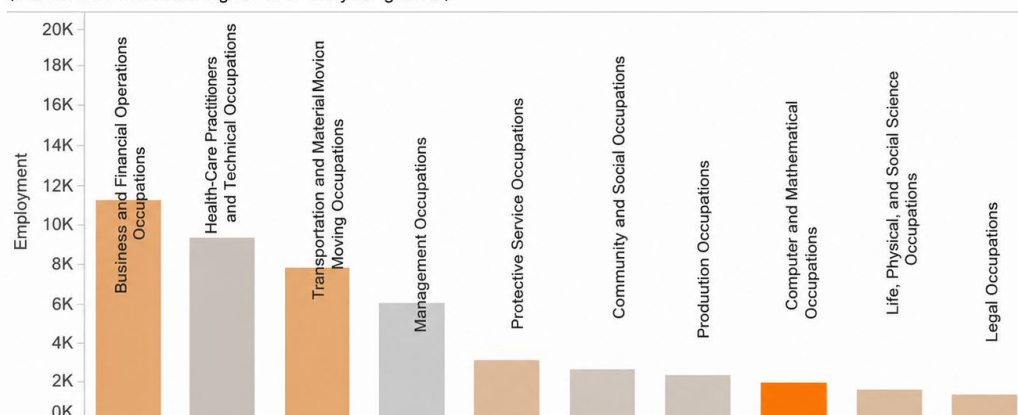
Using 2024 OEWS data, with 2021 OEWS data as a base for growth. Growth shown is an annual average. Highlighted rows indicate a median yearly salary higher than the Workforce Region Median of \$56,931.

² **Source:** Maryland Department of Labor, Office of Workforce Information and Performance, Growth Occupation Tool; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics (OEWS), latest available data. Southern Maryland Local Workforce Area includes Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary's counties.

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The **Industry Group Jobs and Earnings Comparison** continue in **2026** to show growth in Professional Services, Health Care, and Construction along with data to support the career pathways strategy to start with retail and hospitality as a steppingstone to move into Professional Services, Health Care and Construction industries and occupations²

The Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board convenes regular meetings of stakeholders including representatives from Economic Development, Vocational Rehabilitation, Adult Education and Literacy, Wagner-Peyser, Temporary Cash Assistance, Community College, and Adult/Dislocated Worker/Youth Provider to discuss existing and emerging industries and occupations within the Southern Maryland Workforce Development Area. There is a Partner Convening Group comprised of leadership from the core program partners within the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. There is a Business Engagement Network that represents the partners and the Workforce Board Committee that focuses on employer services.

Updated 2026 labor market data provided to the Business Engagement Network of the Workforce Board identifies in-demand existing and emerging industries and

occupations in Southern Maryland's three (3) Counties:

Sector	Industry Title	Base Employment	Projection Employment	Numeric Change	Percent Change
Construction	Building Equipment Contract..	2,997	3,099	102	3.35%
	Building Finishing Contractors	575	579	4	0.69%
	Construction	7,022	7,236	214	3.01%
	Construction of Buildings	1,434	1,483	49	3.37%
	Foundation, Structure, and B..	616	620	4	0.65%
	Heavy and Civil Engineering C..	403	410	7	1.72%
	Other Specialty Trade Contra..	997	1,048	51	5.00%
	Specialty Trade Contractors	5,185	5,343	158	3.01%
Healthcare and social assistance	Ambulatory Health Care Servi..	5,322	5,827	505	9.11%
	Child Day Care Services	1,263	1,462	199	14.74%
	Community Food and Housing..	218	258	40	16.99%
	Healthcare and social assista..	11,897	12,907	1,010	8.18%
	Home Health Care Services	513	586	73	13.39%
	Hospitals	2,423	2,552	129	5.20%
	Individual and Family Services	173	200	27	14.61%
	Medical and Diagnostic Labor..	213	256	43	18.56%
	Nursing and Residential Care .	2,270	2,360	90	3.90%
	Offices of Dentists	1,176	1,317	141	11.39%
	Offices of Other Health Practi..	601	633	32	5.20%
	Offices of Physicians	2,391	2,562	171	6.93%
	Other Ambulatory Health Car..	69	76	7	9.71%
	Outpatient Care Centers	359	378	19	5.17%
	Private Hospital Employment	2,423	2,552	129	5.20%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	Social Assistance	1,882	2,168	286	14.25%
	Vocational Rehabilitation Ser..	228	247	19	8.04%
	Accounting, Tax Preparation, ..	338	355	17	4.92%
	Advertising, Public Relations,..	247	257	10	3.98%
	Architectural, Engineering, a..	6,537	7,032	495	7.33%
	Computer Systems Design an..	3,386	3,806	420	11.76%
	Legal Services	473	511	38	7.76%
	Management, Scientific, and ..	1,958	2,463	505	23.21%
	Other Professional, Scientific..	681	780	99	13.67%
	Professional, Scientific, and T..	28,478	31,546	3,068	20.57%
	Scientific Research and Devel..	564	511	-53	-9.82%
	Specialized Design Services	56	58	2	3.52%

Source: Maryland Dept of Labor: Labor Market Information; Industry and Occupational Projections

Along with the labor market information for Southern Maryland, the major industries listed represent our focus of careers paths in construction, health care, and professional services. Southern Maryland will also utilize retail/hospitality to serve as an entry point to work for low skill individuals with the intent to lead to entry onto a career path in a living wage in-demand industry and occupation.

Southern Maryland continues to experience strong demand in **construction, professional and technical services, healthcare, defense-related industries, information technology, and transportation and logistics**. Construction remains a critical industry due to continued residential growth, commercial development, infrastructure investments, and federal and military construction projects. Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services continue to be among the region's highest-paying industry sectors, driven by federal contracting, engineering, cybersecurity, aviation, and research activities associated with the Naval Air Station Patuxent River and other defense installations. Healthcare continues to expand as the region experiences population growth, an aging workforce, and increasing demand for behavioral health and long-term care services. Current Maryland labor market information also identifies continued demand for occupations in cybersecurity, software development, engineering, advanced manufacturing, data analytics, logistics, and skilled trades, reflecting the region's growing emphasis on innovation and technology.

While many participants enter employment through retail, hospitality, or other entry-level occupations, the Local Workforce Development Board emphasizes career pathway strategies that support advancement into higher-wage occupations in healthcare, construction, information technology, engineering, professional services, transportation, logistics, and advanced manufacturing. These pathways combine work-based learning, industry-recognized credentials, apprenticeships, postsecondary education, and supportive services to help participants progress toward family-sustaining employment. The Board also recognizes the growing importance of digital literacy, artificial intelligence (AI), cybersecurity, and technology skills across nearly every industry sector and will continue investing in training that prepares workers for the evolving regional economy.

Southern Maryland Local Workforce Plan Major Employers, In-Demand Industries, Emerging Industries, and Occupations

Southern Maryland Workforce Development Area (Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary's Counties)
Latest Available Information (2025–2026)

Calvert County – Major Employers by Industry

Industry	Major Employers	Representative Occupations
Healthcare	CalvertHealth Medical Center; Green Tree Health Care; Asbury Solomons	Registered Nurses, LPNs, Medical Assistants

Defense/Professional Services	Defense contractors supporting NAS Patuxent River	Engineers, Cybersecurity Analysts, Software Developers
Energy	Constellation (Calvert Cliffs); Cove Point LNG	Plant Operators, Electricians, Instrumentation Technicians
Construction	Regional construction contractors	Electricians, HVAC, Welders, Carpenters

Charles County – Major Employers by Industry

Industry	Major Employers	Representative Occupations
Healthcare	University of Maryland Charles Regional Medical Center	Nurses, Therapists, Medical Assistants
Government	Charles County Government; Charles County Public Schools	Teachers, Administrative, Public Safety
Professional Services	Federal contractors	IT, Engineers, Project Managers
Retail/Logistics	Amazon delivery/logistics partners; regional retailers	Warehouse, CDL, Retail Managers

St. Mary's County – Major Employers by Industry

Industry	Major Employers	Representative Occupations
Defense & Aerospace	Naval Air Station Patuxent River; Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division	Engineers, Test Pilots, Acquisition, Cybersecurity
Healthcare	MedStar St. Mary's Hospital	Nurses, Allied Health Professionals
Education	St. Mary's College of Maryland	Faculty, IT, Administrative
Manufacturing	Aviation and defense manufacturers	Machinists, Technicians, Assemblers

Source: Maryland Department of Commerce; Maryland Department of Labor, County Economic Development Agencies

Central to worker success is the Business Engagement Network with a mission to engage local business and industry to identify human capital needs and emerging employment opportunities in order to effectively direct training resources to sector strategies and career pathways that result in a skilled Southern Maryland workforce and create maximum economic value.

In addition, economic development representatives provide broad-based information with the understanding that new business inquiries and discussions are confidential until a general public announcement is made. Based on the input of stakeholders and considering the data provided here, it was determined, as aforementioned, that the Southern Maryland Workforce Development Area would focus its efforts on construction, health care and professional services.

Construction includes truck-driving which is a key occupation within the construction industry in the Southern Maryland Workforce Development Area. In terms of having a comprehensive career pathways approach to building a talent pipeline for the in-demand industries and occupations, retail, particularly as it relates to hospitality, will also be targeted as it is considered an existing in-demand industry and will provide a stepping-stone for upward movement into middle skill in-demand industries and occupations. Many of our jobseekers have many barriers and may need an entry into the workforce system to gain essential skills prior to starting on a career path journey in a higher paying occupation that requires enhanced skills and knowledge.

Southern Maryland will invest training dollars primarily on the construction, health care, and professional services with work experience, when needed, with retail and hospitality to serve as a stepping-stone to the in-demand occupations. The Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board understands that other industries in the area are also growing and in-demand, thus the Board Director has the authority to approve training dollars for other occupational training that will lead to living wage employment and the opportunity for upward mobility. An example would be to train on forklift driving for warehousing, also a growing occupation in Southern Maryland. The Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board will maximize opportunities for sustainable employment by focusing training investments on the indicated demand industries and tracking

SECTION 2 - Strategic Planning

Maryland's vision, outlined in the Four Core Strategic Pillars, is to strengthen key sectors by setting statewide priorities, identifying skill needs, and fostering industry partnerships to deliver workforce solutions. The state aims to enhance the effectiveness of its workforce system through a coordinated, inclusive approach that ensures no one is left behind. By creating equitable pathways to work, wages, and wealth, Maryland seeks to boost its economic competitiveness and ensure shared economic growth for all residents.

Part 1: Aligning Maryland's Strategic Pillars

A. This section should speak to the Four Core Strategic Pillars below and include your strategy to work with the entities that carry out the core programs to align resources available to the Local Area, to achieve the strategic vision and goals.

The Partner Convening Group comprised of core program leaders will be analyzing all local initiatives and activities to ensure they are aligned with the State's Core Strategic Pillars.

The Partner Convening Group will drive the efforts in enhancing existing initiatives and establishing new initiatives aligned with the State's Core Strategic Pillars.

Examples:

- **Supercharge Key Sectors** – Southern Maryland will work with existing registered apprenticeship projects and the local Business Services Team will identify new registered apprenticeship opportunities. The Local Workforce Area will apply to be an apprenticeship sponsor to help make the process faster. We will explore ways to support the training process with tuition assistance and supportive services. The Partner Convening Group will embrace career pathways to move individuals with barriers from pre-employment skills to entry level skills to med-level skills and earning a living wage.
- **Advance Equity and Access** – The Partner Leadership Team is comprised of funding streams attracting diverse populations. Established referrals systems and tracking of referrals has been created that is web-based to communicate in real time a pool of potential applicants. The local Business Services Team will identify the needs and expectations of business and assist in reviewing available training options to ready jobseekers and youth with the skills and knowledge that employers are looking for. The Local Area will always follow State and Federal priority of service policies.
- **Prepare the Future Workforce** – Southern Maryland understands that the answer is not always a college degree and has an ongoing practice of identifying training opportunities to meet the needs and expectations of business customers. These often entail vocational education and community college training options. Tracking will

provide information on how the Local Area is investing its funding related to money expended for each of the identified demand industries. Training will include a career pathways approach to move individuals from entry level skills and knowledge up a career ladder to achieve a living wage.

- **Improve System Alignment and Accountability** – Partners in Southern Maryland are engaged at every level starting with leadership. A service mapping session was held that included front-line workers from all of the partner agencies where each shared performance requirements and how they can work to help each other and to coordinate services to benefit the jobseekers, youth, and business customers. Constant interaction with partners will continue to keep all in the loop of existing programs and activities as well as each communicating their needs.

B. This section should include a description of the local area’s plan to work with providers to facilitate the development of career pathways, including co-enrollment in core programs and academic training programs when appropriate.

Supervisors and core program front-line workers meet to discuss potential co-enrollment candidates. Research is conducted on available courses of study and the career path options available or those that could be established. Local policies will be reviewed to ensure the cost limitations for individual training accounts and work experience support a career pathways approach. All core program staff will be provided training on co-enrollment benefits and referral processes.

The Business Engagement Network will facilitate and/or join existing sector partnership efforts to identify employer needs and expectations and ask employers to validate a career pathways chart to show various options for jobseeker consideration as they move from pre-employment skills through entry level and onto middle skill options.

C. Describe how your local area’s workforce development programs, including programs provided by partner agencies, support this strategic vision.

Southern Maryland’s Core Program Partners and Required Partners provide workforce development activities through a coordinated system. Details on the Basic Career Services, Individualized Career Services, and Training Services provided in the Southern Maryland Workforce Development Area are included in this integrated plan. Soft skills, essential skills, and job readiness skills are regularly taught at the American Job Centers and at partner agencies. As shown in previous data, business customers need both soft and hard skills from their employees. College of Southern Maryland plays an important role in providing the educational training needed.

Currently, College of Southern Maryland offers areas of study to gain the skills, knowledge, or certification needed to begin or enhance a career forecasted to be an in-demand industry or occupation. Offerings currently include:

- Business
 - Bookkeeping and Finance
 - Certified Administrative Professional
 - Entry Level Administrative Assistant
 - Human Resources
 - Paralegal
 - Project Management
- Computers and Information Technology
 - Basic Computer Skills
 - Certified Ethical Hacker
 - Certified Information Systems Security Engineering Professional (ISSEP)
 - Certified Secure Software Lifecycle Professional (CSSLP)
 - Cisco Certified Network Associate
 - CompTIA A+ Certification
 - Tech+ (formally IT Fundamentals)
 - CompTIA Network +
 - (ISC) Continuing Professional Education
 - Microsoft Office Suite
 - Network Administrator
 - Project Management Professionals (PMP)
 - Risk Management Framework (RMF) for F
 - Security+
- Construction and Skilled Trades
 - Building Maintenance Technician
 - Construction Management
 - Core Skills
 - Carpentry
 - Electrical
 - Heating and Air Conditioning
 - Home Inspector
 - Home Improvement
 - Plumbing
 - Small Engine Repair
 - Stationary Engineer
 - Supply Chain Automation
 - Certified Structural Welder
- Healthcare
 - Certified Clinical Medical Assistant

- Certified Medical Administrative Assistant
- Certified Medicine Aide
- Certified Geriatric Nursing Assistant (CNA/GNA)
- Certificate: Maryland Community Health Worker
- CPR and First Aid
- Dental
- Electrocardiogram Technician
- Emergency Medical Services
- Nurse Refresher
- Patient Care Technician
- Phlebotomy Technician
- Training for Intervention Procedures
- Transportation
 - Commercial Driver's License – Class A and Class B
 - Vertical Agriculture Systems Certificate

D. Describe how the local area will ensure consistent implementation of activities and services that align with the State's four core strategic pillars.

1. Supercharge Key Sectors

- **What strategies will you use to map skills and training assets and identify gaps?**

Southern Maryland Partner Convening Group held a systemwide session comprised of executive, mid-management, and front-line workers to process map referral procedures. A service mapping of partner services available was conducted and used to support coordination in serving clients. The Business Engagement Network is facilitating Sector Partnership Groups in the Area's selected in-demand industries to map employer needs and expectations in growth and emerging industries/occupations and get guidance from business on appropriate career path considerations. Once employers tell the workforce system what they need and expect an analysis will be done of what currently exists within the core program partners to meet the needs and expectations and what does not exist that needs to be developed.

2. Advance Equity and Access

- **What steps will you take to apply an equity lens to address labor force participation inequities and gaps?**
- **How will you expand access to supportive services for job seekers**

facing barriers to employment and/or training?

- **What initiatives will you implement to support employers in recruiting, hiring, retaining, and upskilling employees from diverse populations?**

The Partner Convening Group has discussed and agreed to some aligned procedures, some of which have already been created, that enhance the Southern Maryland Workforce Development Area's ability to carry out the vision and goals for the workforce system. It is understood by partners that wrap around services require coordination among partner funding streams to provide a holistic approach to overcoming barriers with integrated supportive services.

- Provide training to all interested Core Program Partner staff on registering in the Maryland Workforce Exchange.
- Ensure that ALL appropriate jobseeker clients, regardless of where they first access the workforce system, will be registered in Maryland's Workforce Exchange.
- Create a common intake form that will be used until such time a statewide electronic common intake is established.
- Partner program inclusion in the mobile unit that is available for remote access to services throughout the region.
- Use initial screening questions to help in identifying potential partner engagement and referral opportunities.
- Use partner lists of typical characteristics for each program in regard to potential eligibility and decisions regarding readiness for enrollment to assist with targeted referrals.
- Each partner has negotiated a referral process included in the Memorandum of Understanding that kicks in based on the initial screening findings and partners agreed that if the initial screening is done at the American Job Center, basic individualized services will be offered and provided.
- Keep an updated service map of Local Area available basic and individualized career services, training, and supportive services.
- Use a system orientation to be used at appropriate access points in the Southern Maryland Workforce Development Area.
- Establish a tracking form that will be used until such time a statewide electronic tracking is available via an integrated case management system.
- Core Program Partners will meet regularly to review referral listings, enrollments, co-enrollments, and exits. These meetings will serve as informational to help partners follow through on referrals, to provide opportunities for pitching co-enrollment possibilities, discuss performance strategies, and to coordinate exits.
- Core Program Partners that have a "job" as a planned outcome have agreed to participate on a Business Engagement Network along with Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board Committee Members.
- Core Program Partners plus the College of Southern Maryland and Economic Development Representatives have assisted in the creation and support of

sector partnerships for the identified existing and emerging industries and occupations. The sector partnerships incorporate career pathways into its responsibilities in terms of creating a flow of the career path options, analysis of the needs and expectations of business customers, analysis of the existing skills and knowledge of the talent pipeline, and work with education representatives to tap into existing training or create new credentialing or certification options. The College of Southern Maryland includes Carl Perkins options in the equation to assist with credits for eligible participants.

- The Business Engagement Network has agreed upon the existing and emerging in-demand industries and occupations that the Southern Maryland Workforce Development Area will focus on regarding business development and the building of a talent pipeline to meet business needs and expectations.

3. Prepare the Future Workforce

- **What strategies will the LWDB implement to increase participation in Registered Apprenticeships (RA) and the attainment of industry-recognized credentials among high school students?**

The Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board is fully engaged with the State's apprenticeship unit and has directed the Business Engagement Network representatives to offer apprenticeship as a solution to workforce issues. The state has been responsive on every occasion and SOMD JobSource will continue to promote this effort. The Partner Convening Group will strategize marketing efforts to ensure business understands the benefits of apprenticeships and industry-recognized credentials among high school students.

The Business Engagement Network will actively work to communicate registered apprenticeship benefits to in-demand industries in Southern Maryland. The Local Workforce Development Board will become a sponsor of Registered Apprenticeship if one does not exist for specific sectors in the Local Area.

4. Improve System Alignment and Accountability

- **How will the local area, working with the entities that carry out the core programs, align available resources to achieve the strategic vision and goals?**
- **How will you monitor and evaluate the use of resources to ensure they are contributing to the desired outcomes?**

See #2 above for advancing equity and access that provides a blueprint for action steps that are planned for the Partner Convening Group to spearhead.

Partners will establish a scorecard to track desired outcomes and report on the progress quarterly at Partner Convening Group meetings.

Part 2: Sector Strategies for Emerging and In-Demand Industries

- A. This section should include an analysis of the knowledge and skills needed to meet the needs of the local businesses, including employment needs in in-demand industry sectors and occupations.**

The Business Engagement Network surveys business on a periodic basis to keep a focus on the pulse of employer needs and expectations. JobSource and its partners continue to provide the interpersonal skills and basic skills that business customers have indicated they are looking for. The other skills listed are offered through educational opportunities within industry and occupation training.

The data below was identified as the top advertised job skills in each of the Southern Maryland demand industries. Information was data taken directly from the O'NET database and the Maryland Department of Labor, Maryland Workforce Exchange. This information is for the period ending March 31, 2024.

CONSTRUCTION COMPETENCIES - SKILLS
Top Advertised Job Skills
Communication <i>Ability to convey thoughts and express ideas effectively in writing and speech as well as fully comprehend what others are saying. An example would be to fully explain to a customer the problem so they can understand it.</i>
Detail Orientation <i>Ability to efficiently achieve thoroughness and accuracy when accomplishing tasks. Example: collected detailed data and information to prepare technical drawings.</i>
Dexterity <i>Steady hand and good hand-eye coordination when handling very small parts and tools precisely. Example: Being able to install small parts in an engine with very little room.</i>
Math <i>Ability to perform calculations to meet project and product requirements. Example: precisely measure and cut wood for shelving.</i>
Mechanical <i>Knowledge of how the systems operate to assemble, disassemble, repair, reassemble and maintain machinery. Example: Disassemble an old climate control system and install a new one.</i>
Physical Stamina/Strength <i>Ability to lift heavy equipment often, stand, climb, walk, or bend for many hours. Example-lift a bag of concrete mix over 50 lbs. and climb a ladder on the truck to pour into a mixer.</i>
Power Tool Operation <i>Control the functioning of a tool that is powered by an additional power source and mechanism. Example: Use a bushwhacker to clear an overgrown area of wild growing shrubs.</i>

Problem Solving <i>Identify complex problems and reviewing related information to develop and evaluate options and implement solutions. Example: Work independently to modify building materials and make adjustments onsite to complete projects.</i>
Time Management <i>Effectively plan in advance and work efficiently to meet deadlines. Example: Ensure each construction phase is completed on time regardless of material delays in order to complete project as scheduled.</i>
Troubleshooting <i>Ability to find, diagnose, and determine best way to repair problems. Example: Perform tests on a non-working motor to determine that an open circuit is the cause of its failure.</i>

HEALTH CARE COMPETENCIES - SKILLS
Top Advertised Job Skills
Adaptability <i>The ability to adjust to altering work conditions and acquire new skills to respond quickly to changing ideas, responsibilities, expectations, trends, strategies and other processes. Example: Assist providers with preparation of reports, speeches, and articles during manager absence.</i>
Basic Life Support/CPR <i>The type of care that first-responders, healthcare providers and public safety professionals provide to anyone who is experiencing cardiac arrest, respiratory distress or an obstructed airway. Example: Respond to an emergency health situation by providing basic life support and CPR.</i>
Communications <i>The ability to convey thoughts and express ideas effectively in writing and speech as well as fully comprehend what others are saying. Example: Interpret and respond clearly to requests over the phone or in person by a client or patient.</i>
Computer Literacy <i>The knowledge and ability to use computers and related technology efficiently, perform basic tasks such as operating software systems, platforms and other computer programs. Example: Using a computer and database program to manage and record client or patient records.</i>
Coordinating <i>Bringing the different elements of something complex into a harmonious and efficient relationship. Example: Organize the delivery of services provided to clients or patients based on provider availability, priority and type of service required, and facility usage.</i>
Customer Service <i>Act of providing and delivering professional, helpful, high-quality service and assistance to a customer before, during, and after the goods or services are rendered. Example: Greet clients or patients, determine the purpose of visit and conduct interviews for intake or insurance forms.</i>
Leadership/Management <i>Knowledge of business and management principles involved in strategic planning and development to influence others toward the accomplishment of identified objectives. Example: Plan, implement, and administer staff development programs to support policies and the best delivery of services to clients or patients.</i>
Problem Solving <i>Identifying complex problems and reviewing related information to develop and evaluate options and implement solutions. Example: Identify codes with conflicting, missing, or unclear information and</i>

<i>consult with the coding team and providers to resolve the issues.</i>
Scheduling <i>Act of planning the times at which particular tasks will be done, or events will happen. Example: Schedule client or patient appointments to receive services.</i>
Teamwork <i>Qualities and abilities that allow you to work well with others during conversations, projects, meetings, or other collaborations. Example: Listen, ask questions, share ideas or concerns, and discuss potential solutions with your team regarding client or patient care.</i>

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES COMPETENCIES - SKILLS
Top Advertised Job Skills
Accounting <i>Process of recording and reporting financial transactions pertaining to business operations. Example: Review pending transactions for errors or abnormalities and promptly investigate potential issues.</i>
Analytical <i>Ability to collect and analyze information, problem solve and make decisions. Example: take into account trends, regulatory changes, and client's comfort with risky decisions when determining investment portfolio.</i>
Communications <i>Ability to convey thoughts and express ideas effectively in writing and speech as well as fully comprehend what others are saying. Example: document and present research and related information to supervising attorney.</i>
Customer Service <i>Act of providing and delivering professional, helpful, high-quality service and assistance to a customer before, during, and after the goods or services are rendered.</i>
Detail Oriented <i>Ability to efficiently achieve thoroughness when accomplishing tasks. Example: take note of each piece of information on a loan application when determining qualification.</i>
Computer Literacy <i>Use computers and related technology efficiently, perform basic tasks such as operating software systems, platforms, and other computer programs. Example: create spreadsheets and input data for bookkeeping, accounting, and auditing records.</i>
Interpersonal <i>Comfortable interacting with people in different types of situations. Example: build trusting relationship with client so they feel comfortable enough to share personal information related to their case.</i>
Project Management <i>Apply knowledge, skills, tools, and techniques to project activities to meet the project requirements. Example: create timelines and assign team tasks for project coordination.</i>
Sales <i>Principles and methods for showing, promoting, and selling products or services including marketing strategy and tactics, product demonstration, sales techniques, and sales control systems. Example: use a CRM to keep track of contacts, deals, and tasks to identify best activities to enhance network system sales.</i>
Troubleshooting <i>Ability to find, diagnose, and determine the best way to repair problems. Example: utilize remote desktop to recreate an error and develop a theory for the cause.</i>

RETAIL & HOSPITALITY SERVICES COMPETENCIES - SKILLS
Top Advertised Job Skills
Customer Service <i>Act of providing and delivering professional, helpful, high-quality service and assistance to a customer before, during, and after the goods or services are rendered.</i>
Building Strong Relationships <i>A combination of soft skills that a person applies to connect with others and form positive relationships.</i>
Interpersonal Skills <i>Comfortable interacting with people in different types of situations. Example: build trusting relationship with customer so they feel comfortable enough to share personal information which will help you make a very positive experience.</i>
Developing Team Members <i>The process of assembling various members to build an effective team. In order to be effective, it's critical that team members can work together well for maximum contributions to the team's desired outcome.</i>
Willingness to Learn <i>Is when you want to broaden your mind and abilities. This willingness shows your employers that you have the drive to stay qualified for your job, or that you want to be even more prepared for what your job demands.</i>

The Board's Business Engagement Network that includes representatives from all of these in-demand industries reviewed the knowledge and skills provided in O'NET and concurred with the findings.

In the event that knowledge and skills upgrade is needed for incumbent workers, Southern Maryland will utilize their Incumbent Worker Funds and work with Maryland Business Works to support employer strategies for retention, growth, and expansion.

Understanding data that outlines the skills and knowledge local businesses are looking for in applicants will help the local area maximize jobseeker access to employment opportunities. This focus will help increase the earning capacity of the workforce system customers by meeting the needs and expectations of our business customers through deliberate screening in specific skills and knowledge.

B. This section should include an analysis of the workforce in your Area, including current labor force employment (and unemployment) data, and information on labor market trends, and the educational and skill levels of the workforce in your Area, including individuals with barriers to employment.

Unemployment rates in Southern Maryland show a trend that coincides with the State of Maryland overall of July 2024 ranging from 3.0% to 3.3% and lowering in December of 2024 of 2.2% to 2.8% with Calvert and St. Mary's below the State average.

Unemployment Rate by County	Jul 2024	Aug 2024	Sep 2024	Oct 2024	Nov 2024	Dec 2024
Maryland	3.3%	3.4%	2.8%	3.1%	3.3%	2.7%
Calvert County	3.0%	3.2%	2.4%	2.7%	2.8%	2.2%
Charles County	3.5%	3.6%	2.9%	3.2%	3.4%	2.8%
St. Mary's County	3.3%	3.3%	2.4%	2.7%	2.9%	2.3%

The low unemployment rates indicate the need to work with individuals with barriers that need support with job search, training, and essential skills.

Southern Maryland is slightly higher than the State of Maryland on high school graduate or higher percentages for 25-year-olds and up, however is below the State's percent for those in that age group with a Bachelor's Degree. Poverty levels in Southern Maryland are lower than the state average, especially in Calvert County which is nearly half of the State average. Southern Maryland boasts a higher median household income from the State's in all three counties.

To address individuals without a high school diploma, the College of Southern Maryland offers low or no cost Adult Basic Education, GED Preparation, and English as a Second Language instruction. The Maryland Adult National External Diploma Program is also offered in Calvert and St. Mary's counties. It is an alternative to the GED exam and is designed for adults who have developed high school level skills through life experience.

Data Element ⁴	Calvert County	Charles County	St. Mary's County	Maryland
Populations Estimates	94,728	171,973	115,281	6,180,253
High School Graduate or Higher (25 years +)	94.9%	94.3%	92.4%	91%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher (25 years+)	35.3%	31.6%	35.1%	42.7%
Persons in Poverty	4.9%	7.8%	8.4%	9.5%
Households 2019-2023	33,485	60,199	41,743	2,339,510
Median Household Income	\$132,059	\$120,592	\$114,580	\$101,652
Mean Travel Time to Work	40.7 minutes	43.1 minutes	30.4 minutes	31.5 minutes
Households with computer	95.8%	96%	94.9%	96%
Households with Broadband Internet Subscription	92.9%	92.9%	90.9%	91.5%
Veterans	7,746	16,664	11,871	322,655

⁴ Census QuickFacts 2019-2023

Significant progress has been made regarding the number of households that have a computer and that subscribe to Broadband. Access to Broadband can become very important to individuals with barriers in Southern Maryland and supportive services must include supporting Internet access.

With the low unemployment rates comes the reality that most of the unemployed individuals have barriers to employment that the workforce system can help address.

Maryland's barriers to employment statistics in 2024:

Population group	Count	Percent of population	Labor force participation rate	Unemployment rate
Total population	6,042,718	100.0%	--	--
Total working-age population	4,931,235	81.6%	66.9%	3.9%
Disabilities	676,072	11.4%	50.6%	12.5%
Low income	875,225	14.8%	--	--
Poverty	528,203	9.0%	50.9%	24.8%
Indigenous peoples	20,744	0.3%	65.6%	7.6%
Youths	379,728	6.3%	37.5%	17.3%
Youths with disabilities	55,753	4.2%	--	--
Homeless	31,318	--	--	--
English language barriers	396,606	7.0%	--	--
Single-parent households	402,939	18.2%	--	--
Long-term unemployed	38,500	0.8%	28.9%	100%
Older (55+)	1,742,994	28.8%	44.9%	3.2%
Veterans	409,000	8.8%	63.4%	3.2%

Southern Maryland understands various funding stream expertise in regard to working with individuals with barriers. The subject matter experts do not necessarily serve the clients but can serve as a resource for successful strategies related to working with the targeted population

Barrier to Employment	Funding Stream Expertise
Career Pathway Exploration	Title I
Individuals with Disabilities	Title IV
Individuals with Low Level of Literacy	Title II
Job Match	Title III
Justice-Involved Individuals	Parole and Probation
Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker	Title III
Single Parents	Department of Social Services

SNAP	Department of Social Services
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families	Department of Social Services

Per employer feedback essential skills, or referred to as soft skills, are needed to assist individuals with barriers. To assist job seekers with barriers, Southern Maryland provides a series of modules called Workplace Excellence comprised of training on:

- Adaptability
- Communication ability
- Dependability
- Presentability
- Reasonability
- Respectability
- Suitability
- Transition ability
- Workability
- Writability

This training is designed to help people understand and deliver what employers demand today and in the foreseeable future. Each module teaches the employer's perspective, practical skills, and the bottom line on a key topic so participants can increase their company and career success.

The Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board supports maximizing the use of skills and credentialing. It is essential to understand and analyze the data related to the current labor force employed and unemployed as well as labor market trends. This data combined with the knowledge of educational and skills levels in the local area and barriers that our jobseekers have, will help us make informed decisions on where to invest dollars and how to create innovative and creative program designs.

C. This section should include an analysis of the workforce development activities (including education and training) in your Area, including an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of such services and the capacity to provide such services, to address the identified education and skill needs of the workforce and the employment needs of employers in your Area.

Southern Maryland's Core Program Partners and Required Partners provide workforce development activities through a coordinated system. Details on the Basic Career Services, Individualized Career Services, and Training Services provided in the Southern Maryland Workforce Development Area are included in this

plan. Soft skills, essential skills, and job readiness skills are regularly taught at the American Job Centers and at partner agencies. As shown in previous data, business customers need both soft and hard skills from their employees.

College of Southern Maryland plays an important role in providing the educational training needed. Currently, College of Southern Maryland offers areas of study to gain the skills, knowledge, or certification needed to begin or enhance a career forecasted to be an in-demand industry or occupation. Offerings currently include:

- Business
 - Bookkeeper
 - Certified Administrative Professional
 - Entry Level Administrative Assistant
 - Human Resources
 - Project Management
 - Tax Preparation
- Computers and Information Technology
 - Basic Computer Skills
 - Certified Ethical Hacker
 - Certified Information Systems Security Professional
 - Cisco Certified Network Associate
 - CompTIA A+ Certification
 - Comp TIA IT Fundamentals
 - CompTIA Network +
 - (ISC) Continuing Professional Education
 - Microsoft Office Suite
 - Network Administrator
- Construction and Skilled Trades
 - Building Maintenance Technician
 - Construction Management
 - Core Skills
 - Carpentry
 - Electrical
 - Heating and Air Conditioning
 - Home Inspector
 - Home Improvement
 - Plumbing
 - Stationary Engineer
 - Certified Structural Welder
- Healthcare
 - Certified Clinical Medical Assistant
 - Certified Medical Administrative Assistant

- Certified Medicine Aide
- Certified Nursing Assistant
- CPR and First Aid
- Dental
- Electrocardiogram Technician
- Emergency Medical Services
- Nurse Refresher
- Phlebotomy Technician
- Hospitality
 - Food Services Manager
 - Meeting and Event Planner
 - SERV Safe
 - Training for Intervention Procedures
- Transportation
 - Commercial Driver's License – Class A and Class B

As indicated above; to assist job seekers with barriers, Southern Maryland provides a series of soft skill modules called Workplace Excellence comprised of training on:

- Adaptability
- Communication ability
- Dependability
- Presentability
- Reasonability
- Respectability
- Suitability
- Transition ability
- Workability
- Writability

This training is designed to help people understand and deliver what employers demand today. Each module teaches the employer's perspective, practical skills, and the bottom line on a key topic so participants can increase their company and career success.

Individual Training Accounts are used for specific skills and hard skills training in the in-demand occupations of Construction, Professional Services, and Health Care. In addition to helping businesses train interested individuals with pre-apprenticeship skills, a portion of the funding is being used by regional businesses to upskill their current employees. Southern Maryland partners are exploring registered apprenticeship opportunities to complement the pre-apprenticeship activities. Much like the Title I incumbent funding and the State's Maryland Business Works, Southern Maryland Businesses have another stream of funding to support necessary

certification training in construction that can be enhanced through registered apprenticeship opportunities.

Southern Maryland JobSource in partnership with ABC Chesapeake Shores, a local business alliance of construction companies, created a Fundamentals of Construction class. ABC provided the instruction, materials and lab space and Southern Maryland JobSource provided ARPA funding to supplement instruction and other supportive services such as transportation to 15 jobseekers who were interested in a career with construction. The ABC membership indicated their need for entry level workers and the 4 certifications that the students received.

- OSHA 10
- First Aid, CPR & Fall Protection/Ladder Safety
- Lift Certification
- Powder Driven Fastener Certification

The class was a mixture of hands-on training and classroom construction basics, which also includes a basic blueprint class. This partnership will continue and will continue to facilitate a Spring and Fall Class.

A primary strength of the local area is the relationship between the workforce system partners, educational institutions, and economic development. College of Southern Maryland works with the partners to identify and establish training curriculum to meet area business needs and expectations. The College participates on the Local Workforce Development Board's Business Engagement Network. Weaknesses continue to be in the area of transportation and barriers getting to and from training or worksites. Post-pandemic, technology capabilities and Internet access continues to be barriers to many of our jobseekers and youth. Local partners and Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board Members participate on the Regional Infrastructure Advisory Committee where regional transportation priorities are identified and transportation funding requests are coordinated with local and state officials. In addition, the mobile unit provides opportunities to reduce transportation requirements for some of the training and resource options. The Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board works with jobseekers and youth to identify technology needs and assist using supportive services when feasible. Another local strength in Southern Maryland is the Partner Convening Group relationships of Core Partners to identify areas of integration and seamlessness for job seekers and business customers. The partners meet monthly and have collaborated on a number of activities.

A weakness associated with partnerships is the reduction in Wagner-Peyser staff in the local area and the decision to co-locate only in the comprehensive center. This put a financial burden on other partners for the satellite/affiliate locations that are needed to provide access points for all three counties. Currently many services are

provided virtually. Southern Maryland anticipates virtual interactions to be part of the overall service strategy going forward due to the ease of access and now staff and participant familiarity with the process.

Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board embraces the principle of maximizing access to and use of life management skills. The local area has established networks of resources to assist with this essential ingredient to increasing the earning capacity of our workforce system customers.

D. This section should describe how your area will align workforce programs, services, and resources to a career pathways model.

- **How will you identify and focus on sectors such as cybersecurity, healthcare, clean energy, infrastructure, and manufacturing?**

Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board will continue to embrace and enhance efforts to use a career pathways model that meets individuals where they are at and works with them to move from entry level positions to mid-level positions that pay a living wage. The local Business Engagement Network will work with in-demand industry sectors in Southern Maryland to identify the skills and knowledge they are looking for in regard to new employees and upgrading existing employees. When necessary, the Business Engagement Network will facilitate a task analysis process to identify the skills and knowledge, duties and tasks, tools and equipment, and traits and attitudes needed to be proficient in a specific occupation within the demand sectors.

- **How will you engage with employers to understand their workforce needs and priorities?**

The Southern Maryland Business Engagement Network is an integrated team comprised of partner agencies that have a job as a desired outcome. The team will identify and assign team member subject matter experts to learn and communicate ongoing with companies that include occupations within the local in-demand sectors. Team members will learn the industry language, tour facilities, meet with human resource personnel, and identify gaps between what the workforce system has to offer and what employers need and expect. Once the gap analysis is complete, the local area will work to enhance and upgrade services to fill the gaps and/or identify partner agencies for referral opportunities.

- **What strategies will you use to collaborate with partners to recruit successful training and apprenticeship program training providers to the ETPL?**

Registered apprenticeships will be a major focus in the coming funding cycles. As

indicated in the data under economic analysis of this plan, there is a large percentage of individuals with a high school diploma and/or some college versus a much smaller percentage on those with a Bachelor's Degree. That tells us that vocational educational and work-based learning programs are needed such as Registered Apprenticeship. The Business Engagement Network will research existing apprenticeships and compare and contrast the in-demand industry and occupation selections to identify targeted occupations for new registered apprenticeships. The Local Workforce Development Board will become a Registered Apprenticeship Sponsor and market through educational sessions the availability of new Registered Apprenticeship opportunities.

- **What strategies will you use to encourage employers to participate in workforce development initiatives?**

Southern Maryland will utilize the network of employers created through the Business Engagement Network to create an industry language approach and talk to employers about benefits and return on investments. We will use successful data on our work with employers and provide consultation on recruitment and screening options.

The Southern Maryland focus will be done finding out what employers need and expect and comparing their needs and expectations to what we have available. Once gaps in what we have versus what employers needs and expect are identified, the Business Engagement Network will work with the Partner Convening Group to establish or connect with the missing services.

- **How will you support employers in developing and implementing on- the-job training programs?**

On-the-job training is a proven tool in our workforce toolbox to help employers offset the cost for eligible individuals who need some additional assistance with qualifying skills and knowledge needed for a specific employer and a specific occupation. Southern Maryland will provide the features and benefits to in-demand industries in the area and discuss "what's in it for them" to participate.

The Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board will encourage incumbent worker options that include on-the-job training for employers upgrading and offering a career pathways opportunity in-house .

SECTION 3 – American Job Center Delivery System

This section should include a description of the American Job Center delivery system in your area highlighting best practices and strategies to delivery high quality services.

- A. List the AJCs in your area, including address and phone numbers. Provide the One-Stop Operator for each site and whether it is a comprehensive or satellite center.

The Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board competitively bid the One-Stop Operator and awarded the contract to PowerNotes LLC.

The AJC locations have been decreased; however, the service delivery structure has remained consistent with the details in this Plan. There are two (2) American Job Centers in the Southern Maryland Workforce Development Area and one (1) mobile unit. The centers experienced approximately 19,976 visits in FY26.

Charles County Southern Maryland JobSource
175 Post Office Road
Waldorf, Maryland 20602
Telephone: 301-645-8712
Fax: 301-645-8713
Email: dlwdalcharlescountyjs-LABOR@maryland.gov
Comprehensive American Job Center
One-Stop Operator: PowerNotes LLC



St. Mary's County Southern Maryland JobSource
22934 Three Notch Road, Suite B
California, Maryland 20619
Telephone: 301-844-6404
Email: stmarysaic@tccmd.org
Satellite American Job Center
One-Stop Operator: PowerNotes LLC



Mobile JobSource American Job Center
Hans Welch, Mobile Career Center Coordinator
Hwelch@tccsmd.org
Telephone: 240-412-7804



The 28' MCC allows JobSource to offer a full array of career services for job seekers and businesses on-the-go. It features 7 computer workstations, 42" Samsung monitor, Verizon high speed internet access, exterior audio visual and broadcasting capabilities, microphone enabled, workforce applications, and even free Wi-Fi connectivity. It is a self-contained vehicle equipped with telecommunications equipment capable of being deployed inside or outside of the vehicle. Job seekers and businesses are welcome to use the MCC's greeter workstation, resource area, employee workspace, and a confidential interviewing space. The MCC is ADA-accessible with a working wheelchair ramp providing access for individuals with limited mobility. It also serves as a resource to our area county governments in event of emergencies.

B. Describe your customer flow system and process used in the Local Area. This description should include eligibility assessment, individualized training plans, and case management.

Front Door of an American Job Center: (left to right)

Welcome	Referral Kiosk or Paper Version	Initial Verbal Screening	Maryland Workforce Exchange Registration	System Orientation Video	Basic Career Services	Program Referral Internal or External
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Internal Referral within American Job Center: (left to right)

Program Screening/Eligibility/Readiness/Assessment	Program Orientation	Individual Service Goals ⁴	Services and Activities	Training	Exit	Follow-up
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External Referral Access Points: (left to right)

Note: each funding source has its own unique customer flow but agrees at a minimum to include the following at the appropriate time to their consumers/clients/customers

Welcome	Initial Verbal Screening ⁵	System Orientation Video	Program Orientation	Program Screening/Eligibility/Readiness/Assessment	Individual Service Goals ⁶	Register in Maryland Workforce Exchange If appropriate	Training	Exit	Follow-up
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Jobseekers, youth, and workers may access the workforce system at the comprehensive American Job Center, a satellite American Job Center, the mobile American Job Center, Division of Rehabilitation Services, Department of Social Services, or Adult Education and Literacy. A "no-wrong door" approach agreed upon by the partner agencies provides agreed upon steps in each of the access points as shown in the diagrams above. The partners have created an initial screening tool that is comprised of some basic questions that provide an indication of whether the individual may be a potential candidate for another Core Program Partner. If the initial screening identifies a potential partner referral may be helpful, then the referral process negotiated by each partner agency is triggered. The Partner Convening Group created a system orientation for use at each access point in the form of a video. The system orientation provides

information on the diverse array of options that may be available. Next, basic career services may be provided by the Center first accessed or a partner agency or an individual may be referred to an American Job Center to utilize the resource room if access is somewhere other than an American Job Center. Program screening is conducted by the respective partner and includes assessments. A unique program specific orientation for the services he or she will be enrolled in is provided by each partner. Funding streams provide appropriate program services.

Partners will meet regularly to review enrollment information and discuss co-enrollment possibilities and procedures. During these meetings, if co-enrollments are in place, exit information will be coordinated. For Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth the Individualized Career Services will include an Individual Employment Plan or Individual Service Strategy. Career planning begins at enrollment onto a partner program. The partners in the Southern Maryland Workforce Development Area will be promoting co-enrollments when it is advantageous for service options to the client and to leverage resources.

C. *Describe the process your Board intends to use for the solicitation and selection of a One Stop Operator. (Section 107 of WIOA)*

Consistent with section 121(d) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, the Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board, with the agreement of the Chief Elected Officials shall designate or certify one-stop operators and may terminate for cause the eligibility of the provider selected.

Selection of the One-Stop Operator will be through a competitive process and shall be a public, private, nonprofit, or consortium of entities comprised of three (3) or more American Job Center partners. The selected One-Stop Operator will have demonstrated effectiveness and will be located in the local area. Examples of organizations that may competitively apply include institutions of higher education, employment service State Wagner-Peyser Act agencies, community-based organizations, nonprofit organizations, private-for-profit entities, government agencies, local chambers of commerce, business organizations, labor organizations, career and technical education schools, and other interested organizations or entities. Elementary schools and secondary schools shall not be eligible for designation or certification as a One-Stop Operator.

Organizations applying for One-Stop Operator designation must disclose any potential conflicts of interest arising from the relationships with other service providers. The selected One-Stop Operator(s) may not establish practices that create disincentives to providing services to individuals with barriers to employment who may require longer-term services, such as intensive employment, training and education services. And the selected One-Stop Operator(s) must comply with Federal regulations and procurement policies related to calculation and use of

profits.

The Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board will consider proposals that have direct costs associated with providing the One-Stop Operator roles and responsibilities, and proposals that have costs incorporated within other on-site service provider activities and no direct One-Stop Operator budget.

To ensure there is no conflict of interest or perceived conflict of interest, the Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board will contract with an independent consultant to facilitate the procurement process. The Executive Committee of the Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board will work directly with the independent consultant to develop a request for proposal and evaluation tool. No workforce system service provider or potential service provider will be involved in the development of the request for proposal or the selection process. In the event only one proposal is received, the Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board will proceed with sole source procurement with the approval of the Chief Elected Officials.

The One-Stop Operator procurement will comply with legislative requirements and will be done at least every four years as required.

D. Describe how your Board will ensure the continuous improvement of eligible providers of services through the system and ensure that such providers meet the employment needs of local businesses, workers, and jobseekers.

The programs provided through Title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act are tied to negotiated common performance measures. Continued success and funding are directly related to meeting or exceeding the negotiated performance levels.

The Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board is considering establishing a balanced scorecard metrics that provides a format to analyze success ratios of each eligible training provider in terms of participant engagement including but not limited to:

- Receipt of a credential or certification in an in-demand industry and occupation
- Receipt of a job
- Receipt of a job in a training related in-demand industry and occupation
- Six Month Retention in a job
- Six Month Retention in a training related in-demand industry and occupation
- Median wage at job entry comparable to the local negotiated level

- Entry into a more advanced course of study to achieve progress towards a career path goal

Eligible training providers will be trained on the negotiated common performance measure requirements. Providers that do not meet or exceed the requirements will be asked to create a continuous improvement plan that will be approved and monitored by the Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board for progress. Continued failure to meet negotiated requirements may result in discontinuing the respective training option(s).

Eligible Training Providers for classroom training will comply with Maryland's policy and be listed on the statewide Eligible Training Provider List.

Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board has a Business Engagement Network that includes in-demand industry representatives who are on the Board.

The Business Engagement Network will review employer placements. Business customers utilizing work-based learning opportunities that are intended to result in a job will be monitored according to the same criteria as eligible training providers. This will include on-the-job training, customized training, and incumbent worker training opportunities. An employer who has had three (3) or more placements in a program year and has a track record of not meeting the negotiated levels will not be able to participate for a period of six (6) months at which time the situation will be evaluated and a decision made by the Business Engagement Network.

E. Describe how you will facilitate access to services provided through the AJC delivery system, including in remote areas, through the use of technology and through other means.

Access to services will be achieved through a variety of mechanisms starting with training all Core Program Partners on registering individuals in the Maryland Workforce Exchange, providing workforce system initial screening questions, and offering the system-wide orientation developed by the Partner Convening Group. This "no wrong door" concept allows multiple and varied access points.

Technology is encouraged throughout the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. Information will be provided on all Core Program Partner websites on services that are available via the web. Information on how to access web resources will be provided via the system orientation and through outreach and recruitment materials.

For remote access, JobSource has a mobile American Job Center. Many Southern Maryland Workforce Development Area citizens residing in the more remote communities of the region are severely limited in their ability to access the

employment and training services made available by Federal funding at the American Job Centers in Waldorf in Charles County and California in St. Mary's County. Since the services at these Centers are meant to benefit all citizens, an innovative and cost-effective means was designed to take the services to the individuals, regardless of where they are.

The Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland purchased this mobile unit with U.S. Department of Labor funding from the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act. The greatest single benefit of the mobile unit is its ability to provide employment and training services in the more rural and remote communities of the Southern Maryland Workforce Development Area where transportation is difficult or nonexistent for individuals to attend one of the "bricks and mortar" American Job Centers. The Mobile Career Center assists approximately 1600- 1700 job seekers per year by providing career services throughout the three counties. The unit serves the Southern Maryland Workforce Development Area residents who would otherwise have been unable to take advantage of these services, positively impacting both job creation and retention.

The mobile unit is a 28' converted RV equipped with telecommunications equipment and information technology capable of being deployed inside or outside of the vehicle. It offers a full array of employment, reemployment and employer services. The mobile unit contains 7 computer workstations and one computer server with the ability to accommodate additional users utilizing wireless laptops, and all have Internet access. It is able to respond to private, public and workforce related needs including rapid response sessions (business closings) and workforce reductions; trade shows, job fairs and expositions; targeting youth and elder services at schools, senior centers, and churches; serving incarcerated individuals soon to be released; serving those with disabilities via the mobile unit's wheelchair lift; visiting employer organization meetings and providing tutorial and workforce skills training. The mobile unit allows JobSource to work with partner agencies, community-based organizations, government, faith-based organizations, high schools, providers of post-secondary and adult education, and businesses. The partners include, but are not limited to:

- All job fairs in the region, sponsored by numerous organizations and communities for various clients – general public, youth and young adults, veterans, NAACP, disabled, etc.
- The College of Southern Maryland-all three campuses plus the Center for Trades and Energy Training where we work with students in the JOBS grant which trains young ex-offenders in construction trades.
- Farming 4 Hunger at Serenity Farm, working with the inmates interning there.
- 10 local libraries on a regular basis.

- 3 homeless shelters.
- Centers for those recovering from drug and alcohol abuse.
- Detention centers and centers for newly returning citizens.
- Food pantries.
- Community centers in remote locations – Callaway, Nanjemoy, Bel Alton, Newberg, Piney Pt. etc.
- Green Expo held annually at Annemarie Garden.
- On Track to Recovery at Calvert High School.
- Division of Rehabilitation Services.
- Leadership Southern Maryland – Economic and Workforce Development Day.
- Homeless Resource Day.
- Hispanic Resource Day.
- Youth and Young Adults Resource Day.
- Festivals and County Fairs.
- Others as the need arises.

Adult students are able to access the mobile unit to use the resource room and other services throughout the three-county area.

F. Describe the roles and resource contributions of the AJC partners.

American Job Center Core Program Partners will be negotiating and signing a Memorandum of Understanding along with Required Partners that include roles and resource contributions.

Fundamentally, partners have agreed to pay a square footage amount for direct space used in the Centers and the corresponding percentage of common areas. Each partner will provide their own materials and program specific equipment. Partners who will be “visiting” with regular office hours on a part-time basis may provide resources in the form of in-kind contributions such as shared staff for workshop trainers, resource room coverage, or front-desk coverage.

A service mapping exercise was conducted to identify basic career services, individualized career services, and training services each partner offers. The exercise included age group served, targeted populations, and eligibility requirements. This exercise provides an opportunity to coordinate like services and to tap into partner services through co-enrollments.

The updated Memorandum of Understanding and Resource Sharing Agreement will provide an up-to-date reference for partner roles and responsibilities. Local workforce system partners have agreed on a Memoranda of Understanding and Resource Sharing Agreements that can be found at <https://southernmarylandjobsources.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Southern->

G. Describe how your Board will use Individualized Training Accounts based on high-demand, difficult to fill positions identified within local priority industries identified in (Section 1(A))

Individual Training Account approvals will consist of eight steps that are required to be documented:

- 1) Is the applicant eligible to participate?
- 2) Are funds available?
- 3) Is the proposed training on the Eligible Training Provider List?
- 4) Is the proposed training an existing or emerging in-demand industry and occupation?
- 5) Is the applicant suitable for the selected training?
- 6) Does the training lead to a credential or certification, or provide a step in a career pathway plan on the Individual Employment Plan?
- 7) Is the cost and length of training in compliance with Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board policy?
- 8) Has the Eligible Training Provider met performance metric requirement or working through a continuous improvement plan?

Southern Maryland utilizes and follows Maryland Labor's policy.

Currently, training covering Construction, Healthcare, and Professional Services will be approved as well as Retail/Hospitality as a steppingstone to advance toward a career path that involves one of the three sector groups chosen by the Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board as priority in-demand industries and occupations. The Workforce Director may approve other industry focused training when it is deemed appropriate for the job seeker and may extend the 12-month period for training when it is deemed appropriate.

H. Describe how your Board will provide priority of service that conforms to 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.

To participate in the WIOA Adult Program, an individual must meet the following eligibility requirements:

- . 18 years of age or older.

- U.S. citizen or non-citizen authorized to work in the U.S.
- Meet Military Selective Service registration, if applicable.

WIOA Target Populations & Priority of Service

For WIOA Title I Adult Program employment and training services, local workforce areas must provide priority of service to individuals in the following target populations, in accordance with the Act, the State Plan, and the approved Local Plan.

Target Populations: Individuals with Barriers to Employment

- Displaced Homemakers
- Eligible Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers
- Ex-offenders (Justice-Involved Individuals)
- 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)
- 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 committed to ensuring its target populations are able to access the WIOA system on a priority basis. For the WIOA Title I Adult Program, priority must be provided in the following order:

1. First, to veterans and eligible spouses who are included in the groups given statutory priority for WIOA Adult formula funding. This means that veterans and eligible spouses who are also recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, or individuals who are basic skills deficient receive first priority for services with WIOA Adult formula funds for individualized career services and training services.
2. Second, to non-covered persons (that is, individuals who are not veterans or eligible spouses) who are included in the groups given priority for WIOA Adult formula funds.

3. Third to veterans and eligible spouses who are not included in WIOA's priority groups.
4. Fourth, priority populations established by the Governor and/or Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board.
5. Last, to non-covered persons outside the groups given priority under WIOA.

Basic Skills Deficient

For purposes of this policy the definition of basic skills deficient is an individual 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 (Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Section 3[5]).

<i>Criteria used to determine whether an individual is basic skills deficient:</i>	
Criteria Used	Documentation Required
Lacks a high school diploma or high school equivalency and is not enrolled in secondary education	Self-attestation
Enrolled in a Title II Adult Education/Literacy program	School records or verification from school official
English, reading, writing, or computing skills at an 8.9 grade level or below	Results of academic assessment
Determined to be limited English-skills proficient through staff-documented observations	Case notes clearly demonstrating staff assessment of English skills
Lacking computer literacy defined as: non-technical knowledge of computers and how to use them; familiarity and experience with computers, computers, software, and computer systems	Case notes clearly demonstrating staff assessment of computer skills or self-attestation

Low income

An individual that meets one of the four criteria below:

- A. Receives, or in the past six months has received, or is a member of a family that is receiving or in the past six months has received, assistance through the supplemental nutrition assistance program, temporary cash assistance, supplemental security income program, or state or local income-based public assistance.
- B. In a family with total family income that does not exceed the higher of the following: the poverty line; or 70% of the Lower Living Standard Income Level.
- C. A homeless individual.
- D. An individual with a disability, whose own income does not exceed the income requirement but is a member of a family whose total income does (WIOA Section 3[36]).

Public Assistance Recipient

An individual that receives federal, state, or local government cash payments for which eligibility is determined by a needs or income test (WIOA Section 3[50]).

Self-Attestation

When a participant states his or her status for a particular data element, such as low income, and then signs and dates a form acknowledging this status. The key elements for self-attestation are:

- The participant identifying his or her status for permitted elements; and
- Signing and dating a form attesting to this self-identification. The completed self-attestation form with signature remains part of the eligibility verification and must be filed in the participant's case file.

Note that self-attestation is not to be used as the primary method of gathering documentation to verify data elements. Self-attestation as a documentation source is only to be used when the preferred options of paper documentation or third-party corroboration are not available.

Basic career services are not subject to priority of service. Individualized career services and training services are subject to priority of service.

Documentation for Adult Priority of Service	
Priority of Service Criteria	Acceptable Documentation
Recipient of public assistance	Crossmatch with public assistance database Copy of authorization to receive cash public assistance Copy of public assistance check Medical card showing cash grant status Public assistance records Refugee assistance records
Low income	Alimony agreement Award letter from Veterans Administration Bank statements Compensation award letter Court award letter Pension statement Employer statement/contact Family or business financial records Housing authority verification Pay stubs Public assistance records Quarterly estimated tax for self-employed persons Social Security benefits Unemployment Insurance documents Self attestation as a last resort

Basic skills deficient	School records Results of academic assessment documented in case notes Self-attestation as a last resort
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In addition to veterans’ priority of service, recipients of public assistance, low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient must be provided priority of service in accordance with TEGL 7-20. At least 75% of individuals enrolled in individualized career or training services in the Adult program will be from at least one of the priority groups mentioned above.

I. Describe how your Board will utilize funding to create incumbent worker training opportunities.

Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board has a business-led Business Engagement Network including representatives from forecasted in-demand industries.

The Business Engagement Network plays an essential role in identifying and creating incumbent worker training opportunities.

Incumbent Worker Training funds are used to help avert potential layoffs or to increase the skill levels of employees so they can be promoted within the company and create backfill opportunities for others.

The Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board may spend up to 20% of its Adult and Dislocated Worker funds on Incumbent Worker Training. A separate line-item budget will not be established until such time a project is funded so as not to tie up funds for other training opportunities for Adults and Dislocated Workers. However, when a project is approved tracking will begin to ensure the Southern Maryland Workforce Development Area does not exceed the 20% cap. A project funded by Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker funds can only reimburse for training expenses and on a cost reimbursement basis. An employer will be required to provide a minimum 50% match that may include worker wages during training.

First, when a potential Incumbent Worker Training project is identified, the Business Engagement Network will research the availability of Maryland Business Works funds. Maryland Business Works is an Incumbent Worker Training program funded by the Maryland Department of Labor in partnership with the Maryland Department of Commerce. The Business Engagement Network may assist employers in applying for these targeted funds that help small business with upgrading the skills of current employees while creating opportunities for new hires. In accordance with the Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning (DWDAL)’s Policy Issuance 2021-02, “Maryland Business Works,” businesses must be responsible for

50 percent of the training costs to be eligible for Maryland Business Works. The Adult and Dislocated Worker service provider will recommend Incumbent Worker projects to the Board's Business Engagement Network. Each project will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and determined if the Board will support a project from Title I funds, refer the employer to Maryland Business Works, or negotiate a collaborative effort. In ALL cases, a project being reviewed for participation in must meet the following criteria:

- Are funds available?
- Is the proposed training an existing or emerging in-demand industry and occupation?
- Is the applicant suitable for the selected training?
- Does the training lead to a credential or certification, or provide a step in a career pathway plan on the Individual Employment Plan?
- Has the employer met performance metric requirements or working through a continuous improvement plan?
- Is the employer matching a minimum of 50% toward the project costs?

Another resource available for incumbent worker training that is reviewed and agreed to by the private sector Business Engagement Network is the EARN Maryland funds. As previously indicated, the Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board will promote and cultivate industry-led partnerships through the establishment of sector partnerships that will be chaired by respective industry leaders. Construction is active currently. Each sector partnership will create entry-level through middle skills flow of career options to formulate logical career paths for jobseekers and incumbent workers to consider.

J. Describe how your Board will train and equip staff to provide excellent, WIOA-compliant customer service.

The Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board supports a customer-centric model for customer service and adopts Maryland's Customer-Centric Workforce System principles:

- **Engaging business** through 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.
- **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.
 - **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.

All JobSource partners will be provided training on the fundamentals of the principles at least annually. Customer service training will be provided annually. Processes and procedures will embrace the concept of customer input and feedback to help make improvements. Secret shopping will be conducted at least once annually to evaluate customer service from the eyes of the customer both in-person and via the telephone.

SECTION 4 - Title I - Adult, Youth and Dislocated Worker Functions

A. Describe description and assessment of the type and availability of adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities in the Local Area.

The Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board wants to make available as many options for Individualized Career Services and Training as possible to allow a tailored unique experience based on client needs. This supports our customer-centric model. The local workforce system will not prescribe to “a one size fits all” mentality. The toolbox of opportunities will be extensive providing front-line workers and Business Engagement Network members a chance to individualize the workforce system experience and create a meaningful plan of action.

The assessment of the type and availability of these employment and training activities was conducted through a service mapping exercise performed by the Partner Convening Group. The services will not all be the role of the title I Adult and Dislocated Worker provider. In some instances, the services are Basic Career Services that one or more partner agencies may be assisting with. In other instances, such as Adult Education and Literacy, a Core Program Partner will provide the service. Adults and Dislocated Workers may be co-enrolled across partner programs to leverage resources and expand the menu options.

Therefore, the Southern Maryland Workforce Development Area will consider all Title I service possibilities on the options menu:

Basic Career Service: Basic Career Services must be made available to job seekers through WIOA or Wagner-Peyser. The services without program enrollment may include:

- Determinations of whether the individual is eligible to receive assistance from the adult, dislocated worker, or youth programs.
- Outreach, intake (including worker profiling), and orientation to information and other services available through the one-stop delivery system.
- Initial assessment of skill levels including literacy, numeracy, and English language proficiency, as well as aptitudes, abilities (including skills gaps), and supportive service needs.
- Labor exchange services (typically provided by Wagner-Peyser staff within the Center), including—
 - Job search and placement assistance, and, when needed by an individual, career counseling, including—
 - Provision of information on in-demand industry sectors and occupations

(as defined in sec. 3(23) of WIOA); and

- Provision of information on nontraditional employment; and
- Appropriate recruitment and other business services on behalf of employers, including information and referrals to specialized business services other than those traditionally offered through the one-stop delivery system.

Full enrollment in WIOA Youth or Basic enrollment in WIOA Adult or Dislocated Worker is required for the following services:

- Provision of referrals to and coordination of activities with other programs and services, including programs and services within the one-stop delivery system and, when appropriate, other workforce development programs.
- Provision of workforce and labor market employment statistics information, including the provision of accurate information relating to local, regional, and national labor market areas, including—
 - Job vacancy listings in labor market areas.
 - Information on job skills necessary to obtain the vacant jobs listed.
 - And Information relating to local occupations in-demand and the earnings, skill requirements, and opportunities for advancement for those jobs.
- Provision of performance information and program cost information on eligible providers of education, training, and workforce services by program and type of providers.
- Provision of information relating to the availability of supportive services or assistance, and appropriate referrals to those services and assistance, including: child care; child support; medical or child health assistance available through the State's Medicaid program and Children's Health Insurance Program; benefits under SNAP; assistance through the earned income tax credit; and assistance under a State program for TANF, and other supportive services and transportation provided through that program;
- Provision of information and meaningful assistance to individuals seeking assistance in filing a claim for unemployment compensation. "Meaningful assistance" means providing assistance:
 - On-site using staff who are well-trained in unemployment compensation claims filing and the rights and responsibilities of claimants; or
 - By phone or via other technology, as long as the assistance is provided by trained and available staff and within a reasonable time.
- The costs associated in providing this assistance may be paid for by the State's unemployment insurance program, or the WIOA adult or dislocated worker programs, or some combination thereof.
- Assistance in establishing eligibility for programs of financial aid assistance for training and education programs not provided under WIOA.

Individualized Career Service (also known as Enhanced Career Service): Individualized

career services must be made available if determined to be appropriate in order for an individual to obtain or retain employment. Full enrollment into WIOA Youth, Adult or Dislocated Worker must be completed prior to receiving Individualized Career Services. Staff must use assessments to determine if individualized career services would be appropriate. These services include the following services, as consistent with program requirements and Federal cost principles:

- Comprehensive and specialized assessments of the skill levels and service needs of adults and dislocated workers, which may include—
 - Diagnostic testing and use of other assessment tools; and
 - In-depth interviewing and evaluation to identify employment barriers and appropriate employment goals.
- Development of an individual employment plan, to identify the employment goals, appropriate achievement objectives, and appropriate combination of services for the participant to achieve his or her employment goals, including the list of, and information about, the eligible training providers.
- Group counseling.
- Individual counseling.
- Career planning, job coaching and job matching services.
- Short-term pre-vocational services including development of learning skills, communication skills, interviewing skills, punctuality, personal maintenance skills, and professional conduct services to prepare individuals for training or unsubsidized employment.
- Internships and work experiences that are linked to careers (as described in § 680.180 for Adults in the Final Rule).
- Workforce preparation activities including job readiness if not combined with a training service described below. Activities will help an individual acquire a combination of basic academic skills, critical thinking skills, digital literacy skills, and self-management skills, including competencies in utilizing resources, using information, working with others, understanding systems, and obtaining skills necessary for successful transition into and completion of postsecondary education, or training, or employment.
- Financial literacy services as described in sec. 129(b)(2)(D) of WIOA and § 681.500 of the Final Rule.
- Out-of-area job search assistance and relocation assistance; and
- Information gathering on English language acquisition and integrated education and training programs. Adult education and literacy activities if not combined with a training service described below.

Training Services: Training services can be critical to the success of a participant transitioning to employment. There is no sequence of service requirement; therefore, staff may determine training is appropriate at any time during enrollment. Program staff must determine if appropriate, after an interview, evaluation or assessment, and career planning, that the participant:

- In unlikely or unable to obtain or retain employment, that leads to economic self-sufficiency or wages comparable to or higher than wages previous employment through career services alone.
- Is in need of training services to obtain or retain employment that leads to economic self-sufficiency or wages comparable to or higher than wages from previous employment, through career services alone; and
- Have the skills and qualifications to successfully participate in the selected program of training services.

This determination must be documented in case notes and through assessments.

Training services may include the following referenced in WIOA Regs 134(c) (3) (D) (x):

- Occupational Skills Training, usually in the form of an Individual Training Account (ITA).
- On-the-Job Training (OJT).
- Incumbent Worker Training.
- Customized Training.
- Required pre-requisite courses or training could include:
 - Skill upgrade and retraining.
 - Accelerated Learning; or
 - Training that combines workplace training and related instruction.
- Youth Work Experience/Internship as described in § 681.600 of the Final Rule (Adult WEX or Internship is considered an Individualized Career Service).
- Transitional Jobs.
- Accelerated Skills (learning/training), with a focus on work-based training, that leads to industry-recognized credentials and employment such as registered apprenticeship.
- Registered Apprenticeship.
- Entrepreneurial Training; or
- The following services if combined with one of the training types above:
 - Job readiness, or
 - Adult education and literacy activities.

Follow-up Services: Follow-up services are available to Adult and Dislocated Workers that entered unsubsidized employment and are required for all Youth participants. These services are available for a 12-month period from the job seekers placement date. Follow-up services do not extend the date of participation. The following services could be provided:

- Supportive Services (see above).
- Counseling regarding the workplace.
- Retention services; and
- Referrals to community resources.

Front-line staff will be trained on each of the service options and the Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board will develop policies to support each service.

B. Describe how your Board will coordinate workforce development activities in the Local Area with statewide rapid response activities. (Section 134(a)(2)(A)).

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 benefits. A Rapid Response team, which is comprised of State and Southern Maryland Workforce Development Area employees, offers its services to small organizations and large companies alike. The Dislocation Service Unit 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.

In the Southern Maryland Workforce Development Area, Rapid Response is a collaborative effort that involves locally defined partnerships with staff from the Department of Labor, the Southern Maryland Dislocated Worker Program, the State's Business Services Team, Southern Maryland Workforce Development Area's Business Engagement Network and 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. The Department of Labor works collaboratively with JobSource, the Division of Unemployment Insurance, and other relevant stakeholders to ensure effective, customer-centric Rapid Response provision.

C. Provide a description and assessment of the type and availability of youth workforce development activities in your area, including activities for youth who are individuals with disabilities. Include successful models of such youth workforce development

The age range for in-school youth is 14-21, and the age range for out-of-school youth must align with WIOA (16-24) or should align with Maryland (18-24) but include language about exceptions to Maryland's compulsory education law.

Md. Code, Educ. 7-301, known as the Maryland Compulsory Education law, dictates that individuals must attend school through the age of 18. Thus, while WIOA dictates that OSY must be between the ages of 16-24 at the time of enrollment, in Maryland, OSY should be between the ages of 18-24 at the time of enrollment since they are required to attend school at ages 16 and 17.

While in most cases OSY will be 18-24, there may be situations where a 16- or 17- year-old is eligible as an OSY. An individual who is between the ages of 16 and 17 and meets the qualification listed under 3(b) of the OSY definition OR meets one of the following exceptions to the Maryland Compulsory Education Law, may qualify as an OSY. Additionally, individuals in this category must meet all other requirements of the OSY definition to be eligible.

The exemptions to the Maryland Compulsory Education law are for an individual under the age of 18 who:

1. Has obtained a Maryland high school diploma, an equivalent out-of-state high school diploma, or equivalent.
2. Is a student with a disability and has completed the requirements for a Maryland High School Certificate of Completion.
3. Is receiving regular, thorough instruction during the school year in the studies usually taught in the public schools to children of the same age.
4. Has completed an instructional program under item (3) above.
5. Is severely ill and requires home or hospital instruction.
6. Is married.
7. Is in military service.
8. Is committed by court order to an institution without an educational program.
9. Provides financial support to the child's family as documented by a Local Department of Social Services (LDSS).
10. Subject to the approval of the county superintendent, has been expelled.
11. Is pregnant or a parent and is enrolled in an alternative educational program.
12. Attends an alternative educational program.
13. Subject to written parental consent and written agreement with the county board, attends a public school on a part- time basis and attends a private career school; or

14. Is waived from the provisions of the Compulsory Education law by the State Superintendent.

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act requires that a minimum of 75% of Southern Maryland Workforce Development Area Title I youth funds, minus administrative costs, must be spent on out-of-school youth. The U.S. Department of Labor has approved Maryland's request to waive the obligation outlined in WIOA Section 129(a)(4) and 20 CFR 681.410 that not less than 75% of funds shall be used to provide youth workforce investment activities for out-of-school youth. The Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board has chosen to use its Title I funds for out-of-school youth services ages 16 to 24.

Also, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act requires a minimum of 20% of the Southern Maryland Workforce Development Area Title I youth funds, minus administrative costs, must be spent on work experiences.

- Summer Jobs
- Pre-Apprenticeship Programs
- On-the-Job Training
- Job Shadowing and Internships

Program expenditures on the work experience program element include wages as well as staffing costs for the development and management of the work experiences.

Examples of the 20% priority spending on work experiences:

- Youth wages including Federal Insurance Contributions Act (FICA) tax.
- Staffing and travel costs for developing and providing work readiness training for youth participants.
- Staffing and travel costs to meet and work with employers to develop work experiences for youth participants; and,
- Staffing and travel costs for on-site monitoring and job coaching at the youth participants' work site.

Southern Maryland's Title I Youth Program will include the fourteen (14) required program elements in our menu of services. Youth with disabilities will have access locally to each of the fourteen (14) program elements including:

1. Tutoring, study skills training, instruction and evidence-based dropout prevention and recovery strategies that lead to completion of the requirements for a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent (including a recognized certificate of attendance or similar document for individuals with disabilities) or for a recognized postsecondary credential.
2. Alternative secondary school services, or dropout recovery services, as appropriate.

3. Paid and unpaid work experiences that have as a component academic and occupational education, which may include:
 - a. Summer employment opportunities and other employment opportunities available throughout the school year.
 - b. Pre-apprenticeship programs.
 - c. Internships and job shadowing; and,
 - d. On-the-job training opportunities.
4. Occupational skill training, which may include priority consideration for training programs that lead to recognized postsecondary credentials that are aligned with in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area.
5. Education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster.
 - a. Adult education and literacy activities such as basic academic skills training, critical thinking skills, or digital literacy skills.
 - b. Workforce preparation activities such as self—management skills grooming for employment, or following directions, and
 - c. Workforce training such as occupational skills training, on-the-job training, job readiness training, or customized training.
6. Leadership development opportunities, which may include community service and peer-centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social and civic behaviors, as appropriate.
7. Supportive services.
8. Adult mentoring for the period of participation and a subsequent period, for a total of not less than 12 months.
9. Follow-up services for not less than 12 months after the completion of participation, as appropriate.
10. Comprehensive guidance and counseling, which may include drug and alcohol abuse counseling and referral, as appropriate.
11. Financial literacy education.
 - a. Support the ability of participants to create budgets, initiate checking and savings accounts at banks, and make informed financial decisions.
 - b. supporting participants in learning how to effectively manage spending, credit, and debt, including student loans, consumer credit and,
 - c. Supporting a participant’s ability to understand, evaluate and compare financial products and services.

12. Entrepreneurial skills training

- a. Entrepreneurial skills training provides the basics of starting and operating a small business. These trainings should develop the skills associated with entrepreneurship and may include but not limited to:
 - i. Taking initiative, creatively seeking out and identifying business opportunities, develop budgets and forecast resource needs, understand various options for acquiring capital and the trade-offs associated with each option; and,
 - ii. Communicate effectively and market oneself and one's ideas.
13. Services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area, such as career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services.
14. Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to postsecondary education and training.
 - a. Inform participants of legal responsibilities after turning 18, assess participant strengths/abilities/interests, help participants prepare and submit post-secondary education applications and financial aid, investigate and apply for scholarships, and develop portfolio that demonstrates accomplishments and competencies.

As with the Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs, all fourteen (14) elements will not necessarily be provided by the Title I Youth service provider. Youth may receive some services through coordination with Core Partner Programs including Adult Education and Literacy, Wagner-Peyser, Vocational Rehabilitation, or other Required Partner Programs.

Youth with disabilities may be co-enrolled onto a WIOA Youth Program and onto a Vocational Rehabilitation Program. Co-enrollment of youth with disabilities will include leveraging resources and expanding access to additional services such as Vocational Rehabilitation paying for training and WIOA Title I Youth paying for supportive services.

When appropriate, youth will be co-enrolled in a Core Program Partner funding stream to leverage resources and maximize service options to youth.

The Southern Maryland Workforce Development Area has had a focus on youth services for many years.

We have participated and recruited for a Youth Community Conversation to discuss what challenges youth face in this day and age.

Types and Availability of Current Menu Youth Workforce Development Activities:

- Program Orientation - Ongoing Monthly
- Job Club (career advising, mentoring, job readiness, personal/professional development, guest speakers, etc.) - Weekly September thru June

- Occupational Skills Training (Industry specific coursework) – Ongoing
- Work Based Learning (Career Pathway on the job training matching) – Ongoing
- Basic Services (Career Exploration via Virtual Reality, Resume building, job searching, LMI research, etc.) – Ongoing
- Specialized Online Soft Skills Training - Spring/Fall as funding permits
- Summer Employment - July thru August

In addition, JobSource has created a series of seminars to help youth with work readiness. Seminars are marketed on the Youth focused Facebook page that is updated at least weekly with important information regarding workshops, hiring events, and other items of interest to youth.

D. Describe how your local area will coordinate education and workforce development activities carried out in your area with relevant secondary and postsecondary education programs and activities to coordinate strategies, enhance services, and avoid duplication of services.

The Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board is established a combined Youth & Young Adult Advisory Committee that will meet at least quarterly to ensure that youth workforce activities are focused on the needs and expectations specific to 16- to 24- year-old young people. The Committee will be chaired by an Adult Education Representative who is a voting member of the Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board. Voting members on our Board engaged with youth services also includes a representative from the College of Southern Maryland.

The combined Youth & Young Adult Advisory Committee is tasked to ensure youth services are coordinated between education and workforce development activities, particularly in regard to postsecondary education. The engagement with secondary education includes recruitment efforts targeting individuals who have dropped out of school or who are graduating and need help with further education and training activities. As indicated above, youth with disabilities are encouraged to co-enroll in Title I-B Youth Programs and with the Department of Rehabilitation Programs. The combined Youth & Young Adult Advisory Committee works with the Board's Special Populations Committee to ensure individuals with disabilities are provided mainstream access to all services before, during, or after services elsewhere. Southern Maryland is committed to assisting youth with disabilities in regard to all of the fourteen youth elements.

K-12 and post-secondary educational institutions in Southern Maryland participate on the EARN strategic industry partnerships (SIPs) and assist in the planning and implementation of a career pathways model to support sector strategies.

Youth service delivery is projected to be as follows with the understanding that post-pandemic, technology capabilities and Internet access continues to be barriers to

many of our youth. These figures represent a cut in funding Southern Maryland has experienced last year and projected for the coming year. These numbers will be adjusted accordingly with the increase or decrease in WIOA funding.

PY	2021	2022	2023	2024
Walk-ins, Basic Services, Workshops	40	40	40	40
Enrolled Participants / Case Loads	44	40	40	40
Work-Based Learning Participants	30	22	22	22
Summer Employment Program	40	40	40	40
Total Served	154	142	142	142

E. Describe how your Board will coordinate workforce development activities carried out under this title in your area with the provision of transportation, including public transportation, and other appropriate supportive services in the Local Area.

Transportation barriers continue to be an area of concern for low-income and individuals with barriers to employment in all three (3) Southern Maryland Counties. JobSource provides transportation supportive services on a case-by-case basis if assistance is required to participate in an education or training activity. The difficulty in accessing transportation has been a driving force behind why it is necessary for Southern Maryland to have American Job Centers in each County.

Access to basic and individualized career services reduces the transportation needs through the use of our Mobile American Job Center which travels to remote locations and provides service options to youth and other workforce system clients.

The Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board collaborates with the nonprofit and public sector through a Regional Infrastructure Advisory Committee (RIAC). RIAC is the convening body where regional transportation priorities are identified, and transportation funding requests are coordinated with local and state officials. The goal of RIAC is to focus on infrastructure, especially the transportation needs of Southern Maryland to accommodate the Patuxent River Naval Air Station, Indian Head NSWC, the business community and the citizens in this fastest growing region in the state.

A Regional Transportation Need Inventory is developed annually by the RIAC

committee. After the Council's approval, the list is then forwarded to the Transportation Secretary for consideration for future funding. Committee members include State Delegates, Three County Administrators, Chamber of Commerce Representatives, Commanding Officer of the Patuxent River NAS, and Indian Head NSWC, County staff, and local citizens.

F. Describe how your Board will utilize Local Adult Funding, based on adult priority groups as specified in the State Plan.

To participate in the WIOA Adult Program, an individual must meet the following eligibility requirements:

- . 18 years of age or older.
- . U.S. citizen or non-citizen authorized to work in the U.S.
- . Meet Military Selective Service registration, if applicable,

WIOA Target Populations & Priority of Service

For WIOA Title I Adult Program employment and training services, local workforce areas must provide priority of service to individuals in the following target populations, in accordance with the Act, the State Plan, and the approved Local Plan.

Target Populations: Individuals with Barriers to Employment

- Displaced Homemakers
- Eligible Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers
- Ex-offenders (Justice-involved Individuals)
- 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)
- 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 committed to ensuring its target populations are able to access the

WIOA system on a priority basis. For the WIOA Title I Adult Program, priority must be provided in the following order:

1st Priority	Veterans and eligible spouses who are also low-income, recipients of public assistance and/or basic skills deficient.
2nd Priority	Non-covered persons (individuals who are not veterans or eligible spouses) who are included in the groups given priority for WIOA adult formula funds.
3rd Priority	Veterans and eligible spouses who are not included in WIOA's priority groups.
4th Priority	Priority populations established by the Governor and/or Local WDB
5th Priority	Non-covered person outside the groups given priority under WIOA
1 st Priority	Veterans and eligible spouses who are also low-income, recipients of public assistance and/or basic skills deficient.
2 nd Priority	Non-covered persons (individuals who are not veterans or eligible spouses) who are included in the groups given priority for WIOA adult formula funds.
3 rd Priority	Veterans and eligible spouses who are not included in WIOA's priority groups.
4 th Priority	Priority populations established by the Governor and/or Local WDB
5 th Priority	Non-covered person outside the groups given priority under WIOA

In addition to veterans' priority of service, recipients of public assistance, low- income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient must be provided priority of service in accordance with TEGL 7-20. At least 75% of individuals enrolled in individualized career or training services in the Adult program will be from at least one of the priority groups mentioned above.

G. Describe how the Local Board will utilize Local Dislocated Worker Funding.

Title I Dislocated Worker funds will be used to cover direct and indirect services to assist eligible and suitable dislocated workers in the Southern Maryland Workforce Development Area. Funds will be used for individualized career services and training services.

Enrollment into a training activity requiring an Individual Training Account must meet the criteria outlined in this plan for Individual Training Accounts. The Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board has authorized a maximum of \$5,000 for occupational skills training with a maximum length of training of 12 months. Exceptions to the Individual Training Account cap of \$5,000 and duration of 6-12 months may be approved by the Board Director as warranted by customer choice, rising training costs, or other factors on a case-by-case basis. The Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board will be revisiting its policies on Individual Training Accounts as career pathways are established for new and emerging industries and occupations that may require a series of trainings to reach self- sufficiency.

H. Describe how your Board will define “self-sufficiency” for employed Adult and employed Dislocated Worker participants.

The Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board adopted its self-sufficiency policy as of March 2023.

A Dislocated Worker will be considered underemployed if the individual is making 80% or less of his or her pre-layoff income.

The Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board will use a living wage standard for self-sufficiency for employed Adults utilizing the web-based MET Living Wage Calculator.

Family Size	Calvert County	Charles County	St. Mary’s County
	Living Hourly Wage Based On 2080 Hours Annually		
1 Adult	22.31	22.31	18.77
1 Adult 1 Child	41.27	41.27	35.78
1 Adult 2 Children	52.84	52.84	44.28
1 Adult 3 Children	69.38	69.38	58.69
2 Adults (1 Working)	32.24	32.24	28.99
2 Adults (1 Working) 1 Child	38.56	38.56	35.51
2 Adults (1 Working) 2 Children	43.44	43.44	40.40
2 Adults (1 Working) 3 Children	48.62	48.62	46.12
2 Adults (working)	16.10	16.10	14.48
2 Adults (working) 1 Child	22.59	22.59	19.85
2 Adults (working) 2 Children	28.35	28.35	24.39

I. Describe your Board’s definition of “unlikely to return to previous industry or occupation” when required for eligibility for Dislocated Worker services.

The Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board defines “unlikely to return to previous industry or occupation” as follows:

An individual who is laid off without a recall date or the recall date has passed, and falls into one of the following categories:

- The number of jobs in the applicant’s previous industry and occupation is declining based on Labor Market Information data; or
- The projected annual increase in employment growth within the local area based on

Labor Market Information or O*Net is fewer than 100 jobs in the previous industry, including replacements, or the projected annual increase in growth openings is fewer than 30 jobs in the previous occupation, or

- The applicant is dislocated from a job not on Southern Maryland’s new and emerging industries and occupation sector priority approved list; or
- The applicant has conducted a dedicated but unsuccessful job search in the previous industry and occupation, as evidenced by employer rejection letters or employer contact logs; or
- The applicant is unable to perform the duties of the previous job due to age, ability, or disability.

J. Describe how your Board will interpret and document eligibility criteria for in-school youth. (Maryland Youth Policy and WIOA Sections 129(a)(1)(B)(iii)(VII) and (a)(1)(C)(iv)(VII).

The Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board has elected to serve only Out-of-School Youth.

K. Describe how your Board will interpret and document eligibility criteria for out of school youth. (Maryland Youth Policy and WIOA Sections 129(a)(1)(B)(iii)(VII) and (a)(1)(C)(iv)(VII).

The Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board defines “requires additional assistance to complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment” as follows:

All youth, including a youth with a disability, AND...

- Has dropped out of a post-secondary educational program during the past 12 calendar months; or,
- Has a poor work history, to include no work history, or has been fired from a job in the last 6 calendar months; or,
- Has previously been placed in out-of-home care (foster care, group home, or kinship care) for more than 6 months between the ages of 16 and 21; or,
- Currently has an incarcerated parent or guardian.

As provided in PI 2021-14, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I Youth Program, Southern Maryland will document the eligibility criteria for Out-of- School Youth “requires additional assistance to complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment” in a variety of ways including: self-attestation, case notes, signed intake application or enrollment form, needs assessments, or signed individual service strategies.

L. Describe the documentation that is required to demonstrate a “need for training.”

The Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board defines “need for training” as

follows:

The individual...

- Has little or no work experience in the industry and occupation to be trained in; and
- Is interested in and suitable for the industry and occupation to be trained in; and
- Has not been trained in the proposed industry and occupation; or
- Has not worked in the proposed industry and occupation for more than 5 years.

As provided in PI 2021-14, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I Youth Program, Southern Maryland will document Out-of-School Youth “required demonstrate a need for training” in a variety of ways including: self-attestation, case notes, signed intake application or enrollment form, needs assessments, or signed individual service strategies.

M. Describe how your board will provide access to the 14 required program elements for the WIOA Youth program design and whether the Local Board has contracted with youth services provider.

As per the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, design framework services may be done by the grant recipient/fiscal agent. Design framework elements include intake, objective assessment, individual service strategy, case management, and follow-up services. Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland, the grant recipient and fiscal agent for the Title I funds will do the design framework elements.

The Southern Maryland Workforce Development Area is rural in nature. The Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board determined that there is an insufficient number of eligible providers of youth workforce investment activities in the Southern Maryland Workforce Development Area and thus has awarded the remaining youth elements to the Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland on a sole source basis as allowed in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, Section 123(b).

Wherever possible, such as providing financial literacy, the Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland in its role as a Title I provider will collaborate with an existing program to provide the element.

All fourteen youth program elements will be provided as follows:

1. Tutoring, skills training, and dropout prevention: Participants will be referred to Adult Basic Education and National External Diploma Program.
2. Alternative secondary school service: Participants will be referred to public

secondary schools that address needs of students that typically cannot be met in regular school.

3. Paid and unpaid work experiences: Local businesses, agencies, and organizations.
4. Occupational Skills Training: Community College, Prep 4 Success Academy and other providers of industry recognized certifications.
5. Concurrent Education and Workforce Preparation Activities: the participants Individual Service Strategy (ISS) will be combined with education and workforce preparation activities through diverse providers such as co- enrollment in the WIOA Adult Program Vendors, Adult Basic Education, Women's Evolution Center, Public Library, Community College, Local Businesses, Community Agencies, Organizations, and Youth and Young Adult Program Staff. (all based on the needs of the participant)
6. Leadership Development Opportunities: series of classes taught by program volunteers who are leaders with their community. Participants will be taught from the curriculum, Practical Guide To Self-Development for Emerging Young Leaders, written by, New Leadership Learning Center, Inc. In addition to classes, participants will be exposed to positive social and civic activities within the community.
7. Supportive Services: will be provided through WIOA program funding for transportation, uniforms and work shoes, tools, training equipment, gas stipend, interview attire, academic fees, etc.
8. Mentoring: Organizations, Agencies, and Adults willing to commit to a duration of 12 months of mentoring.
9. Follow-up Services: Youth and Young Adult Program Staff in collaboration with community partners.
10. Counseling: will be provided as needed by the local Health Departments, Substance Abuse Programs and Mental Health Services.
11. Financial Literacy: series of classes provided by an independent contractor.
12. Entrepreneurial Skills Training: Small Business Association at College of Southern Maryland.

13. Labor Market Information (LMI); the Performance & Quality Specialist of Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland.

14. Preparing for Post-Secondary Education & Training; activities coordinated for participants by Youth and Young Adult Program staff.

Southern Maryland contracts to provide the 14 elements electronically.

N. Describe the steps your Board will take to ensure at least 20% of Youth Funds are used for work-based training activities.

Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland will maintain a line-item budget that shows the breakout for the required 20% for work-based learning. As funds are obligated and/or expended on work-based learning the line item will reflect a running total of both obligated and expended. The Executive Committee of the Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board will monitor the financial information on a monthly basis to ensure compliance.

O. Describe your board's plan goal to serve out of school youth and identify specific steps that have been taken to meet this goal. If your board's goal is under 75 percent describe how you will implement the waiver and how you will enhance connections to Youth Apprenticeship programming, increase DORS co-enrollment, and make changes for In- School-Youth (ISY) services.

The Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board will use all youth funds for out-of-school youth. The Board voted to spend 100% of its youth funds on out-of- school youth with the following goals identified to meet the desired expenditure level as indicated in the chart previously provided in (M) above.

All fourteen program elements will be available as described in (M) above.

P. Describe how your Board will provide basic and individualized career services to customers and how services will be coordinated across program/partners in the AICs.

As outlined earlier in this plan, the Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board has established a Partner Convening Group that worked through the customer flow involving initial access through exit taking into consideration the Core Program Partner roles and services including Vocational Rehabilitation, Temporary Cash Assistance, and Adult Education and Literacy Activities. The Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board has representation from the Community Action Agency and as a Required Partner reviews and approves the Plan as well as participates in the Memorandum of Understanding.

Jobseekers, youth, and workers may access the workforce system at the comprehensive American Job Center, a satellite American Job Center, the mobile American Job Center, Department of Rehabilitation Services, Department of Social Services, or Adult Education and Literacy. A “no-wrong door” approach agreed upon by the partner agencies provides agreed upon steps in each of the access points as shown in the diagrams above. The partners have an initial screening tool that is comprised of some basic questions that provide an indication of whether the individual may be a potential candidate for another Core Program Partner. If the initial screening identifies a potential partner referral may be helpful, and the referral process negotiated by each partner agency is triggered. The Partner Convening Group created a system orientation for use at each access point. The system orientation provides information on the diverse array of options that may be available. Next, basic career services may be provided by the Center first accessed or a partner agency or an individual may be referred to an American Job Center to utilize the resource room if access is somewhere other than an American Job Center. Program screening is conducted by the respective partner and includes assessments. A unique program specific orientation for the services he or she will be enrolled in is provided by each partner. Funding streams provide appropriate program services.

Southern Maryland has a strong leadership team comprised of the core program partners. Significant work has been done related to service mapping and program knowledge to prevent duplication of services and leverage resource across partner agencies.

Further, partners will meet regularly to review enrollment information and discuss co-enrollment possibilities and procedures. During these meetings, if co-enrollments are in place, exit information will be coordinated to prevent duplication of services. For Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth, the Individualized Career Services will include an Individual Employment Plan or Individual Service Strategy. Career planning begins at enrollment onto a partner program. The partners in the Southern Maryland Workforce Development Area will be promoting co-enrollments when it is advantageous for service options to the client and to leverage resources.

Q. Describe the Local Board’s follow-up services policy. This should include follow-up requirements, frequency of contact, and required documentation.

Title I Youth staff will contact youth on at least a monthly basis for one year following exit. The exit must represent exiting from ALL core program partners that will be coordinated in monthly partner case management meetings.

The monthly follow-up contact may be in person, by email, or phone. Contact will be documented in the youth’s case file electronically and/or hard copy based on State requirements for case management data. If during follow-up interactions, a youth needs additional services steps will be taken to assist.

Follow-up services are available to Adult and Dislocated Workers that entered unsubsidized employment and are required for all Youth participants. These services are available for a 12-month period from the job seekers placement date. Follow-up services do not extend the date of participation. Follow-up must occur at least monthly for each individual. The following services could be provided:

- Supportive Services (see above).
- Counseling regarding the workplace.
- Retention services, and
- Referrals to community resources.

SECTION 5 – Title II - Adult Education and Family Literacy Functions

- A. Describe how your Board will coordinate workforce development activities in your Area integrating the provision of adult education and literacy activities under Title II of WIOA, including, but not limited to, the implementation of the career pathways model.**

The WIOA Title II Adult Education provider in Southern Maryland is the College of Southern Maryland (CSM), Continuing Education and Workforce Development Division serving Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary's Counties. CSM's Adult Education and Literacy is a Core Program Partner and has been actively participating in the partner convening work done in the Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board (WDB) to prepare this plan and service map, identify areas of collaboration, and build day-to-day operational procedures.

Adult Education and Literacy is offered throughout all three counties with access to learning through remote or in-person classes. There is a comprehensive Intake and Assessment orientation that includes program overview, review of diploma options, English Language class options, and review of participants work and educational goals. CSM provides adult basic education, GED test preparation, the National External Diploma Program (NEDP) and English language acquisition classes. There are multiple entry points to maximize the opportunities available for participants throughout the year. We have streamlined and implemented a referral process for job seekers identified as needing adult education and literacy services. The WDB will collaborate various workforce development activities and opportunities with CSM's Adult Education program to ensure a seamless and integrated approach to workforce activities. The Adult Education program will use contextualized learning, which allows participants to learn industry-specific skills and basic skills simultaneously while in the ABE/GED and ESL classes and NEDP participants. The Adult Education and Literacy program provides career exploration classes for participants. A Transition Specialist, who is a Certified Student Career Coach, is a part of the Adult Education team and works with students to identify career goals and help transition to workforce or college. Multiple entry points will be offered to maximize the opportunities available to participants throughout the year.

The Southern Maryland WDB expects to "meet people where they are" and help individuals gain the skills and knowledge they need to get and keep a job. The Sector Partnership approach provides a blueprint for career pathways. Individuals will enter the system with the partner that they will most benefit from and begin a path toward self-sufficiency via career pathways. The career pathways model will create a talent pipeline to fill employment in industries and occupations that are forecasted to have growth and provide a self-sufficient wage over the next few

years. The Southern Maryland WDB believes that many of the workforce system individuals will start with Adult Basic Education or English as a Second Language and build from there. Therefore, partnership with Adult Basic Education and Literacy is essential. We will leave no one behind.

Adult Education and Literacy in all three counties has agreed to the customer flow that provides for a “no wrong door” approach to serving individuals in the Southern Maryland WDB area. This design has Core Program Partner clients, when appropriate, registering in the Maryland Workforce Exchange and viewing a system orientation as well as receiving any basic career services available at the location they access. Adult Education and Literacy has also agreed to the referral process and initial screening to identify potential services for all American Job Center jobseekers in all three counties in Southern Maryland that is detailed in the Memorandum of Understanding.

In accordance with statute and regulation, the Maryland Department of Labor (MD Labor) will establish a uniform process for the Local WDB to review for alignment applications for Title II funding under WIOA.

All three county services will work together to provide better coordination between Title I and Title II services. Coordination efforts will occur around the following opportunities:

Partner Information Sessions – Coordination can be improved by a mutual understanding of each other’s programs, services, and processes. Southern Maryland WDB will convene partner information sessions to cross-train all Title II and Title I staff and volunteers.

Braided Funding - Title I and Title II partners will research braided funding options and consultation around industry-led occupational trainings, transitioning from Title II services to Title I opportunities, and co-enrollments between Title I and II services to leverage resources.

Coordinated Referral Processes – as indicated throughout this plan, Title II from all three counties will be part of the Memorandum of Understanding that will provide process information on referrals and coordination strategies.

Promote and Support Workplace Literacy – Southern Maryland JobSource will promote and support workplace literacy instruction and include information on the services offered in the business service outreach and recruitment strategies.

B. Describe how your Board will coordinate efforts with Title II providers to align basic skills and English language assessments and include the following:

- **An outline of the steps to align basic education skills and English language assessments within your Area, including, but not limited to any MOU entered into by the workforce development and adult learning partners.**
- **How assessment scores will be shared among WIOA Title I areas and Title II providers (*Consideration must be given to the Federal Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)*).**
- **Who will conduct which of the approved assessments (including for Trade Participants) and when will such assessments be conducted, consistent with this policy.**
- **How will your area coordinate testing between workforce development and adult education providers.**
- **How will your will ensure that test administrators are trained?**

Adult Basic Education and Literacy is a Core Program Partner and will be part of the area's Memorandum of Understanding. As indicated, the Southern Maryland WDB expects Adult Basic Education to frequently be the starting point of a career pathway for workforce system clients.

Basic education skills and English language assessments may be administered to participants enrolled in:

- WIOA Title I Adult Program
- WIOA Title I Dislocated Worker Program
- WIOA Title I Youth Program
- WIOA Title II Adult Education & Family Literacy Act Program; and
- Trade Adjustment Assistance for Workers Program

The Title II provider will follow the Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning (DWDAL's) Policy Issuance 2023-02 Basic Education Skills and English Language Assessments issued on January 10, 2023, see here: <https://labor.maryland.gov/employment/mpi/mpi2-23.pdf>

To reduce duplication of services and enhance system alignment, the partners work with each other to get the appropriate release of information forms approved to allow for sharing of assessment scores. The release of information form must be in compliance with the Federal Education Rights and Privacy Act.

Adult Education and other Core Program Partners will administer Maryland approved assessments as outlined in the Maryland Basic Education Skills and English Language Assessments Policy. Individuals with limited English language proficiency will be administered the CASAS or other Maryland approved assessments. Staff involved in the assessments will be trained by Adult Basic Education subject matter experts. Assessments will be conducted in accordance with applicable guidelines set forth by the respective assessment publisher.

Title II Adult Education and Literacy provides 2 separate services. Clients with limited English start with ESL classes before entering basic skills classes. They are given the CASAS STEPS Listening and/or Reading Assessment to determine a starting literacy level. They are eligible for ESL classes until they test beyond ESL level 6. Those in the Level 6 classes are considered to be in a transition class, preparing for post-secondary education or workforce development training. If they still need some basic skills upgrades, they are given CASAS GOALS tests for reading and math and placed in a basic education class. Most of the ESL learners come for English language improvement first. That is the priority before basic skills upgrades. Many ESL learners are highly educated in their home countries. All ESL classes are taught with workforce skills in mind and in basic skills' contexts.

The Intake and Assessment Specialist (IAS) with the Adult Education Program maintain the CASAS administrator certifications and are required to renew certification annually or as recommended by the test publisher. The IAS will conduct the orientation and include the initial assessments before services begin. Post testing occurs after no less than 40 hours of instruction in accordance with the test publisher's guidelines. Other Core Program Partners may be trained on the proper testing standards and may assist in testing as deemed appropriate and necessary. Generally, the only individuals that come to the Adult Education program are those looking for Title II services.

Adult Education staff personnel do provide assessments for partner agencies when asked to help out (i.e., Senior programs, the Foundations of Construction class, WIOA Title I). At orientation, all clients complete enrollment paperwork before taking part in assessments. CASAS certified Adult Education staff conduct office hours at the American Job Center in Waldorf and used that time to coordinate needed assessments.

It is important that individuals only go through the testing process one time regardless of the partners they end up co-enrolling with so a release of information form that is in compliance with the Federal Education Rights and Privacy Act will be created. The release of information form allows for testing scores to be shared between partner agencies only.

C. Describe how your Board will ensure that the individual appointed to represent Title II services on the Board will coordinate with all Title II Grant Administrators in the Local Area in a uniform, regular, and consistent manner.

An Adult Basic Education and Literacy representative is a current Board Member of the Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board. CSM is the sole provider of Title II services for Southern Maryland covering Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary's

Counties. Currently, the Director of the CSM Adult Education Program is actively involved in the other WIOA partners and there are frequent opportunities to partner, collaborate, and communicate.

D. Describe how adult education services will be provided in the AJC system within the Local Area.

Adult Education representatives are present at the Waldorf AJC on a weekly basis, providing office hours on Thursdays. Staff at AJC are aware and direct individuals to the representative and pass along contact information for individuals needing information. We keep a supply of brochures and information available onsite for individuals to take as needed.

The Core Program Partner Convening Group that meets monthly will provide feedback to Adult Education on the services need in the American Job Center system. With transportation being an issue in Southern Maryland, Adult Education offerings and services at the American Job Center will be based on demand and focus on accessibility. The Core Program Partner Convening Group has established referral procedures, using the ATLAS system, that maximize all partner entry point capacity to identify potential Adult Education referrals. In addition, regular front-line worker meetings coordinate co-enrollments and referral opportunities.

E. Describe how adult education providers in your Area will use the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE) program to 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. If there are no IELCE providers in your area, the response should note how the area refers to job seekers looking for IELCE services. (See WIOA Section 243(a)).

Southern 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 address employment needs.

CSM's Adult Education program incorporates lessons that are contextualized and focus on workplace preparation activities and EL/Civics. The two digital curriculums used in the Program, EnGen and Burlington English, are both align with Maryland's new English Language Proficiency (ELP) Standards, College and Career Standards and the new STEPS CASAS assessments. The ELP Standards were identified to help English Language Learners acquire the language knowledge and skills necessary to achieve postsecondary and career goals. A Transition Specialist works closely with students to identify their career goals and works with students to create a plan.

The Title II provider in Southern Maryland, CSM, does not receive IELCE funds but is taking the steps to complete the tool kit and work to develop an IET.

SECTION 6 – Title III - Wagner-Peyser Functions

A. Describe your plans and strategies for maximizing the coordination of services provided by the State employment service under the Wagner-Peyser Act (29 U.S.C. 49 et seq.) and services provided in your Area through the AJC delivery system to improve service delivery and avoid duplication of services.

Wagner-Peyser is a Core Program Partner in the American Job Center delivery system, and their local manager has been actively involved in the partner convening work done to prepare this plan, service map, identify areas of collaboration, and build day-to-day operational procedures.

Wagner-Peyser will be co-located full-time in the comprehensive American Job Center and share in the facility costs. In addition, a representative will set office hours in one of our affiliate American Job Centers with the intent to visit at least one day a week.

Along with the other Core Program Partners, Wagner-Peyser has agreed to the customer flow that provides for a “no wrong door” approach to serving clients in Southern Maryland. The design has all Core Program Partner clients registering in the Maryland Workforce Exchange and viewing a system orientation as well as receiving any basic career services available at the location they access. Wagner-Peyser has also agreed to the referral process and initial screening to identify potential services for all Center clients.

Wagner-Peyser, along with WIOA Title I-B partner staff, will continue to provide front-door coverage, resource room coverage, and basic career service workshops open to all workforce system clients. Wagner-Peyser will participate on the Local Integrated Business Engagement Network to ensure employers are served according to a customer-centric model and that partners are not duplicating efforts. WIOA Title I-B staff as well as other Core Program Partners were trained to register individuals in the Wagner-Peyser database. WIOA Title I-B staff coordinate services, resource room coverage, and outreach activities with the local Wagner-Peyser team.

B. Describe how your Board will coordinate with the Wagner-Peyser program to provide migrant and seasonal farm workers in its Local Area will be provided employment services.

Wagner-Peyser staff will verify monthly all jobseekers that enroll as Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers in the Maryland Workforce Exchange. Verified Migrant Seasonal Farm workers will be contacted and informed of the various training, employment, and supportive services available to assist them with achieving greater economic stability. Wagner-Peyser staff and WIOA staff will work closely to achieve those goals.

Outreach Workers will be required to locate and contact MSFWs who are not being reached by the normal intake activities of the local Workforce Center to enhance the employability of MSFWs and provide supportive services.

The goals of the Outreach Program are to:

- Provide basic services where MSFWs work, live, or gather for recreational purpose.
- Inform MSFWs of the full array of services available at the Workforce Center; and
- Provide needed supportive services and referral to other service providers.
- Conduct random, unannounced field checks to agricultural worksites where MSFWs have been placed through the intrastate (MWE) and interstate recruitment system.

The outreach worker ensures conditions are as stated on the job order and that the employer is not violating an employment-related law. The outreach worker will also document and refer information to the Reemployment Programs Director-Southern Maryland for processing if they see or learn of a suspected violation of Federal or State employment-related laws and will conduct Pre-Occupancy Housing Inspections.

Should MD Labor recruit and/or refer MSFWs to an agricultural employer (either intrastate or interstate) the MD Labor MSFW Outreach Worker will complete a housing inspection using ETA FORM 338 if an H2A inspection has not previously been conducted. Per Policy Issuance 2018-01, MD Labor will conduct one housing inspection, per season and per employer, for agricultural workers who were recruited by MD Labor. If the employer also hires an H2-A worker, and a housing inspection has already been completed, the housing inspection requirement will be considered met unless violations are identified. If a violation is identified, staff may need to return to re-inspect the site.

C. Explain who is responsible for conducting migrant and seasonal farmworker housing inspections.

The MD Labor State staff conduct the farmworker housing inspections. All American Job Center partner staff are trained to serve customers identified as Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers including outreach where appropriate, orienting to services available in the Center and/or through workforce partners, and local community resource referrals for food banks, faith-based and community-based organizations to assist these workers.

SECTION 7 - Title IV - Vocational Rehabilitation Functions

- A. Describe the cooperative agreements that have been replicated between your Board or other local entities and the local office of a designated State agency or unit administering programs under Title I of the Act. Explain your efforts to improve services may include cross-training of staff, technical assistance, information sharing, cooperative work with employers, and other collaborative and coordinated initiatives. (Rehabilitation Act, 29 U.S.C. 721(a)(11)(B), 29 U.S.C. 720 et seq., 29 U.S.C. 732, 741).**

The Maryland State Department of Education's Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS), in accordance with 29 U.S.C. 721(a)(11) will provide the following services to **youth and adults** with disabilities:

- Provide intake, orientation, and assessments for disabled jobseekers.
- Promote employment of persons with disabilities.
- Based on a comprehensive assessment of an individual's disabilities, determine an individual's eligibility for services in accordance with the Division's Order of Selection criteria.
- Develop an Individualized Plan for Employment.
- Provide guidance and counseling, physical restoration, and training to eligible persons with disabilities.
- Provide follow-up services to enhance job retention.
- Provide other vocational rehabilitation services as may be available and appropriate.
- Provide Pre-Employment Transition Services for students with disabilities, as defined by WIOA.
- Provide Supported Employment Services for **youth and adults** with disabilities as defined by WIOA.
- Provide independent living services to enhance the capacity of persons with disabilities to live unaided in the community.
- Provide performance information as required by WIOA.
- Provide cross-training of workforce staff on disability related issues.
- Provide technical assistance on disability related issues and assistive technology.
- Engage employers through the Division's Business Services Representatives.
- Work in a collaborative manner to coordinate services among the Workforce Partners for **youth and adults** with disabilities.

- B. Describe how individuals with disabilities will be served through the AJC system in the Local Area.**

MD Labor's Nondiscrimination Plan can be found here:
<http://www.labor.maryland.gov/employment/ndp/>.

The Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) is a Core Partner in the Southern Maryland Workforce System. DORS actively participates in the Local Partner Convening Group that established a customer flow which ensures universal access to all services provided at the American Job Centers. DORS collaborates with other workforce partners by participating in the Executive and Targeted Populations committees as well as individual case management meetings related to shared customers.

DORS staff participate in all workforce partner convenings, any Job Source Community Resource events held at the American Job Centers and is also represented on Southern Maryland's Business Engagement Network. DORS plans to work with the Job Source to re-establish a physical presence in the new location in St. Mary's County.

The Division of Rehabilitation Services has provided accessible workstations and assistive technology to the American Job Centers in Charles and St. Mary's Counties.

Section 8 - Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Functions

With guidance and technical assistance from DHS and MD Labor, Local Areas will use a functional approach to integration which may include revised practices and policies related to:

Eligibility:

The Family Investment Administration of the Maryland Department of Human Services (DHS), through the 24 local Departments of Social Services administers the federally funded, State administered Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program.

TANF Programs are designed to provide assistance to needy families so that children can be cared for in their own homes and to reduce the dependency of needy parents by providing services which promote work. The TANF program provides children with resources and support that they need to succeed as adults while providing older participants with the tools necessary to become self-sufficient as soon as possible. In Maryland, the TANF program is called Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA) and consists of services and cash assistance to eligible individuals but also has a 60-month eligibility period with mandated work requirements and activities.

The financial (income and resource) eligibility criteria for the Family Investment Program core components are found in the Code of Maryland Regulations section 07.03.03.11 and 07.03.03.13.

Related TANF assistance programs administered by the Family Investment Administration include Welfare Avoidance Grants, Child Care and Medical Assistance, as well as a full range of programs targeted at special issues and populations. The DHS TANF Federal Block Grant funds designated for workforce development 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 and is tailored to fit the unique population of each jurisdiction.

Currently, Maryland's TANF workforce programs are built on connecting individuals to work participation activities that ultimately result in permanent employment. Local Department of Social Services (LDSS) workforce programs are operated through pay-for-performance vendors, other vendors, or the LDSS themselves. Because there are no workforce development vendors in the Southern Maryland region, the three LDSSs operate programs aimed at achieving the federal TANF

performance measure of 50 percent for Work Performance Rate (WPR). DHS will continue to deploy an “employment first” model, and with TANF’s mandated partnership in the WIOA system, DHS can leverage the myriads of opportunities that the WIOA Partners offer to improve upon the employment and training trajectories of TANF recipients in Maryland.

The Range and Sequence of Services:

All services delivered to TANF recipients focus on: (1) meeting the Work Participation Rate (WPR) by placing TANF 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 TANF recipients to achieve employment that leads to long-term independence from public assistance. Throughout participation in these activities, the LDSSs provide supportive services that may include child care, medical assistance, transportation, food assistance, emergency assistance, clothing assistance, and employment retention services.

The LDSSs will continue to deploy an “employment first” model, and with TANF as a full partner in the WIOA system, the Southern Maryland LDSSs need to leverage the myriads of opportunities that the WIOA Partners offer to improve upon the employment and training trajectories of the TANF recipients they serve.

Through the WIOA system, TANF 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, MD Labor’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).

The Use of Funds for Supportive Services:

Maryland’s diversion program, the *Welfare Avoidance Grant* (WAG) is offered by the three Southern Maryland LDSSs according to criteria described in a local plan approved by DHS. 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. A WAG provides for a specific family episode of need, rather than a chronic or continuing situation. The WAG provides funding to meet that need so that the breadwinner may take a job or return to a job. A WAG payment is not intended to cover a family’s on-going needs. Applicants or

recipients may not receive TANF during any period covered by a WAG. An application for TANF is denied during the period covered by the WAG. Any on-going TANF case would be closed.

Emergency Assistance to Families with Children (EAFC)

The Southern Maryland LDSSs administer Maryland's Emergency Assistance to Families with Children program, using TANF funds allocated to local departments to help 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 a local plan, and do not have income or readily available liquid assets to meet that emergency. The family must have at least one child under the age of 21, and the emergency cannot have been created by quitting a job. Examples of an emergency situation could be a pending foreclosure or eviction, or a lack of or insufficient supply of heating fuel, lack of utilities, or threat of imminent utility turn-off.

Transitional Support Services (TSS)

Administered through all three LDSSs, the purpose of TSS is to help TANF leavers to smoothly transition to self-sufficiency. Through TSS, a TANF household is able to continue to receive cash assistance for a period of time after their TANF case closes due to income over-scale. A TANF leaver may receive up to three consecutive months of a cash benefit equal to the TCA grant amount at the time of case closure. They also qualify for transitional SNAP benefits for a six-month period.

Child Care

The Southern Maryland LDSSs assist customers in applying for the Child Care Scholarship (CCS, formerly known as Child Care Subsidy) program that helps eligible families in Maryland pay for high-quality child care and early education programs. The program is managed through a centralized vendor -- Child Care Scholarship Central 2. The Fast Track Child Care Scholarship application process shortens wait times to three (3) business days to get help with child care expenses and 60 days of child care assistance while your Child Care Scholarship application is processed. If eligible, Scholarships are available for: a child who is younger than 13, or an individual 13-19 years old who has a qualifying disability.

Medical Assistance

The Maryland LDSSs administer the Maryland Medicaid Program via Maryland Health Connections offering Maryland Medicaid to qualifying low-income families and low-cost health insurance plans to individuals who are not covered through their employers.

Income Support

By its very definition and purpose, TANF is an income support program.

Performance Measurement

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services assesses state TANF performance based on the 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:

The WPR is 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 six years old), in the month. In addition to the federal WPR, Maryland assesses performance based on the following indicators:

- Job placements at prevailing minimum wage (federal, state, or local).
- Job placements in full-time employment paying 130% above the local minimum wage or more.
- Job Retention – Achieve a job retention rate of 75 percent; and
- Strategic Benchmark Goals – increasing the earning capacity of TANF recipients through employment, skills and credentialing, eliminating barriers to employment, and increasing core life skills.

A. Describe of how TANF is integrated in the AJC system (e.g., customer intake, service coordination, client monitoring and tracking, targeting employment services to low-skill, low-wage workers, etc.).

Individuals receiving TANF Services through the Local Departments of Social Services are a primary target population for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Title I Adult and Youth Programs. This low-income and multi-barrier target population can be an important component of a successful local workforce system making the partnership with the three Southern Maryland LDSSs essential.

As referenced throughout this Plan, the partners including the LDSSs, have agreed to an integrated upfront system that includes at a minimum, initial screening, Maryland Workforce Exchange registration when appropriate, referrals, and basic career services. In addition, LDSS representatives will continue to participate in all workgroups and related committees including integrated case management meetings to facilitate co-enrollments, career pathway strategies, system orientation, and coordination of exits and supportive services. The LDSSs are active in the Partner Convening Group and also participate on the local Business Engagement Network that conducts business development opportunities for job placements.

The LDSS Directors will continue to participate as leaders and Core Program Partners in the three Counties that comprise the Southern Maryland Workforce Development Area. As members of the Partner Convening Group, they will continue to actively engage in its work to develop, revise and spearhead WIOA initiatives in the region. Specifically, the LDSS TANF partners will support the Maryland State and Regional WIOA Plans with a commitment to invest in the partnerships that continue to form. The State is currently exploring ways, for instance, to incentivize connections between TANF/TCA and WIOA partners and 2Gen service delivery approaches. The State has also been in discussion with new plan partners to find ways to implement workforce interventions for homeless individuals.

Building a strong partnership between the LDSSs and the Southern Maryland Workforce Development Area has been essential to the Partner Convening Group. The overall functional approach to service delivery in the local area compliments Maryland's plan for integration by forming teams across partners that comprise individuals with similar job functions such as case management or business engagement.

B. Describe your implementation and coordination process to enhance the provision of services to individuals on TANF and SNAP that includes:

- **Potential co-location of LDSS and/or WIOA Partners at AJCs or LDSS depending on the nature of local partnerships and operations.**

The LDSSs are not co-located in the American Job Centers in the Southern Maryland Workforce Development Area. Partners and the AJC will continue to explore innovative options for improving customer access to services through the development of local business processes that are responsive to the unique challenges of each County and the region as a whole.

The Southern Maryland leadership team, including the SNAP and TANF Directors for Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary's Counties, is exploring enhancements to the ATLAS referral system to strengthen coordination and accountability among partner agencies. The proposed enhancements would enable the system to capture feedback from referral recipients regarding whether referred individuals accessed services and to identify the specific services provided. This enhanced feedback loop will improve the ability of partner agencies to monitor referral outcomes, evaluate the effectiveness of cross-program coordination, and ensure individuals are successfully connected to the services needed to achieve their employment and self-sufficiency goals.

Due to new federal requirements codified in HR1, Southern Maryland has a unique new initiative designed to seamlessly serve Time-Limited-Participants (TLPs, previously known as ABAWDs), providing not only work activity opportunities, but also providing career and training services to set this

population on the path to development of careers that lead to family-sustaining wages. Similar services will be provided to Medicaid recipients in January of 2027.

- **Leveraging existing financial and in-kind contributions to the WIOA system to ensure coordination of services provided by multiple programs, creating a seamless approach to delivering services.**

Partners in the Southern Maryland Workforce Development Area, including the LDSSs will coordinate services such as business development through participation in the Business Engagement Network and have dialogue with the Local Board for improving service delivery through such things as sharing workshop delivery responsibilities and classroom space. If there will be in-kind contributions, the details will be provided in the Memorandum of Understanding and the corresponding Resource Sharing Agreement. Local workforce system partners have agreed on a previous Memoranda of Understanding and Resource Sharing Agreements and will be working on a new document for signature in the upcoming year.

At this point, with no co-location in place, the Southern Maryland Workforce Development Area is not anticipating a direct financial contribution, however the possibility of coordinating workshops and classroom space could result in partner financial savings.

If there will be in-kind contributions, the details will be provided in the Memorandum of Understanding and the corresponding Resource Sharing Agreement. Local workforce system partners have agreed on a Memoranda of Understanding and Resource Sharing Agreements that can be found at:

https://southernmarylandjobsource.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Southern-Maryland-WIOA-MOU-RSA-Signed_FINAL.pdf

- **Cross training and providing technical assistance to all WIOA Partners about TANF.**

The LDSS' will prepare and provide training on the Temporary Cash Assistance Program including eligibility, processes, services, participation rate requirements, performance goals, and strategies for partners on a regular basis as detailed in the Memorandum of Understanding. LDSS staff has agreed to provide a preliminary list of characteristics they look for and eligibility requirements to enhance workforce system referrals to and from their funding source and will update these characteristics as necessary.

- **Ensuring that activities are countable and tracked for the TANF Work Participation Rate.**

A key ingredient to successful partnerships is coordinating performance and helping each other with strategies that will enhance outcomes. Southern Maryland Workforce Development Area Core Program and Required Partners have established preliminary seamless processes, as described in the customer flow section of this Plan, upfront that will help all the partners be more effective and efficient. Co-enrollments will be a critical component to partner coordination particularly with the Temporary Cash Assistance Programs. Co-enrollment strategies must include ensuring that activities are countable, and tracking is done by all partners to make sure participants meet required Work Participation Rates.

The LDSS' will provide training to all partners to assist them in understanding the work performance requirements under the TANF/TCA Program. LDSS staff involvement in integrated case management meetings will provide a forum for discussion and decision-making related to countable work and training activities and other data that is required to be collected by the TANF Program. DHS has revised its planning document for the TANF/TCA program and new measures for evaluating work participation by customers will be required. All partners and especially the AJC's assistance in collecting and sharing relevant data will be requested and training will be provided.

The State of Maryland has elected 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. LDSS team members will work with the Core Program Partners to understand how this exemption impacts referrals and co-enrollments.

The Partner Convening Group comprised of all of the Core Program Partner leadership is meeting with all funding stream front-line workers to explain and train on what co-enrollments are and how to utilize them to expand customer choice and service options as well as leverage resources. Front-line workers will meet monthly to review co-enrollment possibilities and update tracking documents.

Southern Maryland partners have created a partner website that includes a tracking system for referrals across funding streams and to track co-enrollments.

- **Access to business services and employer initiatives to attract and better**

serve employers by marketing joint services, minimizing the burden on employers who use the centers, and provide employer-focused services through a single point of entry rather than through all partnering programs.

All three LDSS offices will participate in the Business Engagement Network to represent the TANF program requirements, services provided, and how the needs of businesses can best be met by TANF recipients. As members of the Integrated Business Engagement Network, participating Core Program Partners as well as Economic Development and the College of Southern Maryland will align and integrate business development activities within the Southern Maryland Workforce Development Area for the purpose of:

- Creating a single point of contact for businesses to dialogue with partners on the ever-changing business and training needs in the region
 - Establishing a collaborative outreach and recruitment structure
 - Coordinating workforce services and training options
 - Leveraging resources
 - Sharing performance outcomes
 - Creating and managing a talent pipeline in existing and emerging in-demand industries and occupations
 - Establishing an inventory of existing training options, particularly those that include a credential or certification in existing and emerging in-demand industries and occupations
 - Identifying skill and knowledge gaps between what business needs and expects and what training options are available
 - Working with Education to enhance or establish short-term training options for portable or stackable credential/certification opportunities
 - Working with Economic Development Representatives to ensure a dynamic approach to meeting the ever-changing needs of business and industry as the in-demand sector landscape grows or diminishes
- **Contributing and providing outcomes data to the WIOA system through strategies for collecting and reporting varied program reporting requirements. Describe the LDSS representation on the Local Board to ensure that TANF expectations, roles, and responsibilities are addressed in the Local Area.**

The Southern Maryland Workforce Development Area will participate in a local and State collaboration effort to create an integrated case management system that allows data to be easily compiled. Until such a system is established the Southern Maryland Core Program Partners, through the work done by the Partner Convening Group and the Integrated Case Management team, will determine, combine and review baseline administrative data to assess outcomes

of the overall success of the local workforce system. The One-Stop Operator gathers data for the Board from the partners on a quarterly basis including common measure information. Guidance provided by the State regarding the collecting and reporting of data will be followed by the LDSS.

Describe the LDSS representation on the Local Board to ensure that TANF expectations, roles, and responsibilities are addressed in the Local Area.

C. Describe the LDSS representation on the Local Board to ensure that TANF expectations, roles, and responsibilities are addressed in the Local Area.

Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board has a voting member representing the Charles County Department of Social Services. In addition, the Calvert and St. Mary's County Departments of Social Services as well as Charles County Department of Social Services are active on three local teams including: Business Engagement Network, Integrated Case Management Team, and the Partner Convening Group.

D. Describe what strategies your Board employs to support TANF recipients in accessing skills and credentialing, life management skills, and employment to improve the financial status of those exiting the TANF program.

TANF recipients, as a primary targeted population for WIOA services, are made aware by the LDSS TCA staff of services and activities that can help them learn the skills and secure the credentials needed to get and keep a job. Specific strategies to further support them in actually accessing such services and credentialing have been developed through the various WIOA Partner Convening Group meetings. TANF recipients will receive a workforce system orientation at the LDSS office and in the event services such as career exploration are not available at the LDSS the individual will be referred to the American Job Center for basic career services and consideration of co-enrollment onto WIOA Adult services. Life management skills are available to TANF participants through the American Job Centers in Southern as well as financial literacy coaching to assist with budget preparation. Partners will be well versed in how to co-enroll eligible and TANF recipients in other appropriate WIOA programs to leverage resources and increase the menu of services available to them. Core Program Partners participated in a service mapping session to identify the various options available to eligible individuals. Referrals will be made as prescribed within the Memorandum of Understanding.

Section 9 - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training (SNAP E&T)

- A. Describe the process the local WIOA partners utilize, or plan to utilize, to support SNAP work registrants in accessing available support and workforce development programs and how many SNAP work registrants currently exist in your area.**

The three Southern Maryland Workforce Area TANF partners identified approximately 800 individuals in a January 2025 snapshot of the Able-Bodied Adults without Dependents (ABAWDs) caseload. LDSSs have continued screening for eligible individuals who would benefit from workforce development activities and resources offered by the WIOA partners.

The Southern Maryland TANF agencies have referred SNAP ABAWDs to Job Source via the ATLAS Workforce System to engage, communicate and coordinate services with other WIOA partners in the support of SNAP work registrants. TANF partners register participants in MWE, and they use other online aptitude and skill building platforms such as Job Source's SkillUP.

In regard to the expanded SNAP and Medicaid Work Requirements, the Southern Maryland leadership team, including the SNAP and TANF Directors for Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary's Counties, is exploring enhancements to the ATLAS referral system to strengthen coordination and accountability among partner agencies. The proposed enhancements would enable the system to capture feedback from referral recipients regarding whether referred individuals accessed services and to identify the specific services provided. This enhanced feedback loop will improve the ability of partner agencies to monitor referral outcomes, evaluate the effectiveness of cross-program coordination, and ensure individuals are successfully connected to the services needed to achieve their employment and self-sufficiency goals.

- B. List the available SNAP E&T third party partners in your local area and describe how the third-party partners are being engaged to ensure they are aware of all workforce development programs available in the WIOA system, streamline resources, and prevent duplication of services.**

There are no specialized third-party workforce development vendors in the Southern Maryland tri-county region; instead, the LDSSs hire staff to do work program activities within their organizations. All three LDSS agencies have MOUs with other community-based agencies for services and resources which support employment opportunities for their customers.

Section 10 - Community Service Block Grant Functions

- A. List the Community Service Block Grant (CSBG) providers in your service area and whether they provide employment and training activities.**

Southern Maryland Tri-County Community Action Committee, Inc. is the local area Community Services Block Grant provider in all three counties. This entity does provide some employment and training activities such as CDL training.

- B. Describe your implementation and coordination process to enhance the provision of workforce development services for individuals receiving CSBG-supported services that includes:**

- **Potential co-location of CAAs and/or WIOA Partners at AJCs or CAAs depending on the nature of local partnerships and operations.**

The Community Action Agency is not co-located in the American Job Center facilities, however, participates in the local area Memorandum of Understanding that outlines a referral process to ensure customers have access to workforce system resources. Information on Community Action services is available at the American Job Center and workforce system service information is available at the Community Action facilities.

- **Leveraging existing financial and in-kind contributions to the WIOA system to ensure coordination of services provided by multiple programs, creating a seamless approach to delivering services.**

Southern Maryland Tri-County Community Action Committee is a partner in the workforce system Memorandum of Understanding and Resource Sharing Agreement. As a local partner, Community Action works with the American Job Center team to establish and maintain a referral procedure that tracks referrals in and out. Shared participants to leverage resources is encouraged. Often Community Action can assist with supportive services while individuals are participating in other workforce activities. A representative of Community Action is an active Board Member on the Southern Maryland Workforce Board.

- **Cross training and providing technical assistance to all WIOA Partners about CSBG.**

Community Action staff are invited to attend partner training sessions and partner meetings held to discuss workforce issues in our local area.

- **Ensuring that activities are countable and tracked for CSBG performance metrics.**

The Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board is considering creating a performance management dashboard to track and analyze partner success indicators. Southern Maryland Tri-County Community Action Committee will be invited to participate and include measures of importance to their customers.

- **Access to business services and employer initiatives to attract and better serve employers by marketing joint services, minimizing the burden on employers who use the centers, and provide employer-focused services through a single point of entry rather than through all partnering programs.**

Southern Maryland Tri-County Community Action Committee will be invited to participate on the local Business Engagement Network. The Business Engagement Network is comprised of workforce system partners who have a job as a desired outcome. The Community Action Agency will be an essential partner in Southern Maryland's strategy for serving employers in a partner integrated effort. Marketing materials and outreach materials will include joint services and available service access points. Employers have indicated they want a single point of contact rather than have multiple funding streams individually approaching them. The Business Engagement Network will share opening information and all members, including the Community Action Agency, will participate in employer contacts and job development/business development.

- **Contributing and providing baseline outcomes data to the WIOA system through strategies for collecting and reporting varied program reporting requirements.**

Data sharing discussions will take place as additional instructions are received from partner funding sources.

C. Describe the CAA representation on your Board to ensure that CSBG expectations, roles, and responsibilities are addressed in the Local Area.

Describe the CAA representation on your Board to ensure that CSBG expectations, roles, and responsibilities are addressed in the Local Area.

Section 11- Jobs for Veterans State Grants Functions

A. Describe how your Board will provide priority of service to veterans and their eligible spouses.

The Local Plan Section 11 is written and adhered to in accordance with Maryland's WIOA State Plan Section 9 established by Title 38, Chapters 41 & 42 United States Code: Veteran Program letters (VPLs) 05-24, 03-14 & 07-10.

The AJC provides "Priority of Service" to veterans and eligible persons in accordance with the Jobs for Veterans Act of 2002 and the Veterans' Benefits, Health Care, and Information Technology Act of 2006. The purpose of Priority of Service is to give first consideration for program participation to covered Veterans and eligible persons who also meet the eligibility criteria of a federal Department of Labor training, employment, or placement service in any workforce preparation program. Local Workforce Development Areas will ensure all vendors follow Priority of Service provisions.

To receive Veterans Priority of Service for a specific program, a Veteran or eligible person must meet the statutory definition of a "covered person" and also must meet any other statutory eligibility requirement applicable to the program. For all USDOL funded programs, Priority of Service means access to services or resources earlier than others, or if resources are limited, it may mean access to services and resources instead of general service individuals.

Veterans Priority of Service will take precedence before applying WIOA Priority of Service for recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient.

Programs with specific eligibility criteria, such as the WIOA Title I Adult program, will ensure covered persons meet all statutory eligibility requirements for the program before receiving Priority of Service.

Note: All criteria for veteran and spouse eligibility will be applied as written in Maryland's WIOA State Plan, Section 9. (review for more details on veteran and spouse eligibility)

In accordance with Maryland's State Plan, veterans and eligible persons will continue to receive priority of service for all USDOL-funded job training programs, which include WIOA programs. However, as described in TEGL 10-09, when programs are statutorily required to provide priority for a particular group of individuals, such as the WIOA priority described below, priority must be provided in the following order:

- First, to veterans and eligible persons who are also included in the groups given statutory priority for WIOA adult formula funds. This means that veterans and eligible persons who are also recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, or individuals who are basic skills deficient would receive priority for services provided with WIOA adult formula funds.
- Second, to non-covered persons (that is, individuals who are not veterans or eligible spouses) who are included in the groups given priority for WIOA adult formula funds.
- Third, to veterans and eligible persons who are not included in WIOA's priority groups.
- Last, to non-covered persons outside the groups given priority under WIOA.

1 st Priority	Veterans and eligible persons who are also low-income, recipients of public assistance and/or basic skills deficient.
2 nd Priority	Individuals who are not veterans or eligible persons, are recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, or individuals who are basic skills deficient.
3 rd Priority	Veterans and eligible persons who did not meet "first priority" conditions.
4 th Priority	TEGL 10-9 level wording for level 4-page 8 par iv which states "Non-covered persons outside the program-specific mandatory or spending requirement or limitation then receive the fourth level of priority for the program or service.

Customer Service Flow for Veterans

AJC staff provides core services and initial assessments to veterans.

The receptionist or other American Job (AJC) staff who work at the front desks are trained to determine whether any customers are veterans. Information can also be gathered on veteran status when the AJC front desk has customers complete their county's "Customer Activity Sheet". Customers who self-attest to veteran status shall receive priority of service from this point forward.

AJC staff conduct the initial *Personalized Needs Assessment* with all new customers (including veterans). If a customer self-attests to veteran status, AJC staff complete *the*

MD Labor's Qualifying Barrier to Employment (QBE) Checklist to determine whether the veteran qualifies as having one or more Qualifying Barrier to Employment (QBE).

When the Personalized Needs Assessment is completed, veterans choose from the following options:

1. If the customer qualifies as QBE or eligible person, they meet the criteria to be assisted by a Disabled Veteran Outreach Program (DVOP) Specialist. If the QBE customer requests to be assisted by a DVOP, they also agree to be case-managed. Once the QBE veteran or eligible person agrees to be case-managed, the AJC staff member will assist the customer in scheduling an appointment with the DVOP.

Note: QBE veterans or eligible persons decide whether to be case managed by a DVOP. If an QBE identified veteran or eligible person declines case management, then they are referred to non-veteran AJC staff for services.

2. If the customer does not require intensive services, they are then referred to Basic Career Services resources, WIOA Title I resources, an AJC Workforce Development Specialist, or other resource as determined appropriate based on the Personalized Needs Assessment.

Note: When a veteran seeks services at an AJC where the DVOP is not currently available because of their rotation schedule, the receptionist provides the customer with the card and contact information of the DVOP and contacts the DVOP via email to provide them with the contact information of the customer so the two can coordinate a meeting time when the DVOP will be stationed at the AJC, if desired.

Verifying Veteran Status

Any individual **self-identifying** as a covered person should be **provided with immediate priority** in the delivery of employment and training services. It is neither necessary nor appropriate to require an individual self-identifying as a veteran or eligible person to verify their status at the point of entry unless the individual who self-identifies as a covered Veteran or eligible person:

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 person status at that time.

Similarly, a covered person should not be denied access on a priority basis to any services provided by program staff in order to verify covered person status. Rather, an individual self-identifying as a Veteran or eligible person should be enrolled and

provided immediate priority and then be permitted to follow-up subsequently with any required verification of his or her status as a Veteran or eligible person.

For services that require eligibility verification, such as classroom training, verification only needs to occur at the point at which a decision is made to commit the use of outside resources. 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.

To receive Priority of Service for career services, covered persons may self-attest their veteran or eligible person status.

Veterans and Spouses as Dislocated Workers

WIOA Title I Dislocated Worker Funds can help Veterans, separating service members, and eligible spouses to enter or reenter the civilian labor force. To receive services under the WIOA Title I Dislocated Worker Program, a Veteran or eligible spouse must be a dislocated worker. By definition, according to WIOA, a dislocated worker is an individual who:

1. Has been terminated or laid off or received a notice of termination or layoff from employment.
2. Is eligible for, or has exhausted, unemployment insurance (UI) benefits.
3. Has demonstrated an appropriate attachment to the workforce but is not eligible for UI and is unlikely to return to a previous industry or occupation.
4. Has been terminated or laid off or received notification of termination or layoff from employment as a result of a permanent closure or substantial layoff.
5. Is employed at a facility where the employer has made the general announcement that the facility will close within 180 days.
6. Was self-employed but is unemployed as a result of general economic conditions in the community or because of a natural disaster.
7. Is a displaced homemaker as defined by WIOA 3(16); or,
8. Is the spouse of a member of the Armed Forces on active duty (as defined in section 101(d)(1) of Title 10, U.S.C.), and who has experienced a loss of employment as a direct result of relocation to accommodate a permanent change in duty station of such member; or is the spouse of a member of the Armed Forces on active duty and is unemployed or underemployed and is experiencing difficulty in obtaining or upgrading employment.

Generally, service members exiting the military, including, but not limited to, recipients of Unemployment Compensation for Ex-Military members (UCX), qualify as dislocated

workers. Active-duty service members who separate by retirement may also qualify as dislocated workers. However, an active-duty service member taking early retirement as an incentive must be taken on a case-by-case basis. In some cases, this type of separation may be the only choice a service member may have. Thus, the service member's retirement could be considered a dislocation. However, if the service member's separation is voluntary, then the service member would not qualify as a dislocated worker. If a Veteran meets the definition of a dislocated worker, then he/she may also be eligible to receive Priority of Service. 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. AJs may consider documentation of a service member's release from active duty on a specific date as equivalent to a layoff notice for WIOA Dislocated Worker Program eligibility. However, service members are not eligible for Priority of Service until they leave active duty. In the case of separating service members, because they may be on a terminal leave from the military, a separating service member may begin to receive career services while the service member may still be part of the Active-Duty military but has an imminent separation date. It is appropriate to provide career services to separating service members who will be imminently separating from the military, provided that their discharge will be anything other than dishonorable.

Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) Funds Are Provided to Fund Three Staff Positions:

Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) Specialists

DVOP specialists provide individualized career services and facilitate placements to meet the employment needs of eligible veterans and eligible persons. DVOP specialists must prioritize service to special disabled veterans, other disabled veterans, and other categories of eligible veterans in accordance with priorities determined by the Secretary of Labor (Secretary). Annual appropriations acts may provide that DVOP specialists may serve certain additional populations. See Section VI for specific guidance pertaining to DVOP specialists.

Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVER)

LVERs' principal duties are to (1) conduct targeted outreach to employers in the area to assist veterans in gaining employment, including conducting seminars for employers and, in conjunction with employers, conducting job search workshops and establishing job search groups; and (2) facilitate employment, training, and placement services furnished to veterans in a state under the applicable state employment service delivery systems. See Section VII for specific guidance pertaining to LVERs.

Consolidated DVOP/LVER staff

Consolidated JVSG staff positions perform the duties of both a DVOP specialist and a LVER. These consolidated staff are subject to approval by VETS and must be requested in accordance with VPL 01-20 (or the most current guidance on the subject). They may perform DVOP or LVER duties in any combination of their time (see Section V.D. below). They may only perform DVOP specialist and LVER duties as specified in this guidance, and they are subject to all requirements (including National Veterans' Training Institute (NVTI) training) for both positions. Any reference to either DVOP specialist or LVER duties in any statute, regulation, or policy applies equally to these consolidated positions unless otherwise specified or clearly not applicable.

Monitoring Priority of Service

To ensure priority of service is implemented and operating correctly it will be monitored by the Regional Local Veterans Employment Representative (RLVER) and by the Reemployment Program Director or whomever they designate.

B. Describe how your Board will engage Local Veterans Employment Representatives in engaging and providing services to local businesses.

Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVER) conduct outreach to employers and engage in advocacy efforts with hiring executives to increase employment opportunities for veterans and encourage the hiring of veterans.

The Local Board will promote LVER services through social media, job fairs and email blasts based on information provided to the Local Board by the LVER. The Local Board will include the LVER in employer meetings convened in support of determining employer needs related to Career Services, Training Services, or Educational Services. The LVER will be included in meetings and efforts convened on behalf of the AJC Partners, including meetings and efforts convened by the One-Stop Operator.

Section 12 - Trade Adjustment Assistance for Workers Program Functions

A. Describe how Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) services will be provided in the AJC system within your Area.

The Trade program provides aid to eligible workers who lose their jobs, or whose hours of work and wages are reduced, because of increased imports or exports or production transfers abroad. The purpose of the program is to return trade-affected workers to suitable employment as quickly as possible with the seamless provision of coordinated resources, support, skills and training they may need.

Trade Adjustment Assistance Employment and case management services include:

- Interview and review training opportunities for each trade-affected worker.
- Inform trade-affected workers of the services and allowances available.
- Register in Maryland Workforce Exchange and complete Trade Adjustment Assistance application.
- Provide initial assessments.
- Development of an Individual Employment Plan with the affected worker.
- Help them secure appropriate training.
- Monitor their training progress.
- Devise a training waiver process.
- Provide access to workshops and other employment resources.
- Coordinate other employment benefits that workers may be eligible for.
- Inform trade-affected workers about supportive services available through partner programs.
- Co-enrollment with Adult, Dislocated Worker, or other appropriate partner program to provide comprehensive wrap-around services and reduce barriers.
- Rapid Response Services.
- Follow-up Services.
- Facilitate the early filing of petitions for any workers that are likely to be eligible for benefits under the Trade Act; and
- Perform outreach to affected workers, intake of, and orientation for adversely affected workers and adversely affected incumbent workers covered by a certification.

B. Describe how Title I staff will provide the TAA services listed above in an integrated manner.

Partner staff in the American Job Center will be responsible for providing the initial meeting and assessments, ensure enrollment in MWE, labor market information and delivering Rapid Response service, if not already provided and to make the participants aware of all the available services and allowances that the Trade Adjustment Assistance Program can provide. Trade staff will work with the trade affected worker on training options, completing TAA application MWE and to ensure the six criteria for training have been met, as well as create or review participants' IEP. Trade staff will also provide approval of all TAA training programs, training contracts and training waivers. Efforts will be coordinated to monitor progress, provide Benchmarks every 60 days and ensure a service is provided every 90 days for the Trade affected worker, as well as ensure any needs and barriers are addressed. Staff will coordinate on all employment, case management and follow-up activities.

C. Describe how Trade participants will be co-enrolled in other programs.

By following an established process flow within the AJC, co-enrollment of Trade affected workers will be ensured to allow for more efficient use of public workforce system resources and reduce barriers to program integration. Participants will be made aware of their co-enrollment. If a Trade affected worker declines co-enrollment or is not eligible for co-enrollment, documentation must be provided and maintained. Declining co-enrollment has no effect on eligibility for benefits and services under the TAA Program.

Section 13 - Unemployment Insurance Functions

A. Describe how WIOA Title I and Title III partners will support Unemployment Insurance claimants and provide meaningful access to Unemployment Insurance claimants, as required by WIOA.

Per TEGL 19-16 provision of information and assistance regarding filing claims under UI programs, including meaningful assistance to individuals (including individuals with language or other program access barriers) seeking assistance in filing a claim—

Meaningful assistance means providing assistance:

- In the American Job Center(s), using staff who are well trained in UI claims filing activities and, on the rights, and responsibilities of claimants, and information necessary to file a claim, or
- By phone or via other technology, such as live web chat and video conference, as long as assistance is provided by appropriately trained and available staff and within a reasonable time.

Technology-based approaches to providing meaningful assistance must ensure American Job Center customers have access to appropriately trained staff within a reasonable time. The referral of American Job Center customers to the state UI agency's self-service website or public phone line where the individual is placed into a queue with all other claimants is not meaningful assistance.

Wagner Peyser staff provide basic career services for individuals seeking reemployment. In the Reemployment Opportunity Workshop (ROW) and Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) workshops and during one-on-one consultations, the most current job search information and referrals to partner programs are provided to UI claimants to reduce barriers to employment and return to work as quickly as possible. Wagner Peyser funded staff, ROW, and RESEA workshop facilitators also reach customers how to register and utilize Maryland's job bank, the Maryland Workforce Exchange (MWE), to access resources for career/skills assessments, job search, and labor market information (LMI).

B. Describe how your Board will utilize the Wagner-Peyser program and the RESEA and ROW programs to provide access to local workforce development services for Unemployment Insurance claimants.

Local boards lead workforce system staff in working together effectively to ensure UI claimants receive the integrated, customized resources they need to quickly find employment. Wagner Peyser (WP) staff supporting the facilitation of ROW and RESEA

workshops assist UI claimants in accessing a full range of online and in-person basic career services. UI claimants who have received their first pay and are profiled to be most likely to exhaust UI benefits are invited to attend the RESEA orientation workshop.

During the orientation workshop:

- UI claimants are provided with the full range of basic career services as well as an Individual Reemployment Plan (IRP) that refers them to other WP funded services and individualized services funded under Title I as appropriate.
- Each RESEA session is required to include a one-on-one assessment of the claimants' continuing UI eligibility. This assessment typically includes confirming employment status and a review of the claimant's work search activities. Eligibility issues are reported to UI.
- Customized career and labor market information is provided.
- UI claimants are enrolled in the Wagner-Peyser Employment Service; and
- Information and access to other AJC services and resources that support the claimant's return to work are reviewed. For example, Registered Apprenticeship, Jobs for Veterans State Grant, DORS, Trade, Reentry and Business Services to name a few.

Wagner Peyser-funded staff is responsible for most of the additional services assigned to a successful RESEA claimant after the development of the IRP. These may include referrals to employment, one-on-one meetings to discuss resumes, interviews, networking, and other labor exchange activities. In addition, Wagner Peyser funds staff to make referrals to other partner programs including Title I, II, and IV as necessary. UI claimants who are profiled as least likely to exhaust their UI benefits are referred to the ROW, which typically runs as a 6-hour session.

The topics in the following list are covered in a ROW session:

- Orientation to AJC services
- How to cope with unemployment
- The job application process
- Resumé preparation
- Interview preparation and strategies

- Utilization of social media in the job acquisition process
- Networking to find a job
- Salary Negotiation

Title I staff are invited to participate during ROW and RESEA and provide information on services and opportunities funded under Title I programs. Title I staff also share information with UI claimants related to WIOA-funded training opportunities that will prepare them for in-demand employment opportunities.

Section 14 - Senior Community Service Employment Program Functions

A. List the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) providers in your Area and how SCSEP is administered, including grantee and subgrantee information, if applicable.

MD Labor DWDAL is the State Grantee for SCSEP. There are no sub-grantees; however, MD Labor employs an Employment Specialist in each Local Area for which the State Grantee is responsible for administering the SCSEP Program. Note: The jurisdictions for which the State grantee is responsible for administering the SCSEP Program are Baltimore City, Western Maryland (Allegany, Garrett, and Washington Counties), Southern Maryland (Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary's Counties) and Eastern Maryland (Caroline, Kent, Queen Anne's, and Talbot Counties).

B. Describe how SCSEP services will be integrated within the AJC system in your area, including key components of the SCSEP program available locally.

SCSEP utilizes the AJC's system by having participants register with the Maryland Workforce Exchange system to track their progress in narrowing their job interest, host agency search, and employment search. The employment specialists use the Maryland Workforce Exchange to track the participants' progress and maintain case notes for each participant.

When inquiring about the SCSEP Program at an AJC, the applicant meets with the employment specialist and is assisted with registering in Maryland Workforce Exchange. The employment specialist also explains the program and process of becoming a participant to the applicant. The employment specialist tries to ensure the best match for both participant and host agency.

Section 15 - WIOA Section 188 and Equal Opportunity Functions

- A. Provide the designation of the local Equal Opportunity Officer, including their name, location, email, phone number, and TTY (or equivalent).**

Monica Grove
Intake Specialist
Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland
P.O. Box 745
Hughesville, MD 20637 mgrove@tccsmd, 301-274-1922

You may contact Maryland Relay at 800-552-7724 or 410-767-6960 (Voice/TTY) or 443-453-5980 (Video Phone)

- B. Explain how AJC operators and partners will ensure physical and programmatic accessibility for individuals with disabilities and Limited English Proficiency. Include plans for staff training and support to address these needs. (See WIOA Section 188, 29 CFR Part 38, and the Americans with Disabilities Act).**

Southern Maryland partners will continue to comply with the physical and programmatic accessibility requirements of Section 188 of WIOA, 29 CFR Part 38, and provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Staff and partners deliver basic career services to all populations including individuals with disabilities and Limited English Proficiency. Every effort is made to provide reasonable accommodations to allow for full program participant including, but not limited to, providing auxiliary aids and services, and ensuring effective community through alternative formats. Partners collaborate with DORS and other vendors on staff development training to enhance customer engagement.

The Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board supports and requires compliance as follows:

- Section 188 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act prohibiting discrimination on the grounds of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, political affiliation or belief.
- Section 188 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act requires reasonable accommodations be provided to qualified individuals with disabilities in certain circumstances.

All JobSource partners will post required notices to ensure all eligible individuals are aware of the system's obligations to operate programs in a non-discriminatory manner. Equal Employment Opportunity is the Law notices will be posted in all partner facilities and will be reviewed with each program participant and documented in each client file. Equal Employment Opportunity language will be placed on all new and reprinted outreach and recruitment documents including information for individuals with Limited English Proficiency.

Census Reporter provides research data on languages that are spoken at home for the population eighteen years and over in Limited English-Speaking Households. The most current information is 2019 and shows the following for the Southern Maryland Workforce Development Area. Spanish is the largest group by far in the Local Area with limited English-speaking individuals.

All American Job Centers will be accessible to individuals with disabilities including the mobile unit. Customers who have Limited English Proficiency will be assisted to ensure their individual needs are met.

Specifically, there are signs posted in the American Job Center resource rooms that language assistance is available for non-English speakers. The front desk and resource room will use the Language Identification Card to help identify the language the individual speaks. We use the language line, which is an over the phone interpretation service, as needed. In order to assist the customer, we provide in-person interpreter service as determined appropriate.

All printed materials and publications will have Equal Employment Opportunity language printed either on new or reprinted versions and a label placed on older materials. Information will be included related to outreach and recruitment and services for individuals with Limited English Proficiency.

Monitoring will include a review of system compliance regarding all of the above and be conducted at least one time during each program year and will be done in conjunction with the WIOA Title I program monitoring. It will take place in the second quarter of each program year and documented.

The Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board is requesting that the Division of Rehabilitation Services do a review of the American Job Centers, as part of their in-kind resource contribution, to validate compliance. In addition, Division of Rehabilitation Services will provide training to JobSource partner staff regarding serving individuals with disabilities as part of the resource sharing agreement. Training will be done in prior to the program monitoring and the monitoring will review the curriculum and partner participation as part of the compliance monitoring.

C. Provide an acknowledgment that the Local Board understands that, while Section 188 of WIOA and 29 CFR Part 38 ensures 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; and**
- **Maryland Anti-Discrimination laws, including 5 Md. STATE GOVERNMENT Code Ann. §10-1101, which stipulates that oral language services must be delivered on-site for those in frequent contact with a service provider.**

In addition to Section 188 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, all subrecipients are required to comply with:

- I. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, which prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities by recipients of Federal financial assistance.
- II. Title I and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, which prohibits discrimination in employment based on a disability, and prohibits State and local governments from discriminating on the basis of disability.
- III. Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act that requires recipients ensure equitable access to, and participation in, certain programs run by the United States Department of Education.
- IV. Maryland's Anti-Discrimination Laws, including 5 Md. State Government Code Ann. §10-1101, which stipulates that oral language services must be delivered on-site for those in frequent contact with a service provider.

This information must also be posted for review by eligible individuals.

D. Describe how your Board will ensure meaningful access to all customers.

The Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board will support a customer-centric approach to customer service.

The American Job Centers in the Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board provide opportunities for a universal population starting with basic career services for anyone looking for work or a different job. Individuals may access any of the two (2) Centers or Mobile Unit and participate in preparing or enhancing a resume and job search activities.

In addition, all JobSource partner agencies have agreed to provide a “no wrong door” approach and register their applicants and participants in the Maryland Workforce Exchange. That will either be done at the partner location, or they will refer individuals to a satellite or comprehensive American Job Center.

All JobSource partners will provide a workforce system orientation that will be created to represent all related services that comprise the Southern Maryland Workforce Development Area.

An initial screening set of questions are being developed by the partner convening group that will serve as a tool to identify potential needs of individuals at any of the access points and provide enough detail to make referrals to Core, Required, and Voluntary partner services. Partners have agreed upon referral processes tailored to the desires of the agency receiving referrals. Individuals with a declared disability will be referred to the Division of Rehabilitation Services, however, upon entry into an American Job Center will be treated just like everyone else and given an opportunity to access basic career services including registration into the Maryland Workforce Exchange and resource room materials, tools, and guidance. Veterans and spouses of Veterans will be given priority and will also be provided immediate services in regard to registering in the Maryland Workforce Exchange and having access to resource room materials, tools, and guidance.

Business customers will be treated with respect and urgency to include information on available resources and a referral to an Integrated Business Service Team Member.

In September 2022, acutran 19 provided research data that says 19% of residents in Maryland aged five and up speak a language other than English at home. Further, about 66.35% of the population is considered to have limited English proficiency. In Maryland, as in a vast majority of states, the most common language other than English is Spanish, and by a notable margin. There are approximately 470,919 Spanish speakers in Maryland representing a population share of around 8.30%.

The Local Workforce Development Board ensures that materials are translated to Spanish for appropriate documents and materials as needed. Staff will attend training session offered by the Department of Labor to assist in understanding the compliance and meaningful access requirements. In addition, staff will be trained on the use of Language Line and other available interpretation services.

It is the intent of the Southern Maryland Workforce Development Area to provide reasonable accommodations to individuals with limited English-speaking abilities

E. Describe your Board's procedure for handling grievances and complaints from participants and other interested parties affected by the local AJC system, including partners and service providers. (29 CFR 38.69-97) Provide a separate description for the following:

- **Complaints of discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, political affiliation, or belief, as well as citizenship or participation in WIOA Title I-funded programs.**

Southern Maryland will comply with 29 CFR Part 38 in regard to implementation of the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

Complaints alleging discrimination on the basis of race, sex, religion, color, national origin, age, political affiliation or belief, and for beneficiaries only, citizenship or participation in any program funded under the WIOA or in the process of admission or access to, opportunity or treatment in, or employment in the administration of or in conjunction with, any WIOA funded program or activity, may file a complaint, either by him/herself or through a representative, within one hundred eighty (180) days from the date of the alleged violation with the Equal Opportunity Officer. If such a complaint is received, the Equal Opportunity Officer may notify the State of the existence of the complaint. If the Equal Opportunity Officer has not provided the complainant with a written decision within ninety (90) days of the filing of the complaint, the complainant need not wait for a decision to be issued but may file a complaint with CRC within thirty (30) days of the expiration of the ninety (90) day period (in other words, within one-hundred twenty (120) days of the date on which the original complaint was filed). If the complainant is dissatisfied with the Equal Opportunity Officer's resolution of the complaint, the complainant may file a complaint with CRC. Such complaint must be filed within thirty (30) days of the date the complainant received notice of the Equal Opportunity Officer's proposed resolution.

Erica Thomas
Equal Opportunity Officer
Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland
ETThomas@tccsmd.org
240-496-2091

A complaint may be filed directly with the Civil Rights Center (CRC) within one-hundred eighty (180) days of the alleged discrimination through the Complaint Information Form sent by postal mail to the Director, Civil Rights Center Attention: Office of External Enforcement, US Department of Labor, 200 Constitution Ave NW Room N-4123, Washington DC 20210; by fax to 202-693-6505 attention: Office of External Enforcement; or by email to CRCExternalComplaint@dol.gov. Persons with a disability who require auxiliary aids and services in order to file a complaint, to access the CRC

complaint form, or during the complaint process should contact the CRC by email at CRCEXternalComplaints@dol.gov, by phone at 202-693-6500 or Maryland Relay at 800-552-7724 or 410-767-6960 (Voice/TTY) or 443-453-5970 (Video Phone).

- **Complaints and grievances unrelated to discrimination, including labor standards violations.**

Tri-County Council of Southern Maryland's Equal Opportunity Officer will facilitate:

- Complaints and grievances alleging illegal forms of discrimination on the ground of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, individuals with limited English proficiency, age, disability, political affiliation or belief, and for beneficiaries only, citizenship or participation in WIOA Title I – financially assisted program or activity.
- Complaints and grievances not alleging illegal forms of discrimination including grievances from individuals alleging labor standards violations.
- **Remedies for WIOA Title I violations may include suspension or termination of payments, barring placement with non-compliant employers, reinstatement of employees, payment of lost wages/benefits, and other equitable relief where applicable.**

Remedies will be tailored to the specific circumstances and violations and may include, but not limited to:

- Provision of services, benefit or employment opportunity denied.
- Monetary payment for loss of employment opportunity or benefit.
- Disciplinary action(s) against the individual(s) found to have discriminated.
- Training for individual(s) found to have discriminated and for other appropriate individuals.
- Nullification of an adverse action.
- Removal of adverse records or documents from client/personnel files; and
- Preparation of statement of no retaliation.

Should the proposed remedies be acceptable to all parties, if appropriate, the Equal Opportunity Officer shall prepare a written Settlement Agreement which contains the specified remedies and which the complainant and respondent will sign. The

Settlement Agreement will include a stated timeframe for implementation of the remedies. Should the complainant or respondent be dissatisfied with the recommended remedies and no solution appears probable, the Equal Opportunity Officer shall inform the complainant of additional filing rights and timeframes for filing as appropriate.

Where the Equal Opportunity Officer makes the decision that there is no probable cause to believe that an act of illegal discrimination has occurred, the complainant will be so notified.

Where the complainant does not accept the decision, the Equal Opportunity Officer shall inform the complainant of additional filing rights and timeframes, as appropriate.

F. Describe how an individual can request accommodation.

Information will be posted at all access points of the workforce system on alerting staff to the need for an accommodation. Access points include entrances to the American Job Centers, in Center Resource Rooms, in the Mobile Unit, and on the Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland's website.

When a customer enters the American Job Center and self identifies as having a disability, American Job Center staff will inquire if the person needs special accommodations to access workforce services. The American Job Center will comply with ADA by promoting inclusion, choice, and accessibility and ensure that job seekers with disabilities have access to all resources and services. If the customer determines there are accommodation needs in order to access American Job Center services, they will be offered support including:

Referral to DORS services if customer is needing access to American Job Center services, multiple or extensive vocational services, qualifies for Ticket to Work, or is interested in specialized vocational rehabilitation services to assist with getting and keeping employment.

- Direct referral to a Vocational Rehabilitation Specialist/Counselor.
- American Job Center will promote blending, leveraging and braiding of resources to benefit job seekers with disabilities.
- Staff and customers will be provided information regarding reasonable accommodations at job sites.
- Employers will be provided information regarding ADA and reasonable accommodations.

- Assistive technology located in the American Job Center.
- Supportive services as appropriate.

G. Describe your Board’s policy on providing aid, benefits, services, training, and employment, including assurance of reasonable accommodation for qualified individuals with disabilities unless it poses undue hardship.

The Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board will provide reasonable accommodations to qualified individuals with disabilities unless providing the accommodations would cause undue hardship.

Southern Maryland Workforce Development Area Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act providers, administrators, and partners will comply with the Local, State, and Federal Equal Employment Opportunity policies as well as Complaint Grievance procedures and policies.

American Job Centers will have wheelchair accessible ramps, handicap parking spaces, customer accessible bathrooms, Universal Accessible workstation, and Virtual Interpreter Interaction. Assistive technology resources will be available: screen reader applications, adjustable table, large print keyboard, Microsoft Narrator, NVDA Magnification applications, Microsoft Magnifier, trackball, multi-function LaserJet printer, and Headphones that are noise cancelling.

H. Describe how your Board will comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act, including providing reasonable accommodation for materials, technology, and facility accessibility. Also, outline how staff will be trained and supported in addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities.

Maryland Division of Rehabilitation Services, as a Core Program Partner, will provide staff and partner training and support for addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities at least one time annually at the American Job Center. In addition, the Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board will request Maryland Division of Rehabilitation Services offer, as an in-kind contribution, an evaluation of the American Job Centers in the local area to identify areas that may need to be corrected or enhanced to ensure compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Included in the evaluation will be accessibility, assistive technology, rest room availability, and support materials.

The Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board will provide reasonable accommodations to qualified individuals with disabilities unless providing the accommodations would cause undue hardship.

I. Describe your Board's policy and strategy to ensure effective communication with individuals with disabilities, including those with visual or hearing impairments, equal to that with others.

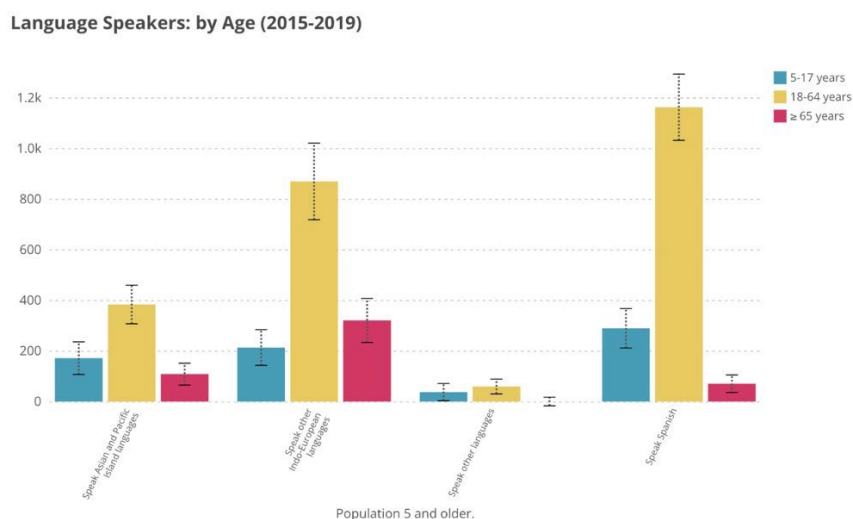
The Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board has made serving individuals with disabilities a priority by ensuring buildings and services are accessible. The mobile American Job Center also has a disability lift to allow easy access for individuals with disabilities.

At the time of the Maryland Division of Rehabilitation Services evaluation, Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board is requesting they review methods of communication and provide suggestions for improvement. Training will be done in prior to the program monitoring and the monitoring will review the curriculum and partner participation as part of the compliance monitoring. Monitoring will include a review of system compliance regarding all of the above and be conducted at least one time during each program year and will be done in conjunction with the WIOA Title I program monitoring. It will take place in the second quarter of each program year and documented.

Southern Maryland works with sign language translators and Maryland Relay services to ensure messages are consistent with all customers. Assistive technology at the American Job Center is available including zoom technology for the visually impaired.

J. Describe how your Board will meet the language needs of individuals with Limited English Proficiency who seek services or information. Include how your Board will disseminate information to individuals with Limited English Proficiency, including using oral interpretation and written translation services. (See the Maryland Anti-Discrimination law, including 5 MD. STATE GOVERNMENT Code Ann. §10-1101)

The most recent Census Data shows:



Adult Education and Literacy is a Core Program Partner and very active on the local partner convening group. A coordinated referral system will be outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding which provides procedures for assisting individuals in accessing services.

Materials may be translated to Spanish for appropriate documents and materials. Staff will attend training session offered by the Department of Labor to assist in understanding the compliance and meaningful access requirements.

It is the intent of the Southern Maryland Workforce Development Area to provide reasonable access to individuals with limited English-speaking abilities.

Other accounts available through Maryland state agencies that we have access to are:

- Telephone Interpretation: Language Line Services
1-800-752-6096
BPO050B2400001
- On-Site Interpretation: Ad Astra
1-800-308-4807
BPO050B3400003
- Written Translation: Schreiber Translations, Inc.
BPO050B3400002

Section 16 - Fiscal, Performance, and Other Functions

- A. Provide an identification of the entity responsible for the disbursement of grant funds as determined by the chief elected official or the Governor. (WIOA Section 107(d)(12)(B)(i)(III) and Section 107(d)(12)(B)(i))**

The Chief Elected Officials have designated Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland as the entity responsible for the disbursement of grant funds.

- B. Describe the financial sustainability of the AJC services with current funding levels, and a description of the ability to adjust should funding levels change.**

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act funded programs depend on Congressional appropriations and line-item budgeting which has always carried a risk of not being funded or being funded at a greatly reduced level. Recent annual cuts in formula dollars has created a burden and the necessity to reduce staff. It has been necessary to adjust the budgets which will likely result in serving fewer individuals, offering fewer opportunities for training expenditures and supportive services. It is important in a rural area with transportation issues to have access points in each County. If funding continues to be a problem, the Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board may consider either identifying less expensive facilities or may co-locate with other partners or provide part-time access.

The Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board will continue to negotiate dollars and in-kind contributions with all the Core Program Partners and Required Partners during the Memorandum of Understanding and Resource Sharing Agreement updated negotiations. In addition, the Board will be pursuing a variety of grants to diversify funding. Local workforce system partners have agreed on a Memoranda of Understanding and Resource Sharing Agreements that can be found at https://southernmarylandjobsource.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Southern-Maryland-WIOA-MOU-RSA-Signed_FINAL.pdf

- C. Describe the competitive process used to award the subgrants and contracts in your Area for activities carried out under this title, including risk assessment of potential subgrantees and contractors.**

The Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board is not incorporated. Tri- County Council for Southern Maryland was designated the Fiscal Agent and Grant Recipient by the Chief Elected Officials. In its capacity as Administrative Entity, Tri- County Council for Southern Maryland serves as the Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board support and assists the Board in fulfilling its duties. In cases where there is a need for a firewall between responsibilities such as monitoring, evaluation, procurement, plan

development, and policy development, the Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board requests the Administrative Entity contract with an independent consultant to provide assistance directly to Board Members independent of Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland.

An independent consultant will be contracted with to assist the Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board in procuring the one-stop operator. Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board and the Southern Maryland Chief Elected Officials have selected and approved Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland to serve as service provider for the Title I Adult and Dislocated Workers and will be asking the Governor to approve the decision. As a result, no competitive process will be used for Adult and Dislocated Worker Procurement. Training services that require an Individual Training Account must be on the Eligible Training Provider List. Youth services will be procured according to guidance from Maryland Labor. In each case, the Board will contract for an independent consultant to assist a Board Committee with procurement.

The risk assessment of having Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland serve in the service provider capacity is low. Chief Elected Officials comprise the agency Board of Directors and the Chair of the Chief Elected Officials is a member of the Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board. In addition, Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland has served as the service provider for several years and has proven to be credible and high-performing. The Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board will contract for monitoring at least two times each program year to provide an independent review.

The Board will incorporate a risk-assessment approach to its oversight of contractors. The process for risk assessment shall include:

1. Define scope. Consider which, if any, contracts involve the most risk exposing the local board to adverse consequences.
2. Identify areas of possible exposure associated with additional risks. Consider the level of vulnerability of the local area or local board if a contractor's compliance with programmatic and fiscal system requirements is monitored less frequently.
3. Identify the factors used to assess risk. Consider: has the contractor experienced major changes in personnel or practices since the last review; what is the structure for provision of services; is there a history of disallowed costs; is there a significant history of prior oversight findings; and what is the contractor's share of the local area's allocation?
4. Project the risk. Assign point values to the scoring system. The numerical ratings can be used to help the Board determine how to allocate its oversight resources.

Service providers may be classified as high risk, medium risk, or low risk for the purposes of measuring program accountability. At a minimum, all providers must be monitored at least once during each program year (July 1 - June 20), with medium or high-risk providers being monitored more frequently.

Risk Assessment Scoring System:

- Were there any changes in provider's personnel or practices since last on-site review? 15 Points = extensive change; 8 points = some change; 0 points = little to no change.
- What is the structure for provision of services? 10 points = if provider does not provide services directly; 5 points = if provider provides some services and purchases some services; 0 points = if provider provides all or nearly all services directly.
- Is there any history of disallowed costs? 20 points = if more than 1 instance of disallowance; 5 points = a single instance of disallowance; 0 points = no disallowances have occurred.
- What is the extent of recent audit or monitoring findings? 25 points = if substantial oversight findings occurred within the past 2 years; 20 points = if some findings occurred within past 2 years; 0 points = no oversight findings occurred in the past 2 years.
- What is the contractor's share of the local area's allocation? 15 points = if more than 25% of local board's allocation; 8 points = if 10% to 25% of local board's allocation; 0 points = if less than 10% of local board's allocation.

The entity selected for one-stop operator will be checked on epls.gov for suspension and/or debarment to minimize risk.

Risk Assessment in regard to procurement and vendor selection processes are defined in 2 CFR 200.205 C. Southern Maryland will consider the following risk factors as part of the procurement and vendor selection processes: financial stability, quality of management and ability to meet management standard, history of performance including timely reporting, compliance, and expenditure levels, audit findings, and ability to implement requirements.

D. Describe your strategy to become or remain a high-performing board. Describe of the process used by your Board to review and evaluate performance of the local AJC(s) and the One-Stop Operator.

Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board is and will continue to be a high-performing Board. The Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board will analyze evidence-based return on investment through a performance management dashboard to track employment, retention, wages, and educational attainment.

The State of Maryland negotiated performance goals will be tracked and measured with a focus on meeting or exceeding all measures. All staff will be trained on the measures and how to successfully implement strategies for achieving each one.

An independent evaluation will be conducted annually to review the local workforce delivery system and provide feedback on enhancement possibilities and areas that may be of concern to the Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board. In addition to a third-party evaluation, mystery shopping of each American Job Center to evaluate customer service will be done at least once annually.

Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board Members will receive at least six (6) hours of training annually regarding the workforce system to keep them apprised of changes, promising practices, sector partnership progress, and local considerations.

E. Describe you Area's Individual Training Account policy. Include information such as selection process, dollar limits, duration. (WIOA Section 101(d)(6))

The current local policy:

Individual Training Account (ITA) Policy TCCSMD Policy Series #OP-2013-05 Date 7/2013, Revised 1/22/15, Revised 9/1/16

Purpose: To establish requirements and procedures for the Southern Maryland Development Area staff, contractors and service providers in establishing Individual Training Accounts (ITA's) for eligible Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act customers.

References: Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 and related Regulations

Background: Services for adults and dislocated workers under the Federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act are provided after an assessment of the specific needs of each job seeker. Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland, through the American Job Centers, uses a career assessment process that assists job seekers in determining the most appropriate services and training plan for each individual. Developing a plan to address the needs of each job seeker is a strategy that embodies the key principals of the Federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity legislation, customer choice, flexibility and a market-oriented approach to job training.

Procedures: The ITA is an account established by the Southern Maryland JobSource Career Counselor on behalf of a Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act eligible individual. ITAs are funded with adult and/or dislocated worker funds authorized under Title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. Eligible individuals may use ITA's in exchange for training services for skills in demand occupations from training providers on the approved Maryland Labor list.

Occupational Skills Training

Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland, in conjunction with the local Workforce Development Board, has implemented a system to authorize occupational skills training for adult and dislocated workers using an Individual Training Account (ITA) voucher. The ITA system makes funds available to cover the costs of tuition, books, and fees, or portions thereof, for programs and courses offered by eligible training providers.

Occupational skills training is defined as a program or course that trains individuals for gainful employment or entry into a specific occupation. Examples of occupation specific

programs and courses include training in areas such as nursing and health care, tractor trailer and truck driving, information technology and computer programming, welding, electronics, automobile mechanics, machine tool, etc.

To be an eligible provider, each program or course of occupational skills training must be placed on the "Eligible Training Provider List" and approved by the local Workforce Board. Occupational skills training programs that are tuition based and available to the general public, offered by community colleges, four- year colleges and universities, community based, non-profit organizations and private schools are eligible to be included on the Eligible Training Provider List.

In the State of Maryland, training providers that offer occupational skills training to the public are required to obtain certification from the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC).

The Maryland Department of Labor has taken the lead in developing and maintaining the State List of Occupational Training Providers. Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland uses only those training providers and specific courses/programs included on the State List of Occupational Providers when referring Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act eligible adults and dislocated workers for occupational training.

Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland has established an individual training cap of \$5,000.00 for each individual.

The maximum length of training in an ITA program is twelve months.

Pre-Vocational Services

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act legislation makes a distinction between occupational specific training and pre-vocational services. Pre-vocational activities are considered an Individualized Career Service rather than a training activity. Pre-vocational services include basic and remedial education courses including GED programs, basic computer skill offerings such as keyboarding and word processing, computer software offerings such as Excel, Word and Access, and other offerings that are not occupational specific training. Since these types of services are not considered occupational training programs, the Maryland Department of Labor will not include such programs on the State List of Occupational Training. Each local Workforce Development Area determines the method for the provision of these types of services. Tri- County Council for Southern Maryland will identify eligible vendors to provide pre- vocational services to job seekers, as needed. Pre-vocational services are also off the shelf, tuition based, and available to the public. Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act adults and dislocated workers are authorized for pre-vocational services on an individual referral basis.

Customer Assessment, Counseling and Individual Service Strategy (ISS)

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Career Advisors will perform a customer assessment for each eligible customer desiring occupational skills training. The Career Advisor will develop and maintain an ISS on each customer to document training requests, work history, and to identify any possible barriers to training. The employment barrier identification will occur through the pre-screening assessment.

If the ISS has determined the customer's primary service needs to be occupational training services, and the customer has significant work history, adequate test scores, and no major barriers to employment, they should be considered suitable at that time for an Individual Training Account (ITA).

If the customer has a limited work history or significant barriers to training, the Career Advisor will complete a more in-depth suitability evaluation before recommending the customer for a training program. This will include the administration of an interest inventory, a plan for managing barriers, and /or referral to partner agency, if required.

Training and Occupations/Approved Provider List

The list of approved training providers will be available to the public via the Maryland Department of Labor web site <https://www.labor.maryland.gov/employment/train/>. This information will also be available at all Southern Maryland One-Stop locations. Vendor selection is based on informed customer choice. The customer decides on which

vendor to use; however, the counselor ensures that the customer has the information necessary to make an informed choice. Career Advisors are responsible for communicating the ITA process in simple understandable language, giving the customer good information and choices.

The advisor reviews with the customer the vendors that provide the occupational training that the customer is interested in taking. The review should include: The begin date; The length of training; The location of training; Performance data for the vendor for that training; the cost of the training.

Once the review is completed the customer is asked to make an onsite visit. Based on their visit, the customer chooses the vendor.

ITA Policy/Process

The Career Advisor will orient the customer to the ITA process. The following information must be discussed with each Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act customer: Customer Responsibilities (sign training agreement form); Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland/ One-Stop responsibilities; Amount and limitations of the ITA; Procedures that must be followed in order to obtain an ITA; and Responsibilities of the training vendor

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act training assistance is only provided if the customer is unable to obtain other grant assistance to pay for training, including Pell Grants. All Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act customers must apply for other forms of assistance, if applicable. The training vendor must certify that it has assisted the customer in applying for other financial assistance. The vendor will apply any Pell Grant and other financial awards toward the total training cost to offset the amount of costs billed to Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland.

ITA Contract

The Individual Training Account Contract is a contract between TCCSMD and the College. The contract is used to show the college which program the client is authorized to attend, and how to invoice TCCSMD as well as the start and end of the contract and the contract amount. The completed contract is sent to the College for approval. The signed contract is then forward to TCCSMD for final approval by the Director of Regional Workforce & Business Development. If a client is planning on taking classes during fall and spring semester the ITA would list the end of the spring semester for the end date.

If any of the information on the approved contract changes, a new contract will need to be completed.

Billing Authorization Form

The Billing Authorization form is used to obligate individual classes authorized under the ITA. Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act customers cannot begin class without the training vendor having in its possession a signed (approved) Billing Authorization Form. TCCSMD will not be liable for training fees occurred prior to the approval of the

Billing Authorization. The training vendor must submit a copy of the Billing Authorization with an invoice to request payment from TCCSMD.

The billing authorization can only list the current semester's classes. Two separate Billing Authorization forms will need to be completed; one for the fall semester and then one for the spring semester when the client is able to register for these classes.

The Billing Authorization is also used to make modifications to the ITA. Examples: de-obligations, change in class dates, address etc. The Advisor must submit modifications to Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland within thirty (30) days. Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Career Advisors must be informed of vendor's policies regarding refunds to ensure that we are not wasting federal dollars.

Submission of ITA/Billing Forms to TCCSMD

The Career Advisor will scan the completed ITA, Billing Authorization Form and Verification Checklist and email to supervisor and Workforce Innovations Manager and/or the Workforce Community Initiatives Manager at TCCSMD to review. Supervisor or designee will have up to 2 business days to review and forward the email to the Workforce Innovations Manager and/or the Workforce Community Initiatives. The American Job Center Workforce Innovations Manager and/or the Workforce Community Initiatives Manager will have up to 3 business days to review. If approved, the Workforce Innovations Manager and/or the Workforce Community Initiatives Manager will print and sign the documents and will forward the originals to TCCSMD. If denied, the Manager will email the Career Advisor, supervisor, Accounting Assistant, and Workforce Innovations Manager and/or the Workforce Community Initiatives Manager the reason for denial. TCCSMD will have up to 10 business days to review and sign all documents. The approved ITA and Billing Authorization will be scanned and emailed to the Career Advisor, supervisor, and the Workforce Innovations Manager and/or the Workforce Community Initiatives Manager.

Upon TCCSMD approval of the ITA, the Career Advisor is responsible for the following: Notifying customer that training has been approved and to give customer a copy of the approved ITA/ Billing Authorization to bring to the vendor so he/she can register for class; Update data in MWE (within 5 days of approval)

NOTE: Customers cannot begin training services until Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland has approved the ITA and Billing Authorization Form. The ITA is a non-financial agreement and is used in conjunction with the Billing Authorization Form to obligate

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act training. Vendors must have an approved Billing Authorization Form in order to invoice TCCSMD. TCCSMD will not be liable for any customer costs occurred prior to the approval of the ITA / Billing Authorization.

Costs Associated with the ITA

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Career Advisor will work in conjunction with the customer, service provider/vendor, and other appropriate staff to determine what costs are allowable and reasonable based on the training requested, funding availability, and priority of service. Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board has established a ceiling of \$5,000.00 for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act funded training programs; standard duration of an ITA shall be 6-12 months (pending Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board Executive Committee approval ITA may be extended beyond 1 year due to extraordinary circumstances). Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Career Advisors will ensure that PELL and other funding is utilized prior to committing Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act funds, which will be documented on the ITA contract. Extraordinary circumstances may include health issues, life events such as a family member death, and other factors that make it difficult to meet training requirements.

Process for Tracking ITA Expenditures

Once the ITA has been fully approved and accepted, the ITA is put into the fiscal accounting system managed by Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland, which obligates the funds for the customer's training. As the service provider/vendor invoice for the customer's training, the amount is charged against the obligated funds. Then a check is dispersed to the service provider/vendor.

Case Management Activities

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Career Advisors must provide case management services to customers as indicated by their ISS. All customers at a minimum should receive the following: Before training - the Career Advisor contacts customer before the training is to begin to ensure that the customer still plans to attend and to offer assistance with any problems that would prevent participation; During training – Career Advisor contacts customer at least monthly to ensure that the customer is attending and to offer assistance with any problems that would prevent continued participation; One month prior to completion of the training – Career Advisor should have customer come in to begin their Center job search assistance; After employment - the Career Advisor contacts the customer at a minimum bi-

monthly, or as identified in the ISS to ensure that the customer is still employed and to offer assistance with any problems that would prevent continued employment. Follow up with client will continue for a minimum of 12 months.

Note: If during follow-up the Career Advisor determines that the customer is no longer employed, the Career Advisor is to provide re-employment services.

Follow-Up/Job Search Assistance

The Career Advisor as part of case-management provides follow-up services. Once the customer completes training, the Career Advisor ensures that the customer is conducting a job search. All customers will receive at a minimum the following:

One week prior to the scheduled end date for training, the Career Advisor should schedule an appointment with the customer to initiate job search activities.

Once training is complete, the customer is encouraged to come to the American Job Center to participate in weekly Job Club, or other job search activity as coordinated with the Career Advisor.

If the customer remains unemployed after a month of job search, an assessment of their job search activities should be made, and an action plan developed.

Exit and Termination

Customers are considered exited from intensive or training services when they no longer receive services, other than follow-up services. A soft exit will be automatically generated when the customer does not receive or is not in an active service for 90 days.

NOTE: To ensure positive performance outcomes are obtained, it is imperative that the Career Advisor conduct timely case management. This includes ensuring that customer files remain up to date, i.e., updating services, documenting case notes, case closures, etc.

Participants who exit from services because they are incarcerated, deceased or have health/medical conditions that prevent them from participating are excluded. If a Career Advisor is aware that a customer is not participating because of one of these reasons, they must update the Maryland Workforce Exchange using the appropriate exit codes.

F. Describe how training services will be provided, including the coordination of training contracts with individual training accounts, and how your Board ensures informed customer choice in selecting training programs, regardless of the service delivery method. (Chapter 3 of Subtitle B, Section 134(c)(3)(G))

Training services for the Southern Maryland Workforce Development Area will be provided in accordance with 134(c)(3)(G) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. Training services provided will maximize customer choice in the selection of an eligible provider of such services.

As required in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, in the Southern Maryland Workforce Development Area, training services shall be directly linked to an in-demand industry sector or occupation or related entry level career path course of study. Input from economic development, employers, core program partners, and labor market information resulted in the Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board selecting Health Care, Construction (including construction related truck driving), and Professional Services (including IT), as the forecasted new and emerging industry sectors or occupations. In addition, to support career pathways and meet clients where they are, the Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board has approved Retail and Hospitality as a career pathway “starter” industry sector or occupation.

Labor market data and local economic conditions can change with little warning. As a result, the Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board may decide to approve training services for occupations determined by the Board to be in sectors of the economy that have a high potential for sustained demand or growth in the Southern Maryland Workforce Development Area. If this occurs, the Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board will document the decision in Board meeting minutes along with the justification for the decision.

Training services will be done through the Individual Training Account process for educational institution training services and through a contract process for other training services including on-the-job training, customized training, incumbent worker training, or transitional employment. Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland will not directly provide training services.

Line-item tracking will be done for Individual Training Account funds versus Training Contract funds.

Customer choice can be achieved through a comprehensive case management strategy that involves an assessment and the development of an Individual Employment Plan that leads to training and self-sufficiency. The Career Advisor’s role is to help the customer make an informed choice after looking at the State’s list, program and cost information, and taking into considerations the dollar amount of the training and the Board policy on expenditures.

G. Describe how the AJCs is utilizing the Maryland Workforce Exchange as the integrated, technology enabled intake and case management information system for programs carried out under WIOA and programs carried out by AJC partners.

The Maryland Workforce Exchange will be used for all workforce system job seekers regardless of the access point to the system. The Core Program Partners have agreed to register all applicants/participants in the Maryland Workforce Exchange. Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Program providers will use the Maryland Workforce

Exchange as its intake and case management system and tracking system for service engagement and performance outcomes. Due to the need to coordinate assessments, co-enrollments, exits and case records, it is important that the other Core Program Partners join Wagner-Peyser and Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth Programs in using the Maryland Workforce Exchange as a coordinated database. Until that is possible, Southern Maryland Workforce Development Area will hold regular conversations to coordinate essential service delivery components.

H. Describe your Board's process for conducting oversight and monitoring of its WIOA activities and those of its subgrantee and contractors.

The Board will incorporate a risk-assessment approach to its oversight of contractors. The process for risk assessment shall include:

1. Define scope. Consider which, if any, contracts involve the most risk exposing the local board to adverse consequences.
2. Identify areas of possible exposure associated with additional risks.

Consider the level of vulnerability of the local area or local board if a contractor's compliance with programmatic and fiscal system requirements is monitored less frequently.

3. Identify the factors used to assess risk. Consider: has the contractor experienced major changes in personnel or practices since the last review what is the structure for provision of services; is there a history of disallowed costs; is there a significant history of prior oversight findings; and what is the contractor's share of the local area's allocation?
4. Project the risk. Assign point values to the scoring system. The numerical ratings can be used to help the Board determine how to allocate its oversight resources.

Service providers may be classified as high risk, medium risk, or low risk for the purposes of measuring program accountability. At a minimum, all providers must be monitored at least once during each program year (July 1 - June 20), with medium or high-risk providers being monitored more frequently.

Risk Assessment Scoring System:

1. Were there any changes in provider's personnel or practices since last on-site review? 15 Points = extensive change; 8 points; some change; 0 points = little to no change.

2. What is the structure for provision of services? 10 points = if provider does not provide services directly; 5 points = if provider provides some services and purchases some services; 0 points = if provider provides all or nearly all services directly.
3. Is there any history of disallowed costs? 20 points = if more than 1 instance of disallowance; 5 points = a single instance of disallowance; 0 points = no disallowances have occurred.
4. What is the extent of recent audit or monitoring findings? 25 points = if substantial oversight findings occurred within the past 2 years; 20 points = if some findings occurred within past 2 years; 0 points = no oversight findings occurred in the past 2 years.
5. What is the contractor's share of the local area's allocation? 15 points = if more than 25% of local board's allocation; 8 points = if 10% to 25% of local board's allocation; 0 points = if less than 10% of local board's allocation.

The entity selected for one-stop operator will be checked on epls.gov for suspension and/or debarment to minimize risk.

Risk Assessment in regard to procurement and vendor selection processes are defined in 2 CFR 200.205 C. Southern Maryland will consider the following risk factors as part of the procurement and vendor selection processes: financial stability, quality of management and ability to meet management standard, history of performance including timely reporting, compliance, and expenditure levels, audit findings, and ability to implement requirements.

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act requires a firewall exist between operations and administration. In addition, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act allows grant recipients and fiscal agents to operate Title I Youth Programs. Also, the Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board staff may serve a dual role in providing career services for Adults and Dislocated Workers without applying a competitive request for proposal process.

The Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board, the Chief Elected Officials, and the Governor through approval of this plan, has approved Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland, in its role as fiscal agent, administrative entity and Workforce Board staffing to provide the Title I Youth services and Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker Career Services. Training services will be done through the Individual Training Account process for educational institution training services and through a contract process for other training services such as On-the-Job Training and other work-based training. Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland will not directly provide training services.

With the multi-role complexity of the Southern Maryland Workforce Development Area, the Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board will ensure that procurement of the One-Stop Operator and any desired service provider procurements are not handled by Tri- County Council for Southern Maryland but instead by an independent contractor working directly with Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board Members who do not have a conflict of interest.

As the Title I Youth Services and Adult and Dislocated Worker Career Services provider, Tri- County Council for Southern Maryland will conduct ongoing monitoring according to the policy provided below. In addition, an independent contractor will be used to do administrative, fiscal, and program monitoring at least once a year that provides an objective evaluation directly to the Executive Committee of the Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board.

- a. The roles and responsibility of staff in facilitating this procedure.

Staff will conduct ongoing monitoring and provide reports to the Executive Committee of the Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board. At least once annually, the Board will contract with an independent contractor to perform an objective monitoring to evaluate Tri-County Council for the Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board's administrative, fiscal, and program functions.

- b. A requirement that all sub-grantee agreements and contracts be monitored at least annually.

During the independent evaluation that will be done at least once annually, all sub-grantee agreements and contracts will be monitored, and a report provided on findings to the Executive Committee of the Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board.

- c. Procedures for determining that expenditures have been made against the cost categories and within the cost limitations specified in the Act and WIOA regulations.

Title I front-line workers will be provided training on cost categories and cost limitations at least once annually. Paperwork and requisitions submitted cost information will be checked by the individual initiating the request in regard to appropriate cost category and if funds are available related to cost limitations. Next, the Director will review the request for cost category selected and cost limitations prior to signing off on it. Finally, the Fiscal Department will review the request to ensure accuracy and compliance prior to processing. If there is a problem, it will be returned to the Director for action.

At least once annually, an independent contractor will monitor cost categories and expenditures and provide findings in the overall monitoring report provided to the Southern Workforce Development Board Executive Committee.

- d. Procedures for determining compliance with other provisions of the Act and regulations and other applicable laws and regulations, including the method of monitoring to be used for subgrantees and contractors.

A comprehensive independent monitoring will be conducted at least once annually that reviews every aspect of financial, administrative, and programmatic requirements within the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act as well as its Regulations.

The Board will incorporate a risk-assessment approach to its oversight of contractors. The process for risk assessment shall include:

1. Define scope. Consider which, if any, contracts involve the most risk exposing the local board to adverse consequences.
2. Identify areas of possible exposure associated with additional risks. Consider the level of vulnerability of the local area or local board if a contractor's compliance with programmatic and fiscal system requirements is monitored less frequently.
3. Identify the factors used to assess risk. Consider: has the contractor experienced major changes in personnel or practices since the last review; what is the structure for provision of services; is there a history of disallowed costs; is there a significant history of prior oversight findings; and what is the contractor's share of the local area's allocation?
4. Project the risk. Assign point values to the scoring system. The numerical ratings can be used to help the Board determine how to allocate its oversight resources.

Service providers may be classified as high risk, medium risk, or low risk for the purposes of measuring program accountability. At a minimum, all providers must be monitored at least once during each program year (July 1 - June 20), with medium or high-risk providers being monitored more frequently.

Risk Assessment Scoring System:

- Were there any changes in provider's personnel or practices since last on-site review? 15 Points = extensive change; 8 points; some change; 0 points = little to no change.

- What is the structure for provision of services? 10 points = if provider does not provide services directly; 5 points = if provider provides some services and purchases some services; 0 points = if provider provides all or nearly all services directly.
- Is there any history of disallowed costs? 20 points = if more than 1 instance of disallowance; 5 points = a single instance of disallowance; 0 points = no disallowances have occurred.
- What is the extent of recent audit or monitoring findings? 25 points = if substantial oversight findings occurred within the past 2 years; 20 points = if some findings occurred within past 2 years; 0 points = no oversight findings occurred in the past 2 years.
- What is the contractor's share of the local area's allocation? 15 points = if more than 25% of local board's allocation; 8 points = if 10% to 25% of local board's allocation; 0 points = if less than 10% of local board's allocation.

The entity selected for one-stop operator will be checked on epls.gov for suspension and/or debarment to minimize risk.

Risk Assessment regarding procurement and vendor selection processes are defined in 2 CFR 200.205 C. Southern Maryland will consider the following risk factors as part of the procurement and vendor selection processes: financial stability, quality of management and ability to meet management standard, history of performance including timely reporting, compliance, and expenditure levels, audit findings, and ability to implement requirements.

e. Provisions for the recording of findings made by the recipients' monitor(s), the forwarding of such findings to the sub-grantee or contractor for response and the recording of all corrective actions.

Ongoing monitoring done by Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland will result in the issuance of a monitoring report within thirty (30) days of completion of the on-site visit. The sub-recipient will have 30 days from the date of initial report to respond. The sub-recipient may request an extension if unable to respond with the thirty (30) day period to include justification for the delay. Any final monitoring report that identifies a compliance exception, administrative issue, negative observation, or non-performance under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, TANF Program, associated regulations, State provisions, local policy, Strategic or Operations Plan, or the organization's sub-contracts shall require a written corrective action plan.

The corrective action plan, if approved, must be completed within a reasonable timeframe agreed upon in the plan.

A written record of each correction action requested and submitted will be retained in the sub-recipient's contract file at Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland.

When the independent monitoring is conducted, the review will include all internal monitoring reports for the last three quarters and any corrective action plans approved along with progress.

The Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board will request validation of corrective actions being taken. If corrective actions are not remedied, the Executive Committee of the Board will recommend action regarding the provider.

f. Provisions of technical assistance as necessary and appropriate.

Staff and partner capacity building is an essential part of developing and maintaining a high-performance Workforce Development Area. The Southern Maryland Workforce Development Area will provide technical assistance through training opportunities, peer networking, and State information.

g. Specific local policies developed by the Local Board for oversight of the American Job Center system, youth activities and employment and training activities under Title I of WIOA.

Southern Maryland has revised all policies and has added to the monitoring policy the remedies and protocol for non-compliance. Remedies will include corrective action plan with follow-up review, the provision of technical assistance or seeking the proper expertise to quickly remedy all issues and ensure positive practices; and may include sanctions, funding reductions or cancellation, and the process for appeals and hearings.

Here is the current monitoring policy that will be updated as additional guidance is received from the Federal funding agency and the State of Maryland:

MONITORING POLICY Date: 7/2013; Date Revised 9/1/16 TCCSMD Policy Series #OP-2013-12; Date Revised 7/1/21

Purpose:

To determine whether those receiving Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act funds are complying with the provision of their contracts and with applicable State and Federal regulations.

References:

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and Regulations

Background:

Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland will monitor service provision according to a schedule approved by the Local Workforce Board. In addition, an independent monitoring review will be held at least once annually to ensure compliance with administration, fiscal, and program procedures and policies.

To determine whether provisions of a contract are being met a Tri-County Council contact monitor or independent consultant for Southern Maryland may conduct site visits, examine program operations, review beneficiary and trainee eligibility, and review outcomes and quality of training being provided. Investigations may include examining records and case files, questioning employees, interviewing clients, and visiting sites where any Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Title I program, or activity is conducted, or records of participants are kept. Contract monitors and/or an independent contractor may also review employer record to assure that participants are receiving proper wages. They may make a work site visit to ensure that participants are employed in the agreed upon position, at the appropriate wage, utilizing the skills obtained through training.

Internal Contract Monitor Review Procedures:

Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland (TCCSMD):

1. Has established and adheres to appropriate systems for the award of monitoring of agreements with sub-recipients. The system contains acceptable standards for accountability and includes the acquisition of threshold documentation of the administrative capacity of each sub- recipient.
2. Enters into written agreements with sub-recipients that establish clear goals and obligations in unambiguous terms.
3. Acts with due diligence to monitor the implementation of these agreements including the carrying out of the monitor activities described below.
4. Takes corrective action related to performance issues and violations of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and associated regulations, State provisions, local policy and sub-recipient agreements.

Specific Monitoring Procedures:

The specific internal monitoring and related procedures conducted by Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland to full its responsibilities include the following:

1. Submission of oversight requirements for the internal compliance review.

2. A thorough review of invoices and supporting documents submitted by sub-recipients, monitoring to assure that expenditures have been made appropriately against cost categories and within cost limitations.
3. A thorough review of invoices submitted by sub-recipients to monitor planned versus actual expenditures.
4. A thorough review of management information system documents submitted and entered into the Maryland Workforce Exchange to monitor planned versus actual performance and equity in service delivery.
5. Provision of ongoing training and training and technical assistance to sub-recipients.
6. Provision of ongoing consultation to sub-recipients on the topics of fiscal invoicing and documentation, management information system procedures, documentation of eligibility and service delivery, performance management, and program service delivery design.
7. Provision of ongoing hands-on training.
8. On-site monitoring of sub-recipients in conformance with the annual monitoring plan to be conducted at least annually with follow-up as indicated in resultant monitoring reports.

Remedies for Non-Compliance:

Remedies will include corrective action plan with follow-up review, the provision of technical assistance or seeking the proper expertise to quickly remedy all issues and ensure positive practices; and may include sanctions, funding reductions or cancellation, and the process for appeals and hearings.

I. Describe your Board's policy and procedures for safeguarding and handling personally identifiable and confidential information (ex., physical and electronic files), including the incident response plan for loss of records.

The Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board will follow Maryland Labor Policy Issuance 2019-04 entitled Privacy and Data Security dated March 28, 2019. The policy covers the protection and use of Personally Identifiable Information (PII) and sensitive information and the obligations to DWDAL regarding any breach.

Background

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 (WIA) and amends the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, the Wagner Peyser Act, and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. By design, the workforce system established under WIOA is integrated to help both businesses and jobseekers. WIOA envisions connecting businesses with job seekers, through meaningful partnerships among workforce, education, human services, and economic development entities to ensure optimum results and leveraging of resources. The law addresses the needs of job seekers through establishing a workforce system that helps them access employment, education, training, and support services to succeed in the labor market. Through the American Job Centers (AJCs), WIOA works to address employer needs by matching them to the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy. In order to ensure that AJCs and WIOA programs are effectively serving both jobseekers and employers as well as meeting federal compliance requirements, states must collect participant and program-level data to track performance. Local and state partners are bound by law to protect customer and employee sensitive information and Personally Identifiable Information (PII), both in electronic and physical file format.

Policy

1. The Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board will follow Maryland Labor Policy Issuance 2019-04 entitled Privacy and Data Security dated March 28, 2019.
2. Sensitive information includes any unclassified information whose loss, misuse, or unauthorized access to or modification of could adversely affect the interest or the conduct of federal programs, or the privacy to which individuals are entitled under various state and federal law.
3. PII is participant-level and employee data that either by itself or combined with other data can link to a specific individual or identity.
4. PII is divided into two categories: protected and non-sensitive. Protected falls under the sensitive information category. While non-sensitive PII has a much lower risk of harm if misused, confidentiality must still be maintained.
5. Table 1 in the State of Maryland's Policy Issuance 2019-04 provides examples of protected and non-sensitive PII.
6. The Local Workforce Development Director will be the contact person at the Local Workforce Area in Southern Maryland.
7. All staff and partners with access to participant-level data:

- a. Must complete the Staff Confidentiality Agreement every six months and submit it to the Director of the appropriate DWDAL office granting the access, according to the chart in Policy Issuance 2019-04.
 - b. Maintain client confidentiality and protect PII, sensitive information, confidential UI data, and education records as defined in Policy Issuance 2019-04.
 - c. Inform Maryland Labor of any users who were previously granted access to a Maryland Labor data system and need to be restricted or inactivated within ten business days of decision to inactivate user.
 - d. Participate in training for the protection of PII and sensitive information on-hire and on an annual basis.
 - e. Notify mandated and relevant parties in the case of a security breach, as outlined in Policy Issuance 2019-04, and as required by other legal or contractual requirements.
8. Southern Maryland will put in place the following safeguards to protect physical data:
- a. Reduce the volume of collected and retained physical data to the minimum necessary as is needed for reporting, eligibility determination, and case management.
 - b. Limit access to those individuals who must have access to perform job functions.
 - c. Keep files in cabinets and offices that lock.
 - d. Keep equal opportunity data (e.g., medical information and requests for accommodations) in files separate from employees' personnel files in accordance with 29 CFR Part 38.41.
 - e. Ensure that all cabinets and offices are locked before leaving the office unattended.
 - f. Ensure that files are not left out (e.g., on a desk during a lunch break) where unauthorized individuals can access them.
 - g. Develop and adopt a risk-aware culture.

- h. Conduct due diligence on all third-party service providers and requiring appropriate information security standards to be written into contracts.
 - i. Conduct on-hire and annual training on the protection of physical data.
 - j. Develop a data governance policy and/or procedure.
 - k. Develop and test an incident response plan, which should involve key stakeholders.
 - l. Use unique identifiers to de-identify records and remove PII (e.g., new unique number specific to organization versus use of social security number).
 - m. Use locked boxes when transferring data for auditing; and
 - n. Use confidential recycling to dispose of records.
9. Southern Maryland will:
- a. Limit the number of records from secure storage to only those immediately in use.
 - b. Use a paper file tracking log.
 - c. Retain and dispose of physical records according to Policy Issuance 2019- 04.
- 10 Participant-level data retained in electronic data systems will be safeguarded as follows:
- a. Reducing the volume of collected and retained electronic data to the minimum necessary.
 - b. Limiting data access to only those individuals who must have such access.
 - c. Using password-protection, encryption-preferred, strong authentication procedures, and other security controls to make the information unusable by unauthorized individuals (necessary when transmitting PII through email or other electronic format, e.g., staff may not email social security numbers without encryption, even if the email is addressed to an individual that has authorized access).
 - d. Immediately deleting received emails containing unencrypted PII and instructing the sender to also delete (including removing from the “deleted files” folder) the email from their “sent” and “deleted files” folders.

- e. Ensuring that data is not left unattended (e.g., MWE data must not be left open on screen while on a lunch break).
- f. Logging out of data systems when leaving one's desk.
- g. Limiting network access to approved devices certified with appropriate security controls.
- h. Not accessing data systems from non-secure computers (e.g., personal computer).
- i. Conducting due diligence on all third-party service providers and requiring appropriate information security standards to be written into contracts.
- j. Following all electronic and physical record requirements when scanning a document into a data system, including not using PII or sensitive information in the naming convention of scanned documents.
- k. Conducting on-hire and annual training on the protection of electronic data.
- l. Developing a data governance policy and/or procedures.
- m. Developing and testing an incident response plan, which should involve key stakeholders; and
- n. When receiving data requests: Providing aggregate-level data (i.e., all PII and sensitive information removed and performance numbers combined to represent the whole program or class) or If participant-level is required, only providing participant-level data if the entity or partner has an MOU in place.

11. In addition, Southern Maryland will:

- a. Set computers to go to screensaver after a maximum of five minutes of inactivity.
- b. Set computer to lock after a maximum of 15 minutes of inactivity
- c. Develop and maintain access by documenting and reviewing users and roles regularly.
- d. Block PII and sensitive information from being downloaded to individual devices (e.g., flash drive).
- e. Develop and maintain an inventory of all hardware and software.

- f. Use the most current versions of applications and operating systems.
 - g. Require complex passwords and use multi-factor authentication.
 - h. Develop and adopt a risk-aware culture.
 - i. Conduct vulnerability testing and risk assessments.
 - j. Invest in cyber insurance.
 - k. Use unique identifiers to de-identify records and remove PII (e.g., new unique number specific to organization versus use of social security number); and
 - l. Implement access control for mobile devices.
 - m. Retain and dispose of electronic records according to Policy Issuance 2019-04.
12. If a staff member or partner suspects that a security breach has occurred, they must notify their supervisor immediately in order to investigate whether there has been an incident.
 13. Notification to DWDAL will follow the requirements in Policy Issuance 2019-04.
 14. Southern Maryland will follow the steps outlined in Assess the Level of Breach, Risk and Harm in Policy Issuance 2019-04. Partners and staff will be trained at least annually on these steps.
 15. In the event Southern Maryland experiences a breach, a corrective action plan will be established to cover all phases of an incident response, including preparation, identification, containment, eradication, recovery, and lessons learned.
- J. Describe your Board’s procurement system, and how you will assure you’re your procedures meet the standards in USDOL regulations Include details on how your Board would award emergency contracts when current contracts have been eliminated for just cause. (See 29 CFR Part 95, Part 97 and 2 CFR 200)**

Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland serves as the administrative entity and fiscal agent and handles procurement; other than services they may be bidding on which is facilitated by an independent consultant. TCCSMD does not procure goods and services for its sub-recipients.

Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland will procure goods and services through competitive negotiations, non-competitive, and small purchase negotiations. It is not anticipated that sealed bids will be used. While cost is an important consideration in any

procurement process, it is not the only consideration. The Tri- County Council for Southern Maryland and its agents will endeavor to select the method of procurement that will bring the most efficient and effective services available. In most instances, this means using the competitive negotiation method. The Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland will use procurement procedures that reflect applicable State and Local Laws and Regulations which comply with DOL regulation 29 CFR Part 95 Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and other Non-Profit Organizations and Part 97 and 2 CFR 200.

The current policy is:

- I. Introduction- TCCSMD makes purchases that will sometimes require certain measures to be taken depending on the grant that the goods or services will be purchased with. In those cases, it is mandatory that the Procurement Procedures are followed. In all cases it is necessary that the guidelines of the grantor are followed.
- II. Purchasing Agent-
- III. The Purchasing Agent will be the department making the purchase and is responsible for the following:
 1. Confers with vendors to obtain product or service information such as price, availability and delivery schedule
 2. Selects products for purchase by testing, observing or examining items
 3. Estimates values according to knowledge of market price
 4. Determines method of procurement such as direct purchase or bid
 5. Prepares purchase orders or bid requests
 6. Discusses defective or unacceptable goods or services with inspection or quality control personnel, users, vendors and others to determine source of trouble and takes corrective action
 7. Approves invoices for payment
 8. Expedites delivery of goods to users
- IV. Finance Department-
 - a. The Finance Department will be responsible for the following when necessary:
 - i. Review Requisitions
 - ii. Reviews bid proposals and negotiates contracts within budgetary limitations and scope of authority

- iii. Maintains procurement records such as items or services purchased costs, delivery, product quality or performance and inventories

V. Purchases-

Small Purchases (\$0-\$25,000)

A. \$0-\$1,000

- 1. Departments may make purchases where the cost does not exceed \$1,000 directly without going through the Finance Department. It will be understood that the department making the purchase of goods or services is responsible for making sure that the price is fair and reasonable through price comparisons. If office furniture or equipment, which falls under this price range, is purchased then the Finance Department needs to be notified so that it is inventoried properly. Where applicable, the approved vendor list must be used.

VI. \$1,000-\$10,000

- 1. Purchases within this range will need at least 3 quotes

which can be obtained through listed catalog prices, telephone quotes, internet, or written requests for quotations (no advertising or posting required). When possible, at least one quote must be made locally (within the tri-county area). It will be the departments who wish to make the purchase to obtain the 3 quotes, if they need assistance that department will need to contact the Finance Department. Copies of the quotes and any other information will need to be sent to the Finance Department so that it can be filed and inventoried. (Purchase Orders and/or other requests may be needed for certain procurements within this range at the discretion of the Department Director)

\$10,000 - \$25,000

- 1. Purchases within this range will require all of the guidelines above be complete and in addition they will need to be made through a more formal request for quotation. The request must be in writing. This process will need to go through the Finance Department for cash flow, budget review, and inventory purposes. Purchase Orders will be necessary with any procurement within this price range. Purchases in this range must be pre- approved by the Executive Director of Tri-County Council or The Executive Director of Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission for SMADC

purchases and at his/her discretion the Executive Board must also be given advance notice of the purchase for their approval.

Large Procurements (\$25,000+)

Procurements exceeding \$25,000 must be procured through the appropriate department in cooperation with the Finance Department through one of the following methods. The type of method is determined by the type of project. All advertisements will include local solicitations. The Executive Director of TCCSMD and/or Executive Director of SMADC and Executive Board and/or Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission Board pre-approval are required for purchases above this threshold. In addition, Procurement Review Committees may be needed to assist in Bid preparation and/or Bid review. In coordination with TCCSMD's conflict of interest policy, any members of the committees will be precluded from bidding.

Any change orders throughout the process that are above 10% of total procurement cost must be reviewed by Procurement Review Board and/or the appropriate Executive Director. If the change order puts the procurement into a new category the procedures of that range would apply.

Any previous contracts prior to the approval of Procurement Procedures will be grandfathered in until such time that contracts are to expire.

A. Invitation for Bid (IFB)

1. IFB, also known as the Bid Request or Sealed Bid Method, is the method of procurement used when price is the primary factor in selection of a contractor. An IFB is typically used for construction projects and other capital projects that have clear-cut specifications. Sealed bids are publicly solicited; the reasonable bidder with the lowest price is awarded a fixed priced contract. (The Maryland LOTS Manual, March 2004)

B. Request for Proposal (RFP)

1. An RFP, also referred to as the Competitive Proposal method, is the method of procurement used when factors other than price are important in the selection of the chosen contractor. An RFP is typically used to procure management, operations, maintenance, planning, software and other consulting services.

2. In determining which proposal is most advantageous, grantees may award (if consistent with State Law) to the proposer whose proposals offer the greatest business value to the organization based upon an analysis of a tradeoff of qualitative technical factors and price/cost to derive which proposal represents the “best value” to the procuring agency. “Best Value” is a selection process in which proposals contain both price and qualitative considerations. Qualitative considerations may include technical design, technical approach, and quality of proposed personnel and/or management plan. The award selection is based upon consideration of a combination of technical and price factors to determine (or derive) the offer deemed most advantageous and of the greatest value selection method as the basis for award, however, the solicitation must contain language which establishes that an award will be made on a “Best Value” basis. (The Maryland LOTS Manual, March 2004). TCCSMD will include points for local vendors as part of their criteria for RFPs.

C. Request for Qualifications (RFQ)

- D. Under this method, professional services are publicly solicited, and qualifications of offers are evaluated without regard to price. Once the most qualified offers are identified, the sub grantee engages in price negotiations with that offers. Failing agreement on an acceptable price, negotiations with the next most qualified offers are conducted until a contract award can be made to the most qualified offers with an acceptable price. (The Maryland LOTS Manual, March 2004) A separate cost bid will be required in addition to the qualification bid.

VII. Competitive Negotiation

1. This State-defined method is used when the item or service to be procured is not such that to a complete, adequate and realistic specification can be developed or when the item or service does not lend itself to a firm, fixed- price contract. Proposals are publicly solicited from a minimum of two qualified sources to permit reasonable competition and the award is made to the responsible offer whose proposal will be most advantageous to the project. (The Maryland LOTS Manual, March 2004) This method will only be used by TCCSMD as a result of large procurements not resulting in a clear single award.

VIII. Contract Negotiation

If procurement is not feasible under any of the above procedures, then you may negotiate with a single source if the item is only available from a single vendor, the urgency for the item will not permit a delay characteristic of competitive solicitation or after solicitation of a number of sources, competition is determined to be inadequate. Noncompetitive negotiation is also referred to as Sole Source procurement. (The Maryland LOTS Manual, March 2004)

The above process is allowed when a demonstrated emergency such as a contracted is eliminated for just cause.

The Local Board's procurement procedures are being revised in the fourth quarter and will ensure that procedures conform to federal and state regulations. Procurement procedures will be reviewed annually in the fourth quarter of each program year to ensure information is relevant and current.

K. Describe your process to document and demonstrate that the acquisition, management, and disposition of property adhere to the Property Management Procedures. (USDOL regulations 29 CFR Part 97 and 29 CFR Part 95.)

All fiscal policies have been revised and include documentation to demonstrate that the acquisition, management, and disposition of property of property will adhere to the Property Management Procedures of DOL Regulation 29 CFR Part 97 and 29 CFR Part 95 and those of the grant recipient.

L. Describe your policies and procedures for avoiding conflicts of interest or the appearance of such conflicts in the exercise of their responsibilities, particularly those related to the awarding of contracts.

It is the policy of the Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland that all procurement transactions of the Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board shall be conducted in an effective and efficient manner, avoiding conflicts of interest or the appearance of such conflicts in the exercising of its responsibilities, particularly those related to the awarding of contracts. This code of conduct governs the conduct and performance of members of the Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland, the

Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board, its officers, employees, and authorized agents engaged in the selection, award, and administration of contracts and sub-grants and/or the procurement of goods and services with Federal funds.

A Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board member shall not cast a vote on or otherwise participate in the selection of or in the award of a contract supported by Federal funds if a conflict of interest, real or apparent, is involved. Such a conflict shall arise when: the member, officer, employee, or authorized agent, any member of his or her family, his or her business partner, or an organization which he/she belongs to or employs any of the above, has a financial or other interest in the being considered for an award.

Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board staff may not participate in developing, advertising, collecting, or scoring the request for proposal process and subsequent decision-making for any service in which Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board staff may be applying for or have a conflict of interest related to.

M. Describe your Board or fiscal agent's accounting procedures, including the procedures used in preparing reports to the State.

The Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland utilizes SAGE accounting system. The Sage 100 Fund Accounting is the award-winning financial management solution preferred by nonprofits and government agencies for planning and managing budgets, increasing transparency and accountability, and producing accurate reports. Our accounting procedures are in accordance with GAAP. The Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland's finance director will use this system to record accounting transactions. As administrative entity and grant recipient, the Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland has the fiduciary responsibility for all funds received and disbursed by the Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland.

a. Tracks funding types, funding amounts, obligations, expenditures and assets.

The fiscal system must be adequate to track by grant award, the following:

- 1) Obligations-The Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland's accounting system will track all obligations by account code in the data system. The system's reporting features can provide original obligations, liquidations,

adjustments, and current balances. The obligation reduces the authorized available account balance, which reduces the possibility of an account exceeding its spending authority.

- 2) Expenditures-The Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland's accounting system has accounts for each grant cost category. Each expense will be reviewed by the Finance Director for appropriate allocation, cost reasonableness, and funding availability. It will then be charged to the account cost category/line item. The Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland Executive Director will sign all invoices as well as the Regional Workforce Director.

b. Permits the tracking of program income, stand-in costs, and leveraged funds.

For each individual grant, the fiscal system must permit the tracking of:

- (1) Program income-

Program income earned during the year shall be retained by the Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board and will be used to fund projects and to further program objectives.

- (2) Stand-in costs-SAGE The accounting system will track costs.

- (3) The tracking of profits is not applicable to WIOA Title I grants.

- c. Is adequate to prepare financial reports required by the State.

The SAGE accounting system addresses specific needs such as tracking and reporting on individual funds from multiple sources. Complies with FASB, GASB, and other reporting requirements. It's flexible system setup and built-in reporting helps your organization master its critical accounting and administration tasks

N. List the key staff who will be working with WIOA funds.

The Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland's Finance Director, Director of Regional Workforce & Business Development Director, and Executive Director will have primary responsibility for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act funds. Executive Director of the Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland will be responsible for budgetary and financial oversight.

O. Describe how your Board's (or fiscal agent's) financial system will permit tracing of funds to a level adequate to establish that funds have not been used in violation of

WIOA standards or USDOL regulations.

The Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland's financial/accounting system will assure all funds have been used in compliance with Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act standards and DOL regulations. The Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland utilizes the Sage accounting system. Through the use of the Sage accounting and other manual systems, the Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland will ensure that financial transactions are conducted, and records maintained in accordance with federal and state guidelines regarding cost and classification.

P. Provide a description of the following:

- Fiscal reporting system
Using the Sage system as well as manual worksheets, Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland staff can prepare monthly financial reports for internal management and quarterly financial reports for submission to the Maryland Department of Labor. Financial reports to DWDAL include unliquidated obligations. The basis for preparing State reports are reports for each funding source, which include expenditures, accruals and any adjustments.
- Obligation control system
The system will provide funding availability by grant, the amounts of encumbrances, the amount of expenditure, and the amount of the current balance. Fiscal staff approves and records all contract obligations in the financial management system.
- ITA payment system
Individual Training Accounts payments will be established through training authorizations. These will identify the cost of training, the training provider, and the services to be received by the participant. The participants will be given the training provider list authorized by the state and they must select from that list. The participants will also be given paperwork to present to the provider, and the Tri- County Council for Southern Maryland will be billed directly.
- Chart of account system
The Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland's accounting system will maintain a chart of accounts that specifically identifies balance sheet, revenue, and expense accounts in accordance with Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act regulations and requirements established by the Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland.

- Accounts payable system
After the approval of coding by the Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland's Director of Regional Workforce & Business Development Director and fiscal staff, invoices will be processed for payment. Expenditure information is then entered into the financial system using budget codes. Each transaction can be identified in the general ledger. The Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland Finance Director will closely monitor general ledger transactions to ensure that payments are charged to the proper grant and cost category.
- Staff payroll system
Bi-weekly time and attendance reports will be used for Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland staff. These reports will be signed by the submitting employee and their supervisor or his/her designee. Timesheets will then be forwarded to the fiscal staff and leave days checked against leave records. Staff checks will be distributed bi-weekly.
- Participant payroll system
The Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland will not process payroll for program participants. This will be done by our sub-recipients or employers in those cases where participant payrolls are involved.
- Participant stipend payment system
The Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland will process participants' stipends based on time and attendance reports submitted by the participant through his or her provider. Payments will be made only for those days in training.

Participants must submit a completed request for payment not to exceed authorized expenses and stipend caps.

Participant timesheets will be submitted bi-weekly by the Southern Maryland Workforce Development Board staff and to the Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland fiscal staff for payment. Participant timesheet older than 60 days will not be accepted and those encumbrances will be de-obligated sixty days after training is completed.

Q. Describe your Board's (or fiscal agent's) cash management system and how you will assure that no excess cash will be kept on hand, and that procedures are in place to monitor cash.

Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland staff will prepare requisitions for cash for the Maryland Department of Labor on a month-to-month basis (biweekly as needed). The amount of funds requested for each grant agreement includes cash expenditure to date and may include an estimate of cash expenditure for the upcoming month. After funds are made available by the Maryland Department of Labor, the Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland fiscal staff ensures that the funds are deposited into the appropriate bank account. Procedures are in place to monitor cash balances. Since the Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland receives funds on a reimbursement basis, excess Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act cash will not be kept on hand.

Training providers and contractors, if any, will request funds from the Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland by submitting a monthly expenditure/invoice report. The Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland staff will review, approve and code all payments. All disbursements are made by check.

R. Describe your Board's cost allocation procedures including:

a. Identification of different cost pools

The Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland will use a program cost pool for the allocation and distribution of staff and operating costs that cannot be directly assigned to a specific Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act funding source or cost category.

The Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland assures that it will use cost allocation methods that are reasonable and consistently applied. Adequate documentation to support distributions will be maintained. Costs that benefit a single funding source will be directly charged. All indirect and unassigned costs will be identified and accumulated in the cost pools and distributed based on acceptable cost allocation methodologies

b. Procedures for distribution of staff costs between cost categories (Administrative cost, program cost and indirect cost).

Staff costs will be distributed to the administrative and program categories based on staff time sheet distribution reports. The fiscal staff responsible for payroll will

assign project numbers, which will automatically distribute time in the payroll system and post it to the general ledger according to the split entered.

c. Procedures used for distribution of funds from each cost pool.

Procedures used for distribution of funds from each cost pool: The program cost centers will identify program costs based on each grant's expenditure level, as calculated with the allocation method.

d. Description of funds included in each cost pool.

The funds in the program cost pool will be from Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Title I source (youth, adult and dislocated worker grants) as well as from other grants which receive benefits from the program cost pool expenditures.

e. Description of cost allocation plans for American Job Centers.

Salaries and fringe benefits of staff will be paid by the employing agency. Operating costs (such as telephone, utilities, and supplies) will be based on a proportionate share staff and/or facility. A major objective of our cost allocation plan will be to reduce actual cash transfers to a minimum level. This cost allocation method is applied consistently throughout the program year.

S. Describe your Board's (or fiscal agent's) procedure for collecting debts involving WIOA funds.

Describe in detail the LWDB or fiscal agent's procedure for collecting debts involving Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act funds.

The Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland's Fiscal Department will send a standard letter to the individual or organization in arrears. It will identify the dollar amount of the debt and suggested time frame for payment. A follow-up telephone call will be made in order to confirm a payment schedule. If the Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland cannot make contact, or if the recipient does not respond, a second letter will be mailed.

If this fails, the debt will be turned over to legal counsel and/or a debt collection agency

to initiate formal collection proceedings. If the county and Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland staff determine cash repayment is not possible, other methods may be explored. The Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland may accept allowable Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act services in lieu of cash as a satisfactory alternative. Such services must be in addition to those provided under any existing agreement. Another method for settling debt is reduction of payments to a current sub recipient while that sub recipient continues to provide Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act services at existing levels.

The Local Workforce Development Board for Southern Maryland Workforce Development Area certifies that it complies with all required components and assurances of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act plan development guidelines issued by the State of Maryland. The Local Board also assures that funds will be spent in accordance with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, Wagner-Peyser Act, and their regulations, written U.S. Department of Labor guidance implementing these laws, Office of Management and Budget circulars, and all other applicable federal and state laws, regulations and policies.

Local Chief Elected Official

Date

Local Workforce Development Board Chair

Date

