

TALENT INNOVATION PROGRAM AND FUND
2024
ANNUAL REPORT

November 2025

Maryland Department of Labor

2024
TALENT INNOVATION PROGRAM AND
FUND ANNUAL REPORT

Dec 1, 2025

The Honorable Wes Moore, Governor
State House, 100 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

The Honorable Aruna Miller, Lieutenant Governor
State House, 100 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

The Honorable Bill Ferguson, President
Senate of Maryland
State House, H-107
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

The Honorable Adrienne A. Jones, Speaker
Maryland House of Delegates
State House, H-107
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: Labor & Employment Article § 11-1604(b) (MSAR # 15479) Talent Innovation Program and Fund Annual Report

Dear Governor Moore, President Ferguson, and Speaker Jones:

I am pleased to share the 2024 annual report for the inaugural year of the Talent Innovation Program. The Moore-Miller Administration, in strong partnership with the Maryland General Assembly, created the Talent Innovation Program in 2024 to increase access to high-quality occupational training to meet demand in the state's high priority growth and emerging sectors.

Recognizing the need for a stronger talent pipeline of highly-skilled cybersecurity professionals, *Accelerating Cyber Careers* launched as the program's inaugural initiative. Established in August 2024, the *Accelerating Cyber Careers* initiative supports the expansion of cyber ranges, which are hands-on training environments that provide hyperrealistic experiential learning opportunities.

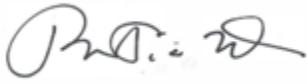
A diverse panel of subject matter experts, representing the Maryland Department of Labor's Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning, the Governor's Workforce Development Board, the Maryland Apprenticeship and Training Program, the Department of Commerce, and the Department of Information Technology, reviewed 17 proposals from a diverse cohort of applicants. Based on that review, the panel selected the Maryland Association of Community Colleges (MACC) for the award. MACC, in partnership with BCR Cyber and the Maryland Workforce Association, will expand the number of cyber ranges at Maryland's community colleges, which will result in 1,100 Marylanders receiving hands-on training by October 31, 2027.

The Department looks forward to sharing the progress and successes of *Accelerating Cyber Careers* in future reports. The department is also appreciative of the Governor and the Maryland General

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Assembly for recognizing the importance of continued investment into this fund, as evidenced by the \$4M investment for this coming fiscal year. We will have more to share in the coming months and will look forward to providing updates and new initiatives funded through the Talent Innovation Program in high-demand industries across the State.

Best Regards,



Portia Wu
Secretary

Report Purpose

This report summarizes the activities of the Talent Innovation Fund (TIF) from July 1, 2024 through December 31, 2024, pursuant to LE § 11-1604(b) HB 1128/Ch. 421, 2024:

On or before January 1 each year, beginning in 2025, the Department [of Labor] shall report to the Governor and, in accordance with § 2-1257 of the State Government Article, the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Delegates on [Talent Innovation] Program activities and use of the Fund.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

Commerce	Department of Commerce
DoIT	Department of Information Technology
DWDAL	Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning, within the Department of Labor
GWDB	Governor's Workforce Development Board
MACC	Maryland Association of Community Colleges
MATP	Maryland Apprenticeship and Training Program
MWA	Maryland Workforce Association
OSI	Office of Strategic Initiatives, within DWDAL
SOC	Security Operations Center
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
TIF	Talent Innovation Fund
TIP	Talent Innovation Program



Howard Community College Cyber Range Ribbon Cutting, Nov. 2024

Activities

The TIP, which is jointly administered by DWDAL and GWDB, became effective July 1, 2024. Soon after, DWDAL and GWDB collaborated to establish a standard process that clarifies roles and responsibilities as well as processes for how the two organizations would administer the TIF.

For the inaugural round of grantmaking, MD Labor and GWDB were provided further guidance via [statute](#), which directed the initial pilot program of TIP to support job training for the cybersecurity sector by expanding regional cyber ranges. Per the statute, cyber ranges are a “recognized method for developing talent and meeting the skill needs of the cybersecurity industry.” Specifically, cyber ranges provide hands-on training environments for students, providing opportunities to collaborate as teams to respond to simulated cyber threats.

The solicitation for the pilot TIP – *Accelerating Cyber Careers* – was released on August 27, 2024. The goal of the *Accelerating Cyber Careers* competitive grant proposal was to award funding to applicants who could provide in-demand, relevant training that includes cyber range models and leads directly to employment in cybersecurity roles. This opportunity reflected alignment with legislation and the goals of the Moore-Miller administration to create an equitable, robust, and competitive economy by developing the cybersecurity sector, and connecting Marylanders to high-demand, quality jobs.

Eligible applicants for the funding opportunity included employers, institutions of higher education, tax-exempt organizations (non-profit organizations), public agencies, local workforce development boards, registered apprenticeship sponsors, and Maryland residents. The solicitation prioritized applicants who:

- Devise creative strategies to serve populations traditionally underrepresented in the cybersecurity industry including women, individuals of color, and people with differing abilities;
- Develop partnerships to ensure individuals with knowledge in key cybersecurity area that may require hands-on experience such as that provided by a cyber range benefit, including graduates of two and four year institutions of higher education, military members stationed in Maryland actively transitioning out of active duty, and members of the Maryland national guard units;
- Describe clear strategies for engaging employers to identify skills gaps, curriculum development, training, and job placement;
- Provide participants with a clear path to unsubsidized employment that offers family-sustaining wages;
- Include career advancement strategies for cybersecurity professionals, including consideration of Registered Apprenticeship career pathways;
- Include braiding or leveraging of other public, private, and/or philanthropic funding streams, and/or in-kind support; and
- Demonstrate a willingness to offer use of the cyber range for purposes other than occupational training for immediately-hired employees, including capture the flag events, immersion activities, and industry-recognized credential- and Registered Apprenticeship-aligned training for high school students or other unique populations.

A virtual pre-proposal conference was held on September 4, 2024 to review the application process, answer prospective applicants' questions, and provide general technical assistance. Forty-five participants attended the pre-proposal conference, representing more than 25 organizations. Interested parties and prospective grantees represented included local workforce and economic development boards, public agencies, cyber operations and cybersecurity services companies, nonprofit organizations, universities and community colleges, and other cybersecurity training providers.

The deadline for proposal submissions was October 4, 2024. In total, 17 proposals were submitted, totaling \$18M in requested funding. Proposals were reviewed by a panel that included members of the Maryland Department of Labor's Office of Strategic Initiatives and Maryland Apprenticeship and Training Program, GWDB, and the Maryland Departments of Commerce and Information Technology (DoIT). Following panel review, MACC was selected as the awardee for the TIF pilot program.

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Grant Award

[MACC](#) proposed a \$1.8M *Accelerating Cyber Careers* program in partnership with [BCR Cyber](#) and [MWA](#) to provide foundational cybersecurity skills training to Marylanders. This project builds on the success and infrastructure of an existing MACC initiative – *the Cyber Workforce Accelerator* – which has leveraged state and federal funding to launch cyber ranges at Maryland community colleges. The *Accelerating Cyber Careers* program will train 1,100 individuals across Maryland, with up to 300 individuals trained as part of the new Security Operations Center (SOC) Registered Apprenticeship. It is expected that at least 800 individuals will obtain employment as a result of participation in the program.



Howard Community College Cyber Range Ribbon Cutting, Nov. 2024

The implementation of the *Accelerating Cyber Careers* program includes several training and workforce development components. Community college students and individuals identified by local workforce development boards will have the opportunity to participate in training on the cyber range. BCR Cyber has established a knowledge and skills baseline for cyber range training participants, which will be utilized during the participant screening and vetting process. The training will include 40 hours of pre-study followed by an eight-hour instructor-led cyber range session. The training will utilize BCR Cyber Series 3000 cyber range technology, which was designed specifically for workforce development and has been provided to MACC through prior funding. Trainees will have the opportunity to gain experience across several areas including SOC operations, IT and cyber tools, enterprise network operations, responding to threats and cyberattacks, and system/network vulnerabilities.

In addition to the cyber ranges training component, BCR Cyber will work to develop and seek accreditation for a SOC industry-recognized credential. Lastly, the collaborative partnership will develop a new SOC Registered Apprenticeship program, with MWA serving as the sponsor organization.



Supportive services for program participants will be provided by three sources. First, students enrolled in the community colleges will be able to rely on established supportive services across the MACC system. BCR Cyber will provide case management personnel to support student counseling, provide specialized training support, and provide referrals to appropriate service providers. Through MWA, local workforce boards will also provide support services to reduce participation barriers related to transportation, childcare, language, computer literacy, and justice involvement.

Funding began on November 1, 2024, and the implementation period is thirty-six months. The Department looks forward to reporting the progress of the *Accelerating Cyber Careers* program in the coming months.