

Report on Apprenticeship Career Training Pilot Program for Formerly Incarcerated Individuals

Submitted by the Maryland Department of Labor
September 30, 2021

2021 Joint Chairmen’s Report

Pursuant to the requirements of the 2021 Joint Chairmen’s Report, the Maryland Department of Labor (Labor) submits this report addressing the implementation of the *Apprenticeship Career Training Pilot Program for Formerly Incarcerated Individuals*.

Chapter 432 of 2020 requires a report on the implementation of Chapter 726 of 2019, specifically: (1) the number and types of employers that receive grants under this program; (2) the grant amounts received by each employer; (3) the total number of apprentices and number of apprentices by employer that participated in the program; and (4) the progress in achieving the purposes of the program.

Legislative History

In 2019, House Bill 1167, “Labor and Employment – Apprenticeship Career Training Pilot Program for Formerly Incarcerated Individuals – Establishment” was enacted under Article II, Section 17(c) of the Maryland Constitution - Chapter 726. This act created a three-year pilot to support Registered Apprenticeship programs in the construction industry that hire Registered Apprentices who (1) have been formerly incarcerated and (2) live in Baltimore City and Dorchester County. The purpose of the pilot is to develop a well-trained, productive construction workforce that meets the needs of the State’s economy; encourage employers to hire formerly incarcerated individuals in the construction industry; and help employers offset additional costs, if any, associated with hiring Registered Apprentices.

In 2020, House Bill 1141, “Labor and Employment - Apprenticeship Career Training Pilot Program for Formerly Incarcerated Individuals – Report,” was enacted under Article II, Section 17(c) of the Maryland Constitution - Chapter 432. This bill mandates that MD Labor submit an annual report on the progress of the pilot program to the General Assembly.

Joint Chairmen’s Report Requirements

- I. The number and types of employers that receive grants under this program*
- II. The grant amounts received by each employer*
- III. The total number of apprentices and number of apprentices by employer that participated in the program*
- IV. Progress in achieving the purposes of the program*

Pilot Program Progress

MD Labor has fully implemented the *Apprenticeship Career Training Pilot Program for Formerly Incarcerated Individuals* and is pleased to share the following progress updates:

1. **Fully Enacted Regulations** – The Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning (DWDAL), which includes the Maryland Apprenticeship and Training Program (MATP), drafted regulations for the pilot and they were published for a 30-day public comment period in the Maryland Register on December 18, 2020. The Department did not receive any stakeholder feedback and the regulations were published on April 9, 2021 and formally enacted ten days later.
2. **Policy Issued** – To further support the grant application and review process outlined in regulation, DWDAL issued a policy to guide interested employers and participants. DWDAL has a robust policy development process that includes collaboration amongst relevant stakeholders and solicits public feedback (a full explanation of the Division’s process is available here: <http://labor.maryland.gov/employment/mpi/mpi1-15.pdf>).

MD Labor convened a Subject Matter Expert group, comprised of members from the following entities, for three sessions to draft and finalize the policy between August 2020 and October 2020:

- Baltimore City Mayor’s Office of Employment Development,
- Governor’s Workforce Development Board,
- MD Labor – DWDAL MATP,
- MD Labor – Office of the Assistant Secretary,
- MD Labor – Office of Correctional Education,
- MD Labor – Office of the Secretary,
- MD Labor – Office of Workforce Development,
- Project JumpStart Baltimore,
- Sheet Metal and Air Conditioning Contractors (Mid-Atlantic Chapter), and
- Upper Shore Workforce Investment Board.

The policy details program eligibility, the application review process, and information on outreach efforts. The Department issued the policy via MD Labor’s Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act email distribution list on January 12, 2021. This listserv reaches over 5,000 workforce stakeholders in Maryland. A final version of the policy is available here: <http://labor.maryland.gov/employment/mpi/mpi1-21.pdf>. Additionally, MD Labor maintains an online list of employer incentives for hiring returning citizens, including the *Apprenticeship Career Training Pilot Program for Formerly Incarcerated Individuals* opportunity. That list is available here: <https://www.labor.maryland.gov/employment/reentryincentives.pdf>.

3. **Ongoing Targeted Education and Outreach** – MD Labor staff regularly shares this pilot program opportunity with relevant stakeholders. Recent and ongoing outreach includes, but is not limited to:
- Correctional Education Council members and attendees, including MD Labor’s own Office of Correctional Education staff and colleagues at the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services,
 - Employer connections via DWDAL’s Business Services Unit,
 - Employer connections via DWDAL’s Reentry Navigators who work with businesses and Registered Apprenticeship employers/sponsors to place returning citizens, including targeted efforts by the Navigators in Baltimore City and in Dorchester County (Eastern Shore), and
 - Maryland Apprenticeship and Training Council members and attendees that consist of numerous construction Registered Apprenticeship sponsors, including organizations in Baltimore City and the Eastern Shore.

Should an applicant require technical assistance with a grant application, DWDAL staff will provide support.

4. **Awards** – As of September 29, 2021, MD Labor has not received any applications for the *Apprenticeship Career Training Pilot Program for Formerly Incarcerated Individuals* despite efforts to encourage participation. The Department suspects that the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as a surplus of workforce development funding from other grants and federal sources, may be influencing the success of the pilot.

For questions or comments regarding this report, please contact:

Andrew Fulginiti

Director of Legislative Affairs

Maryland Department of Labor

andrew.fulginiti@maryland.gov

(410) 230-6338 (Baltimore)/(410) 260-6080 (Annapolis)/(443) 401-5129 (Mobile)