



EARN
MARYLAND



**ANNUAL
REPORT
2023**

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The Honorable Wes Moore, Governor
The Honorable Pamela G. Beidle, Chair, Senate Finance Committee
The Honorable C.T. Wilson, Chair, House Economic Matters Committee

Re: Labor and Employment Article §11-709(a) (MSAR # 12085)

Dear Governor Moore and Chairs Kelley and Wilson:

It is my distinct pleasure to share the 2023 annual report for the Employment Advancement Right Now (EARN) Maryland program. EARN Maryland continues to provide access to quality training that leads to good jobs, increasing pathways to economic growth and prosperity for the State's workforce. The program reached an exciting milestone in 2023: more than 20,000 Marylanders have been positively impacted by the program since its inception in 2014, with nearly 9,300 individuals obtaining employment and more than 13,000 incumbent workers participating in upskilling opportunities.

Through the first three quarters of 2023, just over 1,200 unemployed and underemployed individuals obtained employment as a result of their participation in EARN. Over that same time period, more than 2,000 incumbent workers have benefitted from training, growing the skillsets of the workforce and thus, increasing the economic competitiveness of the state.

While the program continues to connect the workforce to meaningful opportunities in growing industries, it continues to be a sound investment for the State. In a recent study on the economic impact of EARN, the Business Economic and Community Outreach Network (BEACON) at Salisbury University found that for every dollar the state invests into the program, an additional \$17.16 in economic activity is created.

Over the past year, I have had the opportunity to travel around the state, from Mountain Maryland to Baltimore City to the Eastern Shore to witness the work of our EARN grantees. I am pleased to report that this program is executing on the Moore-Miller administration's vision of leaving no Marylander behind. The Department is proud of the program's progress in 2023 and looks forward to sharing the continued growth and success in the years to come.

Best Regards,



Portia Wu
Secretary



MEP SUCCESS STORY

In 2017, Marcus learned about a manufacturing bootcamp that was being offered by the Maryland Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) through his participation in the Re-Engaging Individuals through Successful Employment (RISE) program. The RISE program is meant to help non-custodial parents who owe child support to secure employment. He eagerly enrolled in the two-week program which included classroom training that taught basic manufacturing skills and gleaned critical hands-on experience. Soon after completing the bootcamp, Marcus was hired as a fabricator with a local company in Federalsburg. He was quickly promoted and earned several industry-recognized credentials in crane operations, forklift, and first aid/blood borne pathogens. In 2023, Marcus was promoted to a supervisory role. To further develop his leadership skills, his employer afforded him the opportunity to take a Dale Carnegie Supervisor course. Today, Marcus is married and enjoys spending time with his eight children.

COMMONLY USED ABBREVIATIONS

AWS	Amazon Web Services
CDL	Commercial Driver’s License
CISSP	Certified Information Systems Security Professional
CNA	Certified Nursing Assistant
DHS	Department of Human Services
DoIT	Department of Information Technology
DSP	Direct Support Professional
EARN	Employment Advancement Right Now
FY	Fiscal Year
IT	Information Technology
LMI	Labor Market Information
MEA	Maryland Energy Administration
MTA	Maryland Transportation Administration
RA	Registered Apprenticeship
ROI	Return on Investment
SIP	Strategic Industry Partnership
SNAP	Supplemental Nutrition Assistant Program
WTP	Workforce Training Plan

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MARYLAND'S NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED INITIATIVE

Established in 2014, Employment Advancement Right Now (EARN) Maryland is the State's nationally-recognized workforce solution. The program is industry-led, designed with the flexibility to ensure that Maryland employers have the talent they need to compete and grow, while preparing Marylanders for meaningful careers. EARN builds upon the Moore-Miller administration's priorities of connecting Marylanders to jobs while increasing the State's economic competitiveness. Generally, EARN Maryland is designed to:

- Address business workforce needs by focusing on industry sector strategies that seek long-term solutions to sustained skills gaps and personnel shortages;
- Address the needs of workers by creating formal career paths to good jobs, and sustaining or growing middle class jobs;
- Encourage mobility for Maryland's most hard-to-serve jobseekers through targeted job readiness training; and
- Foster better coordination between the public, private, and non-profit sectors and the workforce, economic development, and education partners around the State.

The success of EARN is seeded in meaningful collaboration among a diverse group of stakeholders who make up a Strategic Industry Partnership (SIP) and includes employer and industry partners, non-profit and community-based organizations, and workforce, economic development, and education partners. Recognizing that a workforce system disconnected from business fails to meet the needs of jobseekers, EARN places employers in the center of the identification of workforce needs and skills gaps.

While traditional workforce programs often look to training entities or higher education to determine training needs and develop curriculum, EARN's innovative model tasks business and industry partners with designing the programs. At a higher level, employers are challenged to look both within and beyond their individual organizations, to identify the specific skill needs for their workforce as well as the broader range of skills needed within their industry sector.

Employers and industry partners are encouraged to analyze the diverse evolving needs within their industry, too, such as training needs associated with keeping pace with increasingly sophisticated technology, and shifting workforce demographics

caused by retirements. By anticipating the changing landscape of training needs, curriculum can be designed flexibly to perform over time as an effective workforce solution.

During the development of training, employer and industry partners are consulted to determine which training strategies and techniques will be most effective in training for the skill sets they need in workers. For instance, some employers indicate that in order to truly master certain skills, on-the-job learning experiences, rather than classroom training, or some combination of both, are ideal. Because employers are the experts on what makes a competent employee, they are experienced in identifying the correct training techniques to ensure success of skill formation.

Finally, employers and industry partners are required to participate in training. This occurs in a variety of ways, including teaching specific courses, observing training, and mentoring trainees. This level of participation not only allows employers to ensure the training meets their vision, but also gives employers exposure to potential employment candidates.

Once these needs are identified and curriculum is developed, members of the SIP set out to implement their Workforce Training Plan (WTP). These partnerships are considered “strategic” because the development of stakeholders is thoughtful, and is meant to cut across traditional workforce, education, and social services system silos. Because partnerships are comprised of diverse organizations with unique strengths, each is able to leverage their central expertise, which yields the greatest level of success for program implementation.

To that end, EARN trainees often have significant barriers to employment, including criminal justice involvement, low levels of literacy, lack of transportation or childcare, and limited work history. Because EARN was designed in the spirit of collaboration, most SIPs include non-profit organizations or Workforce Development Boards who are especially adept at barrier removal. To maximize the odds for success, partners are expected to take a holistic, whole-person approach to ensure all barriers are removed prior to entering employment. Examples of barrier removal include record expungement, stipends for training, help with transportation and childcare costs, and mental health supports.

EARN’s unique program design and implementation of sector strategies have been recognized as best practices by numerous organizations since the program began in 2014, including the National Skills Coalition and the Urban



Since the program began in 2014, nearly 9,300 individuals have obtained employment, with just over 1,200 entering new employment during the first three quarters of 2023.



Alliance. EARN was named one of the Top 25 programs in the 2018 Innovations in American Government Award competition by The Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation, a leading research center at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. The program highlights exemplary models of government innovation and advances efforts to address the nation’s most pressing public concerns. Additionally, the Deloitte Center for Government Insights cited EARN as a best practice for public-private partnership. Furthermore, EARN staff have provided technical assistance to other states and localities looking to implement similar initiatives.

BY THE NUMBERS

In response to the needs expressed by employer and industry partners, the program continues to focus primarily on two distinct subsets of the workforce: unemployed/underemployed and incumbent workers.

Historically, employers across the state, regardless of industry, identify challenges around recruitment, especially for entry-level positions. As the state has experienced historically low unemployment rates in 2023, the challenge to find qualified candidates for open positions has been amplified. EARN programming provides a consistent pipeline of qualified candidates with relevant skillsets who are ready and able to work. Since the program began in 2014, nearly 9,300 individuals have obtained employment, with just over 1,200 entering new employment during the first three quarters of 2023.

Employers identify incumbent worker training as a costly yet indispensable tool that is critical for expansion, retention, and increased economic competitiveness. Due to competing priorities, many companies, particularly those smaller in size, choose to forgo these professional development opportunities due to cost. EARN supports training for incumbent workers at little-to-no cost to employer partners.

In 2023, more than 2,000 incumbent workers participated in training, bringing the total since program inception to over 13,000 individuals. As a direct result, employer partners report improved productivity, cost savings, wages, and job retention.

Final reporting for FY20 investments shows that 81% of individuals who completed entry-level programming obtained employment and nearly 96% of incumbent workers report a new skill, certification, or credential as a result of their participation in EARN-funded training. While these figures align with historical outcomes of the program, it should be noted that FY20 coincides with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Preliminary final data for grants awarded in FY21 shows similar trends.

To understand the effectiveness of EARN from the perspective of employers and industry partners, the program often solicits feedback from these stakeholders. In a recent survey, when asked to rate the competitive advantage of EARN participants, 81% of survey respondents stated that they have a significant competitive advantage over their peers, with 17% responding that EARN participants have at least some competitive advantage. A mere one percent of employers surveyed responded that EARN participants had no competitive advantage over their counterparts.

In addition, nearly 99% of respondents affirmed that their participation in EARN is worth the investment and has made a positive impact on their business. The survey results resoundingly demonstrate that EARN continues to provide strong value to employer and industry partners.

IMPACT

LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND

Aligned with the Moore-Miller administration's vision to leave no one behind, EARN seeks to provide equitable opportunities to work, wages, and wealth for all Marylanders, including those with barriers to employment. At the same time, Maryland is experiencing record low unemployment rates at a time of anticipated growth in many of EARN's target industries. As a result, the potential pool of applicants is limited and often has barriers which make it difficult to obtain and retain employment. Thus, it is of paramount importance that EARN partners deploy creative strategies to remove barriers which may inhibit success in the workplace, including a lack of reliable transportation, housing insecurity, childcare needs, and criminal justice involvement.

Governor Wes Moore visits JARC to tour their training facility and meet students.



Below is a small sampling of EARN participants who have overcome personal challenges, including long-term unemployment, periods of incarceration, and other barriers to employment, to successfully enter the workforce.

Tobias enrolled in the Civic Works Infrastructure and Remediation Technician training program at a critical time in his life. He was reacclimating into society after a period of incarceration, had a baby on the way, and was dealing with significant financial challenges. In addition to the technical training and industry-recognized credentials he earned while in training, Tobias credits his success to the case management and wrap around services he received while enrolled in the program, specifically transportation supports. Soon after graduation, Tobias began to apply for employment opportunities. He recounts, “I interviewed for a laborer position and ended up in an assistant manager position, so it exceeded what I thought was possible. I feel like I’m in a prime position to have a valid career, not just a job but a foundation that I can build on.”



Mia was working in an unfulfilling job with limited growth potential when she decided to enroll in training offered by BCR Cyber. She was excited by the opportunities offered by a career in the cybersecurity industry. She successfully completed training and earned in-demand credentials. Soon after graduating, she was offered a full-time position with a prominent defense contractor, where she is earning a salary of nearly \$70k per year with full benefits. Due to this new opportunity, Mia was able to transition off Supplemental Nutrition Assistant Program (SNAP) benefits.



Mark is a veteran who identifies as a person in recovery. He was looking to build on the culinary skills he first learned in the military when he enrolled in the Ground Work Culinary program offered by Paul’s Place. At the time of his enrollment, he was preparing to transition out of recovery housing and was reliant upon disability, SNAP, and Medical Assistance benefits. During training, Mark received a small stipend, bus passes, two meals per day, and case management support to negotiate the demands of the recovery program he was exiting and to ensure continuity of treatment while also balancing his responsibilities to the training program. With this case management support, he successfully resolved his housing instability, found a treatment provider that worked for his schedule, and maintained compliance with the training program, earning numerous industry-recognized credentials. Mark is currently working as a prep cook at a local restaurant.



James was referred to Maryland New Directions (MND) by the Mayor’s Office of Employment Development at a time when he was unemployed and looking for employment in a field that could provide family-sustaining wages and long-term career opportunities. He enrolled in the CDL training offered by MND and soon after passed his CDL permit exam with passenger, school bus, and air brake endorsements. With his certification in hand, James was eager to apply for paid, behind-the-wheel training with one of MND’s employer partners. Unfortunately, during the final stages of his onboarding process, the results of James’ criminal background check showed charges from more than a decade ago that precluded him from moving forward with the company. Through the support of his job coach, James obtained temporary employment while he worked with Maryland Legal Aid to expunge his record. James submitted an application to the Maryland Transit Authority (MTA) to join their behind-the-wheel training program. He was invited to take the admittance exam, which he passed. After completing a 10-week paid training, James will transition to a full-time role with the MTA.

Before joining the Automotive Technicians for Change (ATC) program offered by Vehicles for Change, Michael served 10 years at the Roxbury Correctional Institution. During this time, he took advantage of Labor's Correctional Education automotive training, earning 10 Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) certifications. Upon release, he enrolled in the ATC program where he was able to further hone his skillsets and recertify for his ASE certifications. He completed training and is currently employed earning \$23 per hour.



Tesfaye immigrated to America from Ethiopia in late 2019. With both a bachelor's and master's degree in biology and more than ten years of experience as a laboratory technician, he felt confident that his employment transition would be seamless. The COVID-19 pandemic exasperated his ability to find a position that aligned with his education and experience. He enrolled in the Biotechnology Bootcamp offered by BioTrain, which provided lectures and hands-on training. He found the résumé assistance and mock interview sessions particularly helpful. Soon after completing training, he was offered a full-time position with a local biotech company.



Kevin was unemployed and ready to start a new career when he enrolled in the Careers in Manufacturing Program offered by the Jane Addams Resource Corporation (JARC). While enrolled, Kevin faced housing instability that was threatening his ability to complete training. Through the support of JARC's team, Kevin was able to find housing that was safe and affordable. The landlord was so impressed with Kevin's dedication to his training that he looked past his criminal background and agreed to offer him space. He has since completed training and secured employment in the manufacturing industry.



John is a United States Marine Corps veteran officer who was in the process of transitioning to civilian life when he enrolled into the Cyber Workforce Academy offered by the SANS Institute. He had an intense desire to work in a mission-oriented field where he could make a meaningful contribution for the betterment of the United States. After graduating from the program with two SANS credentials, he successfully landed employment as a Cyber Threat Specialist, earning more than four times his previous salary. Of his experience he said, "the Cyber Academy program was crucial in getting the job I have today. I will be forever grateful for the opportunity. As I was looking for a new job and trying to get into the industry, I felt overwhelmed that I would never land a job. However, after completing the program, I received job offers and employers took me seriously. It was incredible. I have hope for my future and now am looking at opportunities for further career growth, when just a few short years ago I was wondering if I would ever be able to break into the industry. I would not be where I am today without the program!"



Sarah, a single mom, enrolled in training offered by Dwyer Workforce Development (Dwyer) to further her career prospects. While in training, she learned that she was facing eviction. With the support of DWD, she was able to access rental assistance and maintain her housing. This alleviated stress and allowed Sarah to focus on earning the necessary credentials to obtain employment. Soon after graduating, Sarah was offered a role as a CNA with a local employer.

BENEFITS OF AN EMPLOYER-DRIVEN MODEL

EARN utilizes a dual-customer approach in that the program is meant to support Maryland's workforce and employers alike. As evidenced above, the program is succeeding in its goal to provide in-demand, meaningful training opportunities for Maryland's workforce. At the same time, because EARN uses an industry-driven model, employers have access to a consistent pipeline of highly skilled workers and a mechanism to upskill their current workforce. In addition to these invaluable benefits, employers identify several additional advantages to participating in EARN, such as cost savings and increased productivity.

Because employers participate in the identification of skills gaps and development of curriculum, training is tailored to meet the specific needs of employer and industry partners. Upon completion of training, successful participants are connected directly with employer partners with open positions. This steady pipeline of applicants with employer-identified knowledge, skills, and abilities has led to decreased costs around recruitment, screening, and interviewing of job applicants. In fact, some employers use EARN grantees as their preferred or primary recruitment source.

Once hired, there is also less cost associated with onboarding and training because EARN graduates have the baseline skills necessary, as identified by those employer partners, to be successful in their open positions. This also leads to higher retention rates. One employer noted that since partnering with the program in 2020, EARN graduates have a 98% retention rate with the company.

As detailed above, employers are also able to leverage EARN funding for incumbent worker training opportunities. Not only does this lead to cost savings as company training dollars can be used on other efforts, but the availability of EARN funding to leverage opportunities for their current workforce has been identified as a conduit for increased competitiveness, retention, and productivity by employer partners. For example, the Maryland Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) provided Lean Six Sigma training for an employer, which had a significant impact on their operations. In addition to their staff becoming Lean practitioners, the organization was able to significantly increase production. As a direct result of this EARN-funded training, the company anticipates increasing production by nearly 500 times over the next few years, which will lead to a significant revenue increase.



Below is a small sampling of feedback from employer partners participating in EARN.

“ We have hired numerous students from the EARN training program over the years. We have always been well satisfied with the skills and knowledge that is present from day one. We will continue to hire from this program as it continually updates training to the standards needed by the employer. This is achieved by feedback from the employers that is heard and incorporated in real time.

The training programs designed to teach technical knowledge and/or obtain certifications are especially helpful. We have been able to obtain business and contracts with oil and gas companies that we would normally not be able to do business with due to the need for our staff to have certain certifications to meet their stringent information security standards. It also allows us to better manage projects from prospective client stage, through production installation, and continuous monitoring.

Graduates from the program that is currently in place have been very highly sought after by several local employers, clearly showing a need for people with these skills. In the last few years, we have been fortunate enough to hire several graduates of the welding program and have found their training to be superior - including not only the hard skills in the fabrication and welding curriculum but also the soft skills required to maintain employment, such as good attendance, positive attitudes, and a willingness to learn.

As a start-up company, we are not able to have an in-house training program for our employees, however universally it is something that is desired by our employees, and being able to offer trainings such as these is a way to keep our employees engaged. This is a cost-savings and time savings to us as compared with hiring a trainer to develop and facilitate such trainings, hiring a contractor or sending our employees to external trainings. Further, it is very possible that we wouldn't be able to provide such trainings without this program, due to a need to focus our resources in other areas.

Team members found the courses to be engaging and relatable to their current roles. Group collaboration had the most impact on our team members. It was an opportunity to gain knowledge from “real world” scenarios and discuss how it applies to their day-to-day jobs. Team members are chosen for these classes based on strong performance. As a leader, these classes truly provide additional growth within their current role and future advancement. The skills learned in these classes help us retain strong team members within our divisions.

The offerings are immensely helpful for building skills that workers typically spend years developing in the workplace. By having these skills available to our workforce early, as well as reinforcing and updating skillsets for those who have been in the workforce for some time, we are able to develop these critical skills in our workers and have measurable increase in efficiency and culture improvements that are reflected in our yearly feedback surveys. By having these courses offered for free instead of using outside contracts we are saving approximately \$20,000 in 2023.

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POSITIVE IMPACT ON THE ECONOMY

One of the main goals of EARN is to provide a more highly skilled workforce for Maryland employers. As has been highlighted in the preceding pages of this report, this means providing in-demand training to unemployed or underemployed Maryland residents, which often leads directly to employment, and in some cases may lead to transitioning off of public assistance. Additionally, incumbent workers receive training to increase their skillsets, which may lead to increased earnings. Overall, the program is increasing the earning potential for Maryland's workforce, which directly impacts the State's economy.

On an annual basis, the Business, Economic, and Community Outreach Network (BEACON) of Salisbury University performs an economic impact study to calculate the Return on Investment (ROI) for EARN. The ROI is utilized to determine the effectiveness and efficiency of the public funding invested in the program. The calculations, which are standardized across a wide variety of geographic and industry sectors, utilize large amounts of data supplied by each grantee.

The ROI calculation uses two inputs: the EARN funds invested by the Department in the current year and the reported earnings of EARN Maryland participants both pre- and post-training. In addition, the dollar value of leveraged resources provided by grantees is taken into account. The outputs tracked for the ROI calculation include the value of the earnings differential pre- and post-training and the sum of direct, indirect, and induced impact from the differential and leveraged resources.

BEYOND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Several EARN SIPs are making a difference in their communities beyond traditional workforce development efforts. Each year, techfrederick hosts the Tech Games, an event designed to bring together the tech community

for a day of comradery, teamwork, and competition. A non-profit organization is selected by the partnership, and teams may give monetary donations or physical items needed by the non-profit to accrue points before the games begin. For the 2023 Tech Games, the Boys and Girls Club of Frederick County was the selected non-profit. In addition to more than \$5,000 in cash donations, the event brought in nearly 170 articles of winter clothing for elementary to high-school aged children. Similarly, the I'm Still Standing Community Development Center held a back-to-school event where 70 fully-stocked backpacks were distributed to the community.

In partnership with Baltimore City's Department of Housing and Community Development and the Maryland Energy Administration (MEA), Civic Works is currently operating a low-income solar installation program for single-family residences called Baltimore Shines. The goal of this program is to demonstrate a replicable and scalable model for the deployment of low-income residential rooftop solar installation, and to attract community-focused private investment in these rooftop solar projects.

Participants of Civic Works' Solar Installation and Training Program (SITP) gain their on-the-job training hours working on Baltimore Shines homes. In addition, it is expected that the project will create job placement opportunities for graduates. Baltimore Shines combines the dual benefits of workforce development for unemployed and underemployed individuals with solar upgrades for Baltimore's low-income residents. Since the program's inception, 68 installations have been completed. For projects completed over the current year, the average system size is six kilowatts and they are offsetting nearly 100% of home electricity use.

THIRD PARTY EVALUATION

As noted above, the Department continues to partner with BEACON at the Perdue School of Business at Salisbury University to provide an independent evaluation of the effectiveness of EARN. The broad areas for evaluation include assessment of the value to trainees, the value to employers, the quality and effectiveness of the partnership, and systems change among and within the industry and partner institution.

The staff at BEACON work closely with representatives from each SIP to understand the challenges and successes of the individual programs. In addition, BEACON

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The analysis for FY2023 shows that for each dollar the State invests in EARN, an additional \$17.16 in economic impact is created.

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analyzes reporting submitted by quarterly and final reporting from grantees, which includes pre- and post-training data. This helps BEACON to evaluate the effectiveness of each partnership by comparing their intended goals with the actual outcomes achieved.

In the FY23 evaluation report, BEACON notes that EARN is an effective and efficient workforce development program that “continues to outperform most workforce development programs around the country.” As part of their evaluation, BEACON calculates the ROI to determine the effectiveness of the public investment of state funding. As highlighted above, for every \$1 the state invests in to EARN, \$17.16 in economic impact is created. This further illustrates the value of the industry-led model and EARN’s impact on economic and workforce development in Maryland.

SUPPORTING KEY INDUSTRIES

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

As employers across industries continue to embrace and prioritize diversity, equity, and inclusion, EARN grantees have played a key role in helping partners to increase representation of underrepresented populations in the workplace. The successes outlined below underscore the profound and far-reaching impact that the strategic collaboration required by the EARN model can make.

CYBER/IT

Data shows that women and people of color are significantly underrepresented in the information technology (IT) and cybersecurity industries. According to a recent study by a global non-profit focused on intersectional gender and pay parity in tech, black people as a whole account for 7% of the tech workforce. In addition, whereas women account for nearly 27% of the tech workforce, black women make up only 1.7% of that figure¹. To bridge this gap, several EARN grantees have placed a strong emphasis on diversity, equity, and inclusion in their programs, deploying creative strategies to reach these target populations.

The employer partners who participate in the Intrusion Countermeasures Education and Training (ICET) program have prioritized the inclusion of women and people of color in the cyber and IT industries. As such, BCR Cyber continues to leverage relationships with a variety of community partners, their alumni networks, and social media channels to recruit these populations. In FY23, 91% of trainees in their program were people of color and more than 50% were women.

Similarly, the SANS Cyber Workforce Academy of Maryland continues to leverage strong partnerships with groups such as Women’s Society of Cyberjutsu, Women in Cybersecurity, and Black Girls in Cyber to recruit traditionally underrepresented populations. These collaborations have proven fruitful as close to nearly two-thirds of recent enrollees identify as a person of color and nearly 40% identify as female.

As EARN grantees have developed positive reputations for working collaboratively with employer and industry partners, they have become critical pipelines for employer partners. For instance, Per Scholas continues to incorporate equitable access as a key part of their mission. Employer partners such as TEKSystems rely heavily on Per Scholas to serve as a main source for diverse talent. In fact, TEKSystems has identified Per Scholas as a partner that provides access to a more diverse talent pool with inclusive outcomes intentionally embedded into the training model. This is evidenced by the demographics of Per Scholas hires, with 87% identifying as a person of color. TEKSystems also notes that Per Scholas’ upskilling courses are essential in helping to not only retain but advance their workers, mostly people of color, into higher paying roles.

¹ https://anitab.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/TCInsightsReport_FINAL.pdf

BIOTECHNOLOGY

In biotech and biopharma, African Americans make up only 6 percent of the workforce . Baltimore BioWorks² (BioWorks) and the Bio Technical Institute of Maryland (BTI) are taking intentional steps to reverse this trend. Leveraging diverse recruitment partners such as Baltimore City Community College, BioWorks has been able to provide meaningful opportunities to underrepresented populations. For instance, 77% of individuals who recently enrolled in training identified as African American and 68% were women.

In addition, BTI is piloting a program called “Workplace Competencies Tools to Advance Workforce Equity for Workers of Color.” The curriculum seeks to equip men and women of color participating in the BTI program with the tools to successfully navigate institutional race-based barriers in the workplace. This includes understanding how barriers manifest in the workplace and providing the skills to handle challenges while maintaining their cultural and personal sense of self. BTI hopes to utilize student feedback from the pilot to further develop the curriculum and incorporate it as a permanent component of their essential skills curriculum.

INCREASING RETENTION IN HEALTHCARE

According to the National Council of State Legislatures, workforce shortages in the healthcare industry remain one of the core obstacles to ensuring access to long-term care and supports for older adults and individuals living with disabilities. Turnover rates, which are estimated to be between 40 and 60%³ , coupled with the increased demand for workers due to an aging population, continue to exacerbate the shortage of workers. In addition, it is estimated that 420k direct care workers have left the workforce since 2020.

Several EARN grantees are deploying creative strategies and curricula to help combat these high retention rates. For instance, Dwyer is leveraging Labor’s *Direct Care Workforce Innovation Fund* to provide extensive person-centered supportive services including transportation, childcare, and technology access for their scholars. This individualized support has proven successful as 81% of Dwyer scholars have maintained employment over the past year.

In addition, the Maryland Direct Support Professional (DSP) Consortium came together in an effort to alleviate the high turnover rate in the profession. In close partnership with the Maryland Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA), the consortium developed a DSP II credential, which provides opportunities for DSPs to become more highly skilled and leads to advancement opportunities and increased wages. In addition, the partnership developed a frontline supervisor and manager training program, meant to equip current and future leaders with the skillsets to effectively lead. Participants report a greater understanding of skills and competencies, higher confidence, and greater job satisfaction. This is reflected in the retention rates of participating employers, which averages over 90%.

To further support the retention of healthcare workers, the MD/DC 1199 SEIU Training and Upgrading Fund (SEIU), the lead entity of the Capital Region Healthcare Training Partnership, is working with the United States Department of Labor and Jobs for the Future as a member of the Job Quality Academy. Through participation in this academy, SEIU is working with a team to develop strategies and action plans that address inequities through a focus on improving employment opportunities and job quality across the healthcare sector. SEIU will identify and test job quality practices and forms of partnerships focused on increasing economic mobility and access. As a result of their participation, SEIU will have a greater understanding of job quality principles and a strategic plan to assist employer partners so they can incorporate job quality into their policies and hiring practices, which, once implemented, should improve retention among the healthcare workforce. Once developed, SEIU will share these practices with the EARN network so that other grantees may incorporate the findings into their work.

²https://www.bio.org/sites/default/files/2022-06/261734_BIO_22_DEI_Report_P4.pdf

³<https://www.ncsl.org/health/strengthening-the-direct-care-workforce>

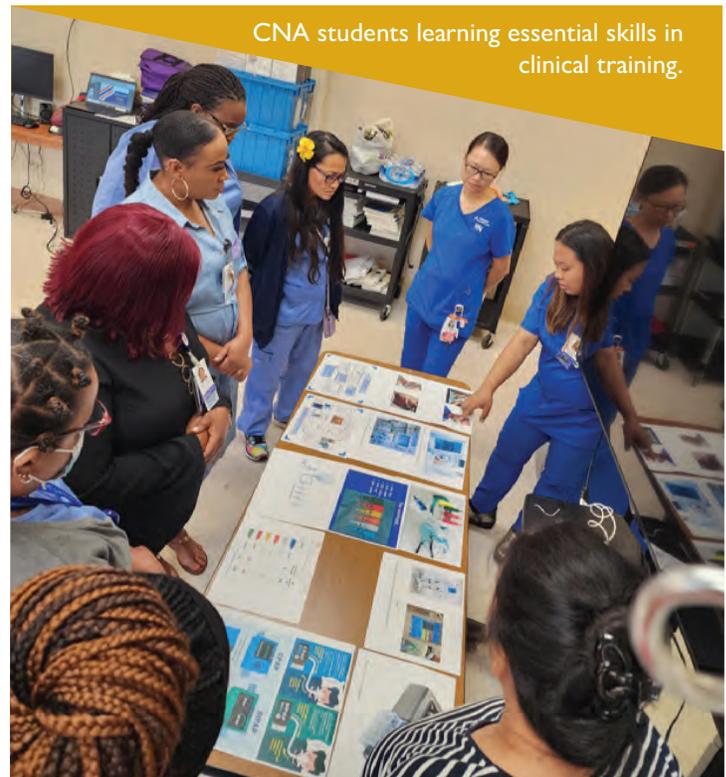
CONTINUED COLLABORATION WITH KEY STAKEHOLDERS

As prescribed in the Labor and Employment Article § 11-706(a)(1) of the Maryland Annotated Code, EARN should collaborate with sister agencies to ensure a highly trained and qualified state workforce. This closely aligns with the Moore-Miller administration's goal to rebuild state government. Since inception, EARN has partnered closely with several sister agencies, including MEA, MTA, the Department of Human Services (DHS), and most recently, the Department of Information Technology (DoIT) to meet this call.

In 2022, a new partnership was developed which will help to stymie a critical issue threatening state government. In response to the growing number of ransomware attacks, DoIT developed a partnership with BCR Cyber. The goal of the partnership is to provide relevant, up-to-date training to state employees to elevate the ability of the workforce to identify and respond to the largest cybersecurity challenges facing state government. As of October 2023, more than 150 state employees have participated in training, representing more than 20 state and independent agencies. The training focuses on two subsets of the state workforce. The first provides more entry-level employees with key skills in preparation for the CompTIA Sec+ certification. The second track, aimed at more seasoned professionals, includes preparation for the Certified Information Security Systems Professional (CISSP) credential.

EARN also continues to partner closely with DHS on their implementation of the SNAP Employment and Training (SNAP E&T) program. Funded by the United States Department of Agriculture, the program connects people who receive monthly food supplement benefits (SNAP, food stamps) to industry-led training programs. SNAP E&T requires a cost match with non-federal funding. Participating programs are reimbursed up to 50% of allowable program costs, thus increasing the state and other non-federal funders' investment and growing the number of Marylanders that receive in-demand skills training. Because EARN is a state-funded program, SIPs have the means to provide the cost match.

To maximize access, Labor and DHS have worked together to provide outreach and education on the opportunities



CNA students learning essential skills in clinical training.

available to leverage different funding sources, including EARN and SNAP E&T, to respective stakeholders. As a result, the number of EARN grantees who also serve as SNAP E&T providers has significantly increased over the past few years. Currently, 16 EARN grantees are utilizing SNAP E&T funding. The Department will continue to work closely with DHS to ensure new grantees funded through the Winter 2023 Solicitation for Implementation Grants process are made aware of funding made possible through SNAP E&T to maximize the reach of state and federal resources.

In addition to collaborating with sister agencies, EARN continues to leverage strategic partnerships with other key stakeholders, including community colleges and Local Workforce Development Boards. In 2023, EARN partnered with 14 of the 16 community colleges in Maryland. Nearly all of Maryland's Local Workforce Development Boards support the program, playing a critical role in the recruitment, screening, and job development of EARN participants.

IDENTIFICATION OF STATEWIDE TRAINING NEEDS

The Labor and Employment Article § 11-709(b)(4) of the Maryland Annotated Code requires EARN SIPs to identify skills gaps, workforce shortages, and areas of opportunities within their industry. Based upon these needs, SIPs are challenged to develop innovative WTPs that will efficiently and effectively bridge these identified gaps. EARN grantees continue to serve two main subsets of the workforce:

- **Unemployed/Underemployed:** Employers continue to identify the need for a pipeline of qualified individuals to fill their open positions. Unemployed refers to an individual without a job and who is available for work. Underemployed refers to an individual who is either working part-time but desires full-time employment, who works full-time but earns wages at or minimally above minimum wage, or who is working in employment not commensurate with the individual's demonstrated level of education and/or skill achievement.
- **Incumbent:** An incumbent worker is an individual who is employed already in the target industry and who seeks to obtain additional training or credential. Employer partners identify incumbent worker training as a vital conduit for growth, expansion, and increased business outcomes. However, this training is costly, making it difficult for employers to invest with existing budgetary constraints. Therefore, many partnerships have been utilizing EARN funds to upskill incumbent workers, which has led to improved productivity, cost savings, wages, and job retention.

For the partnerships offering training opportunities to unemployed and underemployed individuals, a key component of curriculum includes job readiness training. Job readiness training may include professional skills, literacy advancement, and financial coaching. Employers resoundingly identify a need for essential skills training. In fact, employer partners identify essential skills training as equally, if not more important than, technical skills in evaluating a potential candidate. Essential skills, also known as soft skills, include professionalism, communication, timeliness, and customer service.

INDUSTRY TRENDS

HEALTHCARE

As noted above, employers in the healthcare industry express continued difficulty finding and retaining a workforce to meet the growing demand. Several grantees offering CNA training have added other certifications, including Certified Medical Technician and Basic Life Support to their curriculum. Not only do these additions increase employability and lead to higher wages, but individuals with these certifications are able to perform a wider range of duties.

Grantees also focus on career pathway development and career laddering to help with retention. For instance, after reaching certain goals in their career, Dwyer scholars are able to pursue an array of different upskilling opportunities in different healthcare roles, such as medical technicians, patient care technicians (PCT), and administrators, all free of charge. In addition, the organization will support scholars through out their career pathway, providing scholarships to students to pursue their Registered Nurse (RN) license. These strategies have proven in increasing retention among the workforce.



Dwyer scholars at graduation ceremony.

GREEN

The green and clean energy sector continues to evolve at a rapid rate. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law includes more than \$62 billion in funding to advance the clean energy future by investing in clean energy demonstration and deployment projects, developing new technologies, and modernizing the power grid. To prepare for an uptick in electrification demand, Civic Works is updating curriculum so that graduates are prepared to work on these projects. This will increase the employability of graduates while also ensuring Maryland has a workforce prepared to meet Governor Moore's ambitious energy and climate goals.

Similarly, Power52 is modifying curriculum to meet evolving trends. The organization has worked closely with the National Center for Construction, Education & Research (NCCER) to include a variety of new and emerging topics in their curriculum, including energy storage advancements, electric vehicle integration, floating solar, and offshore wind innovations. The nimbleness with which EARN partners are able to work is paramount to being responsive to industry trends. As a result, Power52 graduates leave the program with a versatile skillset which is applicable to diverse sectors within the renewable energy field.

REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP

The Department continues to focus on Registered Apprenticeship (RA) as a key strategy to provide access to good paying jobs for all Marylanders. Labor has focused on the expansion of RA to non-traditional industries, such as healthcare and information technology and is particularly focused on increasing diversity within the RA system. Given the close ties between RA and the EARN model, Labor staff work closely to ensure that EARN grantees understand the nuts and bolts of the apprenticeship model and are able to access resources to explore developing their own program. These efforts have proved fruitful as 10 grantees have been approved by the Maryland Apprenticeship and Training Council to serve as Sponsors, six of which are providing training and employment focused on non-traditional industries.

TRACKING SUCCESS, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND PARTICIPANTS

To ensure that each of the more than 60 EARN partnerships are successful, the program utilizes industry-specific grant advisors who provide technical assistance support. These individuals work closely with each partnership to develop goals and measures of success, providing tailored guidance to ensure goals are met. Grant advisors conduct site visits, hold regular meetings with grantees, and facilitate connections with peers or outside organizations to help further foster program success.

EARN staff strive to develop strong working relationships with each grantee to better understand the challenges and successes of each partnership and industry. Working collaboratively with grantees creates an environment of trust and support, allowing for continuous improvement and innovation. As a result of these strong working relationships, staff are able to identify early on if technical assistance is necessary and work closely with grantees on improvements if outcomes are not being met.

To foster a feeling of community, grantees are brought together in-person on an annual basis. The convening, which is attended by representatives from every SIP, provides the opportunity for partners to come together to receive updates on EARN and other department initiatives, including RA. The meeting is co-hosted by BEACON, who provides updates on their independent evaluation of the program. A significant portion of the meeting is spent allowing grantees to discuss industry trends, challenges, solutions, and best practices within their target industry. The gathering provides an excellent platform for grantees to network and collaborate, and the Department looks forward to hosting this meeting in January of 2024.

Due to the flexible composition of EARN, each partnership is unique in its goals, and success is measured in several different ways. Many elements are considered when developing goals, including cost per participant, average industry training costs, level of services provided, length of training, and the number of participants to be served. Similarly, a variety of different means are utilized to evaluate SIP success. EARN partnerships are quantitatively evaluated based upon the number of individuals who enter new employment positions, or the number of incumbent workers trained. Program staff review metrics such as the number of new employers engaged and the amount of leveraged funding secured. Success can also be measured qualitatively. EARN staff take into consideration employer feedback, systems change brought forth as a result of the partnership, and participant success stories.

To further evaluate progress and ensure accountability, grantees are required to submit the following reports to the Department on a quarterly basis:

- Narrative Report – tracks all programmatic activity, including project activities, program highlights, challenges, and success stories;
- Financial Report – tracks projected versus actual expenditures and leveraged resources;
- Entry Report – captures all required demographic data; and
- Exit Report – captures all required outcome data.

At the conclusion of a grant period, grantees are required to submit a Final Report. This report includes a narrative that describes the effectiveness of funded training, a summary of related partnership activities, areas of opportunity or technical assistance needs, and highlights best practices. A Final Expenditure Report lists all expenditures related to the grant, including leveraged resources, and compares projections to actual expenditures. A Final Exit Report includes the final outcomes for all individuals enrolled under the grant.

Programmatic oversight is provided to ensure that the partnership is on track to meet timelines, outcomes, and other deliverables outlined in the Grant Agreement and that data are complete and accurate. Fiscal oversight is provided by at least three staff at the Department to confirm expenditures are allowable and reasonable. Grantees are monitored regularly to ensure that programmatic data is accurate. EARN staff provide feedback, including recommendations for implementing stronger data collection practices.

Per the Labor and Employment Article § 11-709(b)(4) of the Maryland Annotated Code, EARN Partnerships are required to collect and track certain demographic data for all participants taking part in EARN funded training, including sex, race, national origin, income, county of residence, and education attainment. Following the completion of training, partnerships must track certain outcome data, including whether each participant obtained a new credential or certification, identifiable skill, a new employment position, or a title or wage promotion. The required metrics covering July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023 are included as Appendix A to this report.

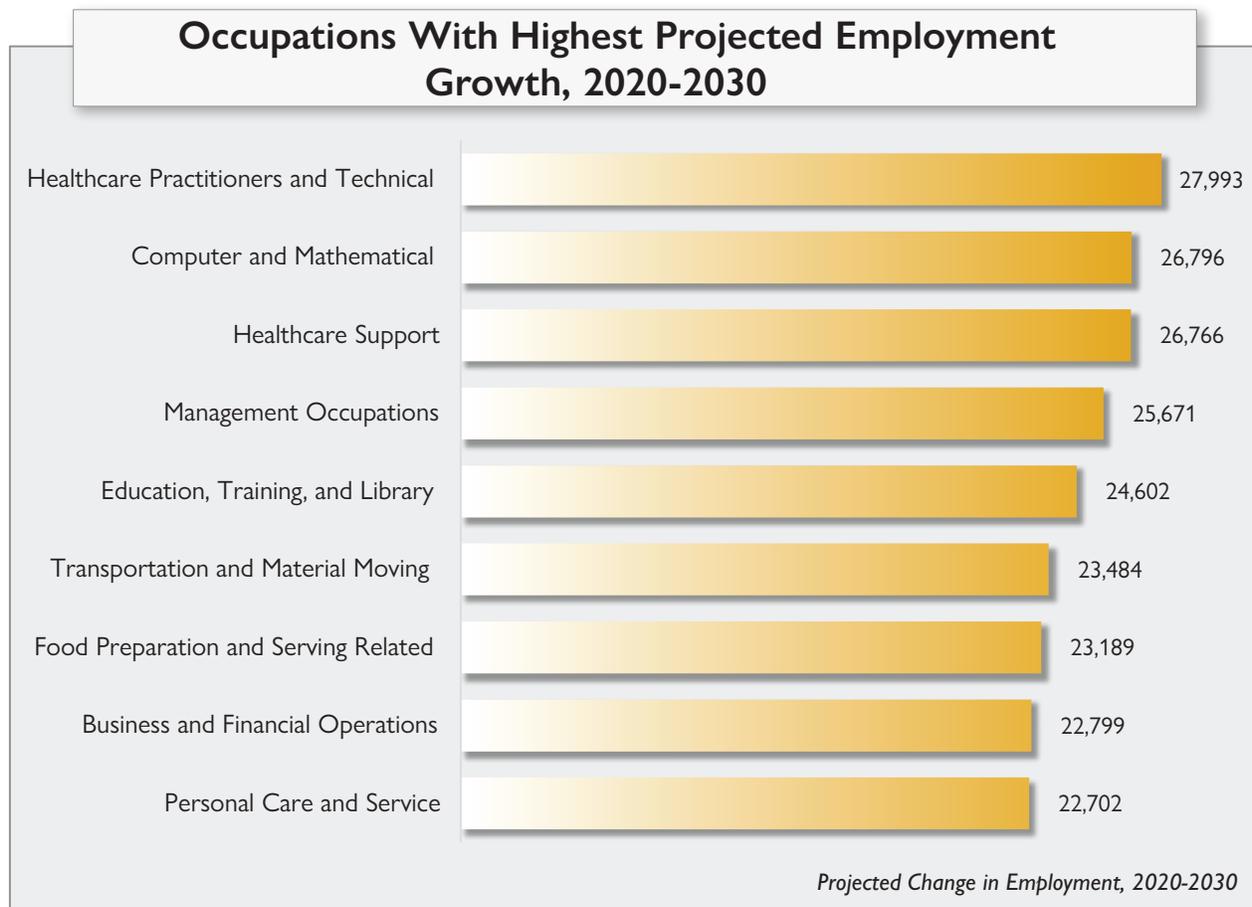
UTILIZING DATA

The Department utilizes data to ensure the industries in which EARN is investing are growth industries with strong earning potential. Below is a sampling of labor market information (LMI), which describes long-term industry projections and long-term occupational projections of employment trends between 2020 and 2030. More detailed information can be found in *Appendix B*.

According to long term industry projections (LTIP) data, total employment in Maryland is expected to increase by 305,269 between 2020 and 2030. As evidenced in the chart below, EARN funding supports half of the industries expected to grow through 2030. These industries include Healthcare, Hospitality, Construction, Manufacturing, and Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services. The Healthcare and Social Assistance sector (which includes childcare) will experience the largest positive change, accounting for 31% of the total projected growth.

INDUSTRY	PROJECTED EMPLOYMENT GROWTH, 2020 - 2030
Healthcare and Social Assistance	88,293
Educational Services	32,323
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	29,363
Accommodation and Food Services	27,122
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	22,950
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	16,868
Construction	13,713
Finance and Insurance	11,828
Management of Companies and Enterprises	9,772
Manufacturing	6,729

When analyzing long-term occupational projections, the top occupations by projected employment growth are mostly related to health, information technology, transportation, and hospitality, all key investment areas for EARN. This data, found in the chart below, demonstrates growing potential in these sectors.



A deeper analysis of the specific industries EARN supports continued investment. When considering IT, the “other information services” sector is expected to experience high growth at a rate of 71% and add 1,463 jobs through 2030. Additionally, employment in the “Data Processing, Hosting, and Related Services” industry is projected to grow by 42% and add 1,755 jobs. The chart below describes the earning potential and employment projections for some occupations in the IT industry.

Earning Potential and Employment Projections for Sample Occupations in the IT Industry

OCCUPATION NAME	EMPLOYMENT 2022	ANNUAL AVG OPENINGS 2020-2030	HOURLY MEAN WAGE	ANNUAL MEAN WAGE
Computer Network Architects	7,370	582	\$72.33	\$150,450
Information Security Analysts	9,070	1,003	\$65.35	\$135,920
Computer and Information Research Scientists	2,160	255	\$63.64	\$132,370
Computer Systems Analysts	14,440	1,591	\$51.98	\$108,120
Network and Computer Systems Administrators	9,310	1,178	\$51.89	\$107,930
Computer User Support Specialists	9,300	1,230	\$28.88	\$ 60,080

As noted above, the Healthcare and Social Assistance industry is expected to experience growth over the next several years. Specifically, the Hospitals subsector is expected to grow by 20%, adding nearly 30,000 jobs through 2030. In addition, the Nursing and Residential Care Facilities industry is projected to grow by 25%, adding close to 22,000 jobs through 2030.

The construction industry is also projected to grow in the next few years and shows strong earning potential, evidenced in the chart below. Construction and Extraction Occupations are expected to grow by 13,875 jobs. It is important to note that there are projected to be just over 18,000 job openings in this occupation group each year due to growth, labor force exits, and job transfers.

Earning Potential and Employment Projections for Sample Occupations in the Construction Industry

OCCUPATION	EMPLOYMENT 2022	ANNUAL AVG OPENINGS 2020-2030	HOURLY MEAN WAGE	ANNUAL MEAN WAGE
Construction Managers	6,110	997	\$56.74	\$118,020
First-Line Supervisors of Construction Trades and Extraction Workers	15,360	1,891	\$37.11	\$77,190
Operating Engineers and Other Construction Equipment Operators	5,610	769	\$27.27	\$56,730
Painters, Construction and Maintenance	3,920	882	\$22.76	\$47,340
Construction Laborers	20,060	3,284	\$20.73	\$43,120
Electricians	11,770	2,198	\$31.84	\$66,230
Carpenters	11,140	2,387	\$27.37	\$56,940

In addition to utilizing LMI, Labor requires prospective applicants to develop data-driven WTPs. The requirements contained within the Solicitation for Implementation Grant Proposals mirror the enabling statute's contingent funding requirements of evidence of workforce shortages and a demonstrated need for worker training. The *Winter 2023 Solicitation for Implementation Grant Proposals* requires that the WTP developed with EARN funds be both data-driven and experience-driven. This means that the plan prepared by the SIP must assess and address:

- Data-based evidence of shortages in skilled employment within the target industry over a sustained period of time or as projected, based upon planned large-scale programs or large-scale industry changes, and identification of specific high-demand occupations or sets of occupations at different skill and salary levels within the identified target industry.
- Real experiences from target industry employers regarding actual and projected gaps in skills training and job readiness. In development of the plan, prospective grantees should focus on ways to obtain input from a broad base of employers in their target industry and region in order to define common workforce needs. Some industries may have more internal data whereas other industries may rely more heavily on the experience of industry partners.
- Both qualitative and quantitative measures are important. SIPs should take into account both qualitative data provided by the target industry through varied collection methods (interviews, surveys, focus groups, roundtable discussions, etc.) and quantitative labor market and industry-specific data. Consideration may be given to such issues as understanding high demand occupations in industry, projected job growth by occupation, analysis of gaps between supply and demand of employees, understanding the root causes of these gaps, and characterizing the needed skills to close any gaps.





MD Labor Secretary Portia Wu visits Allegany College to tour the IT Center for Excellence EARN SIP.

CURRENT EARN MARYLAND STRATEGIC INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIPS

The following section provides a list of the SIPS that were active in 2023, the region in which they are operating, and a brief programmatic update.

CYBER/IT

IT Center of Excellence

Region: Western Maryland

Led by Allegany College, the IT Center for Excellence continues to provide in-demand training to meet the needs of employers in Western Maryland. The need to upskill incumbent workers remains a high priority for members of the partnership, which includes 13 employer partners and an array of government, economic development, and higher education entities. Through the first three quarters in 2023, nearly 50 incumbent workers participated in training opportunities focused on CompTIA Security+, Amazon Web Services (AWS) Cloud Practitioner, and Linux System Administration. In October, the partnership held its seventh annual Tech at the Gap conference, a professional development and networking opportunity meant to highlight Western Maryland as a thriving region for tech companies. This year's theme was Decoding Intelligence, and more than 200 individuals were in attendance.

Industry Feedback: "When an employee is trying to obtain an industry certification through self-study but struggles with the exam, we will send them to an IT Center training. Seeing them finally succeed, pass the certification exam, and be able to finally integrate into their desired roles on their project shows the positive impact of the EARN Maryland program."

techfrederick

Region: Western Maryland

Based upon the results of an annual needs assessment completed by their employer partners and members of the community, techfrederick deploys relevant training opportunities to bolster the skillsets of incumbent workers in the Frederick area and beyond. More than 100 individuals completed training through the first three quarters of 2023, and since inception, the partnership has trained more than 1,000 incumbent workers. Over the last year, techfrederick has deepened its relationship with AWS who provides a discount from their market rate, which is estimated to save the partnership just over \$30,000. As a result of this leveraged funding, the partnership is able to offer 1.5 more classes, thus stretching EARN funding further and reaching more individuals.

Participant Feedback: “Beyond grateful to techfrederick for providing this key training content. Working with impacted end users during User Acceptance Training is a large part of my change management role, and understanding the software testing lens will help support them and report back accurately to the technical testing team. Further, using this learning I was able to add to my credentials and was recently promoted within my organization!”

Intrusion Countermeasures Education and Training

Region: Baltimore City

Led by BCR Cyber, the ICET Partnership continues to provide a blend of technical and hands-on training to unemployed and underemployed individuals. Students earn industry-recognized credentials, such as CompTIA A+, Network+ and Security+, and work through hyper-realistic scenarios of real-world cybersecurity threats on a state-of-the-art range. The partnership continues to focus on providing opportunities for underrepresented populations, including women and people of color, and to date, more than 300 individuals have obtained employment upon completion of training. To ensure opportunities are available for participants to continue to develop in their careers, and in response to employer demand, the partnership has begun to implement training for the Cyber Maturation Model Certification (CMMC).

Participant Success Story: Monique was unemployed and receiving SNAP benefits when she enrolled in the ICET program. After completing training and earning several industry recognized certifications, Monique was offered a position with a prominent energy company as an IT Project Coordinator earning nearly \$65,000 annually with full benefits.

Partnership for Tech Talent

Region: Montgomery County and Baltimore City

Led by Per Scholas, the Partnership for Tech Talent provides an array of training offerings to students at their Silver Spring and Baltimore City campuses. Students have the opportunity to earn industry-recognized certifications like CompTIA A+, Network+, and AWS Certified Cloud Practitioner, and are prepared for positions such as Help Desk, Desktop Support, and Cyber Analyst. Through the first three quarters of 2023, nearly 160 individuals have participated in training and are working towards employment. Over recent months, Per Scholas has worked diligently to expand community partnerships. Examples of this work include a developing relationship with Catholic Charities to provide wraparound services such as financial literacy and childcare services to learners and adding Amerigroup as a referral source to reach prospective candidates who are receiving Medicaid benefits.

Participant Success Story: Kashira, a first-generation-American daughter of Jamaican parents, was born and raised in Maryland. The COVID-19 pandemic made Kashira realize she was interested in a career change. Growing up, she had an interest in computers and technology, so when a friend encouraged her to apply to Per Scholas, she decided to take a chance. Kashira enjoyed her experience at Per Scholas and found it to be positive and supportive. She liked the balance between technical training and professional development, and made the most of the extensive resources offered to learners. “The coursework was very rigorous,” Kashira recalled. “You learn something one day, then the very next day you’re tested on it, and then learn something new.” Upon graduating, Kashira was able to obtain employment as Service Desk Technician at a prominent healthcare company, combining her interests in technology and medicine.

Susquehanna IT/Cyber Partnership

Region: Susquehanna

Led by the Susquehanna Workforce Network, the Susquehanna IT/Cyber Partnership seeks to grow the talent pipeline in the region for a myriad of employer and industry partners, including Bowhead, University of Maryland Upper Chesapeake Health System, and the Aberdeen Proving Ground Army Alliance. Through rigorous training offered by Cecil College and Harford Community College, students are prepared to earn industry-recognized credentials, such as CompTIA A+, Network+, and Security+. In addition, the partnership offered Certified Cisco Network Associate (CCNA) and CISSP training over the last year.

Participant Success Story: Steven, a veteran, enrolled in training offered by the Susquehanna Cyber/IT Partnership with an interest in becoming a Computer IT Technician. He successfully completed training, earned CompTIA ITF+ and A+ credentials, and is working for a local employer.

SANS Cyber Workforce Academy

Region: Statewide, with a focus on the Capital and Central Regions

The SANS Cyber Workforce Academy continues to develop a diverse talent pipeline by providing training opportunities to underrepresented populations, including women, people of color, and veterans. Students receive advanced technical training around topics such as hacker tools and techniques, incident handling, and security essentials. Training culminates with the opportunity to earn industry-recognized certifications including the Global Information Assurance Certification (GIAC) and the Global Certified Incident Handler (GCIH). Over the last year, more than 60 individuals have obtained employment with average starting wages exceeding \$30 per hour. The partnership works with nearly 40 employer partners, including recent additions such as Ernst and Young, Leidos, and Cisco.

Participant Success Story: Dominic is an Army Veteran and Military Spouse. He built on his existing passion for cyber and background in satellite communications to complete GSEC and GCIH through the Cyber Workforce Academy and has accepted a position with AWS as a Cloud Support Engineer making triple his previous salary.

NPower Tech Fundamentals Program

Region: Baltimore

With campuses in East and West Baltimore, the NPower Tech Fundamentals Program seeks to transform the lives of marginalized young people and transitioning veterans by preparing them for entry-level tech careers. Students receive up to 20 weeks of instruction in preparation for earning CompTIA A+, Net+, and ITF+ certifications and gain exposure to Microsoft, Cisco, AWS, and other leading technologies. In addition, students have the option to take advantage of a paid internship opportunity to hone their newly acquired skills in a professional setting. Employer partners include corporate, nonprofit, tech incubator, and other industry partners. To date, more than 300 individuals have obtained employment with industry partners such as Northrup Grumman, TD Ameritrade, and Under Armor.

Participant Success Story: When Mikayla enrolled in the Tech Fundamentals Program, she was looking for a career change after working in retail for seven years. She enjoyed the structured curriculum and personal development components of the program, like interview preparation and mentorship opportunities. Upon graduation, she landed a role at the Baltimore Community Helpdesk, where she has the opportunity to use her customer service skills to help others with their technology challenges.

UMBC Training Centers' Technical Career Pathways

Region: Central Maryland

Led by UMBC Training Centers, this partnership is working to address the workforce training needs of the military, intelligence community, federal civilian agencies, and the commercial sector through a blend of classroom and hands-on technical training. In 2023, the partnership focused on providing upskilling opportunities for incumbent workers,

training more than 130 individuals in topics such as cyber foundations, project management, Javascript, and Python. It is estimated that more than 38 different employer and industry partners sent employees to training through the first three quarters of 2023, including Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Lab, T. Rowe Price, and Morgan State University.

Participant Feedback: “Through this training program, I was able to deepen my understanding of the security domain, thoroughly prepare for the CISSP exam, and gain a comprehensive grasp of the complexities and challenges faced in the field. EARN has undoubtedly provided me with an exceptional platform for professional growth and development in the realm of information security.

Baltimore Cyber Academy

Region: Baltimore City

The Baltimore Cybersecurity Academy, led by I’m Still Standing Community Development Corporation (ISSCDC), is providing training to unemployed and underemployed individuals to prepare them for careers in cybersecurity. Through training, students are prepared to earn industry-recognized credentials, such as CompTIA A+, Security+, and Network+, and receive hands-on experience through lab training. To date, more than 100 individuals have obtained employment, with recent job placements averaging nearly \$30 per hour. In 2023, ISSCDC relocated to a space in Baltimore County which will allow the organization to offer training in other in-demand industries.

Participant Feedback: “As I look back on where I was in my life when God led me to ISSCDC, I remember being someone who didn’t have much of a purpose in life. I wasn’t happy or sad, but I was just here for the ride. So, when I was introduced to ISSCDC through a chance meeting, I decided to give it a shot. Fast forward to 2023 and now I have graduated from the program, earned my A+ certification, and became an instructor!”

Maryland Cyber Skills Alliance

Region: Statewide

Led by CompTIA, the Maryland Cyber Skills Alliance is seeking to address the growing shortage of skilled cybersecurity professionals through implementation of the CompTIA Tech Career Academy. The program offers 16 weeks of virtual instructor-led training, which provides students with baseline security skills and prepares students to test for the CompTIA A+ certification. Upon successful program completion, students are prepared for immediate employment in entry-level IT job roles, such as Help Desk Technician and System Support Specialist. Humanim continues to play an integral role in the partnership, providing case management and assisting with job placement activities.

Health IT SIP

Region: Central Maryland

Led by the Community College of Baltimore County (CCBC), the Health IT SIP continues to engage large healthcare employers, such as University of Maryland Medical System, Johns Hopkins Hospital, and LifeBridge Health, to provide integral training opportunities for incumbent workers. In 2023, more than 30 individuals participated in training that covered topics such as project management, data, and agile. Students are required to complete assignments that require application of new principles to their current roles. The partnership regularly solicits feedback from participants post-training which allows for continuous improvement in course content and delivery.

Participant Feedback: “I was able to apply the principles in my current role and was able to streamline/document our deployment process.”

Advanced Cybersecurity Training Consortium

Region: Statewide

Led by BCR Cyber, the Advanced Cybersecurity Training Consortium is a collaboration with all 16 of Maryland’s community colleges and more than 20 employer and industry partners. The training offered by the Consortium is meant

to increase the employability of students by providing access to BCR Cyber's state-of-the-art range and giving students the opportunity work through hyper-realistic scenarios of real-world cybersecurity threats. To date, nearly 500 individuals have obtained employment, including close to 90 graduates in 2023. In addition, to support the cyber ecosystem, the partnership continues to offer training opportunities to incumbent workers related to the CISSP certification.

Participant Success Story: Sarah was working as a nail technician when she enrolled in the ACT program. After completing the program, she was able to earn an industry-recognized credential. Soon after, she was offered and accepted a full-time position with a prominent defense contractor as a Security Operations Center (SOC) Analyst at a starting annual salary of \$65,000 per year plus full benefits.

Building an IT and Cybersecurity Talent Pipeline

Region: Anne Arundel County

Led by the Anne Arundel Workforce Development Corporation (AAWDC), this partnership seeks to meet the needs of its diverse employer partners by providing customized training based upon industry-identified skills gaps. Candidates are assessed based on their knowledge, skills, and abilities, which are captured through technical hands-on cyber assessments. Training is then assigned based upon the areas identified as needing improvement. Individuals also receive industry mentorship, on-job-training, and have the ability to earn industry-recognized credentials. In 2024, the partnership looks forward to reinvigorating the partnership with a renewed focus on engaging employers and developing RA programming to support the workforce.

Cybersecurity Education and Certification Program

Region: Baltimore

Based upon feedback from their employer partners, the Cybersecurity Education and Certification Program, led by CCBC is offering in-demand and relevant training to incumbent workers. In 2023, nearly 30 individuals participated in coursework which is meant to prepare them to test for Security+, PenTest+, and Linux+ certifications. Students participate in exam preparation and receive vouchers for certification exams, which limits the financial burden. The partnership continues to bolster relationships with the Cybersecurity Association of Maryland (CAMI), the Maryland Tech Council, and the Fort Meade Alliance. In March of 2023, CCBC was approved by the Maryland Apprenticeship and Training Council (MATC) to become an RA Sponsor for the occupation of Cyber Security Support Technician.

Participant Feedback: "CCBC was instrumental in my ability to pass the exams and I am extremely grateful for everything that the cybersecurity/IT program has done for me. I'm looking forward to the future thanks to CCBC. Thank you for the EARN grant program. It's a great value and opportunity."

Maryland Cyber Security Operations Center Training Partnership

Region: Statewide

Led by Transmosis, this partnership is preparing individuals for careers in cybersecurity as SOC analysts. Students participate in a six-week SOC Analyst training. This training is offered in partnership with Cybrary and prepares students to test for the CompTIA Net+ certification. Phase two prepares students for the configuration, operation, and management of an industry leading SOC platform, all skills necessary to successfully earn the CompTIA Sec+ certification. The final phase of training includes exam preparation, which includes completing a simulated online exam. Thirteen students are actively enrolled and will complete training by the end of 2023.

Participant Success Story: Prior to enrolling in the SOC training, Natasha was earning an annual salary of about \$20,000. She applied herself throughout training, earning critical competencies to be successful in cybersecurity. Upon completion of training, she is earning nearly triple her previous salary working as an IT Coordinator.

Education Partnership for IT Careers

Region: Baltimore City

In 2023, ByteBack continued to provide opportunities for underrepresented Baltimore City residents. Students start the program with a course in digital literacy, which helps individuals with little-to-no tech experience form a solid foundation. From there, students have the option to choose between two different training tracks. The first, Information Technology, prepares students to test for the CompTIA A+ certification, while the Administrative track offers certification in Microsoft Office Specialist. Over the last year, 23 students enrolled in the IT pathway. Students who complete technical training also receive support on drafting cover letters, honing interview skills, and learn skills related to workplace etiquette. Due to low interest in the Administrative track, the partnership is exploring adding CompTIA ITF+ as an offering in 2024.

Smoothstack IT Apprenticeships

Region: Statewide

The goal of this SIP is to provide Registered Apprenticeship opportunities to underrepresented communities by removing barriers to entry. Apprentices have the opportunity to select between two different training tracks: cybersecurity or software development. The program includes immersive training, mentorship, and real-life work experience. The Related Instruction, a core component of the Registered Apprenticeship model, is front-loaded during the first 16 weeks of the program, allowing students to hone their newly acquired technical skills in the workplace. To increase enrollment, Smoothstack created new partnerships with WorkSource Montgomery, Employ Prince George's, and Morgan State University in 2023.

Participant Success Story: Ben had been unemployed for several months when he enrolled at SmoothStack. He has excelled in the technical training, earning his Kubernetes Certified Application Development certification. He is now working as a DevOps Analyst earning nearly \$30 per hour.

Cybersecurity Talent Catalyst Program

Region: Howard County

Led by the Cybersecurity Association of Maryland, this partnership seeks to accelerate the cybersecurity workforce pipeline through providing vital training opportunities to unemployed and underemployed individuals and is also focused on upskilling incumbent workers. In partnership with eight employers, Howard Community College, and the Columbia Workforce Center, the partnership will offer training opportunities to 48 individuals in a variety of topics, including Cloud Fundamentals, CompTIA A+, Security Compliance, and Project Management. The partnership will also offer work-based learning practicums for unemployed or underemployed individuals.

Cybersecurity Operational Methods Education Training (COMET)

Region: Statewide

In late 2022, BCR Cyber partnered with the Maryland DoIT to launch the COMET program. The goal of the partnership is to provide in-demand and relevant training to State of Maryland employees who are responsible for cybersecurity preparedness across state agencies. To date, more than 150 individuals have participated in training, more than 20 state and independent agencies. Participants receive training to test for the CompTIA Sec+ and CISSP. DoIT plans to disseminate a needs assessment to state agencies in early 2024 to ascertain what training topics are of interest.



Donated by an employer partner, Cecil College uses this bus to allow for students to train for their CDL driver's license.

TRANSPORTATION/LOGISTICS

Susquehanna Transportation and Logistics SIP

Region: Susquehanna

Led by Cecil College, the Susquehanna Transportation and Logistics SIP continues to provide in-demand training opportunities for individuals to become commercial truck drivers. Students receive scholarships to participate in training that prepares them to test for CDL-A and CDL-B licensure. Additionally, in 2022, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) released new regulations that significantly impacted requirements for Entry-Level Driver training, which limited the ability for employers to provide training internally. The need to partner with an outside trainer to deliver this training presented challenges for many employers, especially smaller companies with limited training budgets. As such, the SIP began to offer training for incumbent workers, offsetting 50% of the cost, to help smaller employers remain in compliance with these regulations.

Employer Feedback: “The EARN grant has made a huge impact for us here at Jerry Preston Hauling, both for managers and students. This grant has given us the ability to send more students through the program, increasing business and employee opportunities. The investment we have in new hires today is exponentially larger than in years passed. The EARN grant alleviates some of these financial pressures, helping us to fill the need for CDL drivers in Maryland. We plan to continue our partnership with Cecil College as we have had an 80% retention rate after graduation.”

Mid-Maryland MOVE

Region: Montgomery County

Mid-Maryland MOVE continues to work with employer partners, such as Montgomery County Public Schools and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, to provide in-demand training to meet the growing demand for CDL-B drivers. The partnership enjoys a close relationship with Hagerstown Community College which allows students

the option to participate in CDL-A training as well. Successful completers continue to be placed into employment at high rates with average starting wages nearing \$25 per hour. In 2023, Montgomery College leveraged other grant funding to purchase a box truck.

Western Maryland MOVE

Region: Western Maryland

Led by Hagerstown Community College (HCC), this partnership continues to provide training to meet the needs of transportation and logistics-focused employers in Western Maryland, offering CDL-A, CDL-B, Forklift Operator, and Diesel Technician training. Employer partners include DM Bowman, DOT Foods, and Pleasants Paving. In 2023, the partnership formulated a referral relationship with Brooke's House, a transitional sober home for women. In addition, HCC is piloting a bridge program with Frederick Community College aimed at connecting English Language Learners to CDL training. Since inception, the partnership has placed nearly 450 individuals into employment. Over the last year, HCC has received nearly \$800,000 in other grant funding to support efforts related to this program.

Participant Feedback: "It was a wonderful experience. We learned a lot we did not know before, including how to drive a larger truck. The instructors were amazing! Now, I have my CDL Class B license. You can take a CDL B license anywhere and get a job. The EARN scholarship was very beneficial in getting through the class. It was a blessing."

Maritime Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics Partnership

Region: Baltimore

Led by Maryland New Directions, the consortium works with more than 30 employer and industry partners who regularly participate in programming. The partnership offers two training tracks: the Maritime Transportation Distribution and Logistics (MTDL) prepares individuals for work at the Port of Baltimore, whereas the Commercial Transportation Careers (CTC) program prepares students to become commercial truck drivers. In addition to technical training, participants are offered financial literacy, mental health supports, and legal aid. On a monthly basis, the partnership hosts between four and six employers who present to students about their company. These interactions strengthen connections between students and prospective employers and often lead directly to employment, sometimes even before training ends.

Industry Feedback: An employer partner of this SIP reports that 75% of their bus drivers are graduates of the program. Because individuals coming out of this program are well-trained and qualified, the company heavily relies on the pipeline of graduates coming from Maryland New Directions.

Anne Arundel County Transportation Industry Collaborative

Region: Anne Arundel County

Led by AAWDC, this partnership seeks to provide individuals with relevant training for careers in the transportation industry. Through much of 2023, AAWDC focused on selecting a new vendor to provide training. Training resumed in late 2023. The partnership looks forward to continuing to support its employer and industry partners with their workforce needs.

BIOTECHNOLOGY

Baltimore BioTechnology SIP

Region: Baltimore

Led by Baltimore BioWorks, this partnership provides customized training to meet the needs of its nearly seventy employer and industry partners. Training ranges from basic laboratory techniques and instrumentation to bio-manufacturing. In addition, the partnership supports students attending Baltimore City Community College's degree and certificate training in Laboratory Animal Sciences and Biotechnology. Since inception, nearly 440 individuals have



BioTrain bootcamp students learning biotechnology essential skills.

obtained employment, some of whom have also continued to pursue further education. Most notably, 97% of students trained under the partnership's most recent grant obtained employment earning an average wage of close to \$18 an hour.

Participant Success Story: Mariah, a high school graduate, dreamed of a career in biotechnology but feared it would not be an option given her limited means to pursue higher education. The SIP supported her coursework at BCCC where she was able to earn an associate degree in biotechnology while working part-time in the industry. In 2021, she earned a bachelor's degree from Notre Dame of Maryland University. Mariah is currently working at the University of Maryland Baltimore Laboratories and pursuing her Doctoral degree tuition free.

BioTrain

Region: Montgomery

BioTrain, led by Montgomery College, works closely with their ten employer partners, such as AstraZeneca and Quality Biological, to provide critical upskilling opportunities for incumbent workers. In 2023, technical training topics included Protein Purification, Bioreactors, and aseptic techniques, among others. In addition, employer partners identified a need for essential skills training on topics like resiliency, critical thinking, and problem solving. In total, 125 incumbent workers participated in training through the first three quarters of 2023. The partnership also provided job development support to students who completed their bootcamp program, which consists of hands-on laboratory training combined with lectures. As a result, 14 students obtained employment in the industry. In response to industry trends and a projected decrease in the need for entry-level workers, the partnership is pausing the bootcamp and will remain focused on upskilling incumbent workers in 2024.

Participant Success Story: "Life took an unexpected turn when I lost my job. By this time, I had worked for over three decades in research and wasn't prepared for life without a steady income. I also feared that my age would work against me since I was within retirement range in a few years. While looking for work, I had to depend on social programs for basic necessities. When I hadn't landed an interview in over five months and was feeling hopeless, I changed course and looked into acquiring additional skills that would boost my hire ability. That's when I found the BioTrain program at Montgomery College. It was free, and lucky for me, starting a new cohort soon. Since I had no income, it was exactly what I needed at the time. Within two weeks of starting the bootcamp, I landed my first job interview and soon

BTI students pose for a photo with Dr. Fawcett as they start their Biotechnology training.



after, accepted a job offer as a Senior Biomanufacturing Associate at Charles River Labs as a member of the Research/Virus Production Team. If ever there was a fairy-tale ending, this was it. Charles River Labs has an amazing work culture where I'm valued and there are many opportunities for growth. They say things happen for a reason. I'm glad my job loss led me to a new career in biotechnology, and to the wonderful teachers who invested so much in our success."

Baltimore BioPrep

Region: Baltimore

Led by the BioTechnical Institute of Maryland, Baltimore BioPrep provides a combination of classroom and hands-on lab skills training to prepare individuals for entry-level careers in biotechnology. Sixteen employer partners have hired graduates, including Johns Hopkins and the University of Maryland School of Medicine. The France-Merrick Foundation recently awarded BTI funding to develop a Virtual Reality training program which will allow the organization to expand its reach and increase skill quality and retention while lowering the cost and time it takes to provide training. In 2023, BTI formed a partnership with Morgan State University and is now able to offer mental health services on-site. This is an important addition to the cadre of supportive services the organization provides, and it is expected that this will bolster success in the workplace.

Participant Success Story: Micha was working a minimum wage job when he became interested in pursuing a career in biotechnology. He enrolled in the BTI lab tech training program and excelled. In addition to the technical training, he participated in mock interviews and greatly benefitted from the essential skills training offered by BTI, like time management. Micha received a job offer prior to completing training and is now earning 66% more than he was previously. In his new role, he has taken on managerial responsibilities including training other employees.

Medicinal Cannabis Workforce SIP

Region: Statewide

Led by CannaWorkforce, this partnership was first funded in October of 2022 after receiving a planning grant to develop curriculum and engage employer partners. This SIP is the first EARN-funded program that is supporting the medicinal cannabis industry. Given the expected growth and demand for a skilled workforce, it is important to note that federal funding cannot be used to support training in this industry. With a focus on equity, the partnership provides individualized



John learning skills to become a Trim Associate in the emerging Cannabis industry.

hands-on training which prepares students for careers as Trim Associates. In addition to growing the partnership to more than 40 members, CannaWorkforce has placed 85% of students into employment earning between \$17 and \$20 per hour. To be responsive to employer and industry- identified needs, the partnership is in the process of developing curriculum to train Cultivation Technicians and Dispensary Attendants.

Participant Success Story: John was unemployed and looking for a new career when he enrolled in the training offered by CannaWorkforce. Of his experience he said, “my training allowed me to cultivate skills that are highly in demand, all while giving me a space to expand upon cannabis history, myths, and ideology.” Upon completion of his training, he was offered a position earning \$17 per hour. John stated, “I feel I have been provided the fundamental steppingstones needed to build a future in the cannabis business profession acumen.”

GREEN

Clean Energy Training Partnership *Region: Howard and Baltimore County*

In close collaboration with nearly 30 industry partners, the Clean Energy Training Partnership is preparing unemployed and underemployed individuals for careers in the solar industry. The program, which is accredited by the National Center for Construction, Education & Research (NCCER), includes 225 hours of classroom instruction, OSHA 10, 75 lab hours, and 20 hours of job readiness training. In addition, participants receive financial literacy training and case management services for up to twelve months post-graduation. As the industry rapidly evolves, Power52 is continuously updating curriculum to ensure that it remains relevant, recently adding topics around electric vehicles, floating solar, and offshore wind. Nearly 140 individuals have obtained employment since the partnership began.

Participant Success Story: Before learning about Power52, Amina was experiencing housing instability and was unsure about her future. She enrolled in training and quickly established herself as a leader in her cohort. In addition to earning OSHA-30, First Aid/CPR, an AED credential, and a Power52 Certificate of completion which articulates into college credits, Amina actively participated in Power Principle and Professional Development sessions. Following Power52’s Speed Interview Clinic, Amina received multiple job offers. She accepted a position where she currently earns \$23 per hour plus benefits. Since graduating, Amina has secured her own apartment and a personal vehicle so that she is able to get to and from work.



Power52 student in training to enter a career in the solar industry.

Solar Installation Training Partnership

Region: Baltimore City

Led by Civic Works, the Solar Installation Training Partnership continues to provide in-demand training to unemployed, underemployed, and incumbent workers. In response to industry trends, this partnership focused mainly on upskilling incumbent workers in 2023, training more than 60 individuals. Incumbent workers receive training in topics such as leadership, project management, energy analysis and customer service. Based on employer feedback, Civic Works is updating the curriculum to include technical sales training, which will enable participants to consider a broader range of solar positions across multiple career tracks. Over the last year, 10 individuals obtained employment after completing entry-level training at an average wage of nearly \$20 per hour. The partnership will continue its work in 2024.

Participant Success Story: Liam embarked on the 7-week solar program with steadfast determination and a hunger for learning. Despite the challenge of completing the program as an English as a second language student, Liam's commitment was unwavering. Through dedicated effort, Liam navigated through the course curriculum, seeking assistance when needed. With a demonstrated passion for sustainable energy, Liam inspired both peers and instructors alike. In June 2023, Liam graduated and landed employment with one of SITP's employer partners earning \$19 per hour.

Wor-Wic Welding SIP

Region: Eastern Shore

The demand for welders and metal fabricators on the Eastern Shore is expected to skyrocket to meet the needs of the emerging offshore wind industry. To prepare for this demand, the Wor-Wic Welding SIP is providing relevant, in-demand training for entry-level positions. The partnership offers two training tracks. The first is an 18-week welding course that teaches stick, flux core, MIG, and TIG welding. In 2023, the second training track was reimagined and now includes both machining and metal fabrication. In this course, students have the opportunity to earn up to 12 OSHA certifications. Over the last year, 18 individuals completed programming with 17, or 94% obtaining employment with employers such as Chesapeake Shipbuilding, Delaware Elevator, Crystal Steel, and Cambridge International. In 2023, Wor-Wic opened the state-of-the-art Guerreri Technology Center where welding training will occur moving forward.

Industry Feedback: "The fabrication training program has provided a significant improvement to the overall skill level of the metal working workforce on the Eastern Shore. The program not only makes the Eastern Shore a more attractive location for development of offshore wind energy, but many other industries- including Chesapeake Shipbuilding, the leading builder of private U.S.-flagged cruise ships in the US. Wor-Wic's programs have never been more critical than what we see over the next few years. These welding and metal fabrication programs meet a critical training need for the Lower Eastern Shore and help drive economic development."

Wor-Wic welding graduate being presented with his certification upon completing the training program.



Energy Efficiency Strategic Industry Partnership

Region: Baltimore City

Led by Civic Works, the Energy Efficiency Strategic Industry Partnership is providing training to unemployed, underemployed, and incumbent workers. In early 2023, in response to industry adjustments, including significant changes to credentialing requirements, the partnership paused to update curriculum. In August, the partnership enrolled nine individuals into entry-level training. An extension was approved for their current grant, and it is expected that Civic Works will exceed all deliverables within the new grant period.

Water and Wastewater Career Development Partnership

Region: Statewide

Led by the College of Southern Maryland, the Water and Wastewater Career Development Partnership seeks to provide water and wastewater operators with the skills necessary to pass a required certification exam. Employers such as the City of Salisbury, Easton Utilities, and several county Department of Public Works have sent workers to participate in the program. Training topics include applied mathematics, concepts of drinking water, and wastewater collection. Trainees also have the opportunity to participate in an exam preparation course. In 2023, nearly 100 individuals participated in training, many of whom are preparing to test for the certification exam.

Participant Success Story: The Director of Water Works for the City of Salisbury shared that an employee within a few years of retirement completed the exam prep course, passed his certification exam, and received a raise. As a result of the wage increase, he will be better prepared financially for and during his retirement.

Green Infrastructure SIP

Region: Central Maryland

The goal of the Green Infrastructure SIP is to empower a diverse workforce to understand, respect, and restore our natural systems for this and future generations. With a focus on stormwater management, ecological restoration, and sustainable landscaping, the SIP is providing training in technical topics such as environmental literacy, safety, tools, and plant ecology. Participants will also have the opportunity to earn the Chesapeake Bay Landscaping Professional – Associate (CBLP-A) certification, OSHA 10, and First Aid/CPR. In addition to technical training, participants receive essential skills and job readiness training on topics such as professional communication, conflict resolution, and leadership. To date, 13 individuals have obtained employment.

Participant Success Story: Michael began training in the Spring of 2023. In just a few months, he was promoted to Crew Leader, taking on new roles and responsibilities. Recently, he received a second promotion and is now a full-time, permanent employee of Howard EcoWorks.

HEALTHCARE

Community Health Worker Partnership

Region: Western Maryland

Led by the Asian American Center of Frederick (AACF), this partnership is providing training to grow the number of community health workers (CHW) in Western Maryland. Upon completion of training, students are prepared to obtain employment in a variety of settings, ranging from hospitals to Local Health Departments. Their work makes a meaningful impact in the community by providing services to marginalized populations. AACF continues to adapt to the demands of the industry, and recently partnered with Hagerstown Community College to add a training module on Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias. The partnership continues to build out its RA program by adding new employer and industry partners. In 2023, the CHW partnership trained a cohort of six participants from the deaf community, which will ensure CHW services are available to individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing in the community. To date, 110 individuals have obtained employment and 60 incumbent workers have benefitted from training.



Beth poses for a photo while in training with AACF.

Participant Success Story: Beth is a member of the deaf community who was unemployed when she enrolled in the CHW training offered by AACF. Upon completion of training, she obtained employment with a state agency, where she oversees vocational rehabilitation services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Community. She is earning \$34 per hour. Of her experience she says, “I thank AACF for the opportunity to participate in the EARN funded CHW Certification Program, it has changed my life for the better.”

Baltimore Healthcare Partnership

Region: Baltimore

The Baltimore Healthcare Partnership, led by the Baltimore Alliance for Careers in Healthcare (BACH), works as a healthcare workforce intermediary and partners closely with the seven major hospitals in Baltimore City and a wide array of community-based organizations to provide training to unemployed, underemployed, and incumbent workers. In 2023, the partnership provided training to prepare individuals to become certified as CNAs, GNAs, PCT, and Pharmacy Technicians. In 2023, the partnership launched an employer workgroup which meets regularly to discuss training needs across the different employer representatives. This group will ensure offerings remain relevant and aligned with industry demand. Since inception, the partnership has placed more than 900 individuals into new positions and provided critical upskilling opportunities for many incumbent workers.

Participant Success Story: “I really appreciate BACH for being there for me to take my classes and help with money for a sitter for my kids so that I could go to training. I am a single mom and do not have extra money. I got to go to my CNA/GNA classes for free which was a blessing. I was worried about how to pay the sitter, but BACH told me that I could have my kids taken care of and there was money to help. I do not know if I could have done it without getting the help from BACH. I am definitely trying to move forward in my job goals. I am already working on getting things together in my life so that I can apply for the Medical Assistant or LPN Apprenticeship at BACH.”

Healthcare Mentorship Maryland

Region: Baltimore Region and Western Maryland

In 2023, Healthcare Mentorship Maryland continued to provide valuable training opportunities to individuals in the Baltimore Region. Students are prepared for certification and employment as CNAs/GNAs. In addition, the partnership provides a career pathway for incumbent workers who wish to pursue the PCT certification. To maximize the success of their participants, the SIP provides supportive services such as childcare and housing assistance. The partnership has placed nearly 200 individuals, or more than 90% of individuals who complete training, into employment.

Participant Success Story: Daria started CNA/GNA training with Pressley Ridge in June of 2023. Soon after she began training, she experienced personal issues that prevented her from continuing the program. Pressley Ridge stayed in communication with Daria and encouraged her to continue training when she was able. She completed training and obtained her certifications. Of her experience she said, “I would like to thank Pressley Ridge because I’ve never been more confident and prepared for the world. I loved this program because I didn’t feel lost or confused. Everything we learned about was pure, and I was able to understand. I would love to tell everyone I know about the program, for those who need a better path in life and those who have things they can’t overcome. I feel this program was gratefully needed for my life.”

PharmaTech Connect

Region: Baltimore City

Led by Goodwill Industries of the Chesapeake (Goodwill), PharmaTech Connect prepares students for careers as pharmacy technicians. In partnership with CVS Health, Walgreens, and Baltimore City Community College, students participate in an 18-week pre-certification program. Individuals complete all prerequisites to sit for Maryland’s Pharmacy

Technician Certification Exam, including CPR training, Pharmacy Calculations, and Pharmacy Theory courses. Upon completion of classroom training, students participate in a 160-hour Pharmacy Technician Clinical with their employer partners. Over 90 percent of participants in the program identify as women of color. In October, Goodwill opened the Baltimore Excel Center, a tuition-free high school for adults 21 and older. Goodwill hopes graduates from their adult high school will transition to the PharmaTech Connect program.

Participant Success Story: Zara enrolled in the Pharmacy Technician training program in July of 2022. She completed all required coursework, received transportation and case management support before successfully graduating. She was hired for a part-time role earning \$16 per hour, but with a desire to increase her earnings, she reached out to Goodwill for support. With the help of the Goodwill Employment Specialist, she was able to transition to a full-time position earning \$17 per hour. Zara’s ultimate goal is to work in a hospital setting and is committed to continuing her education to meet this goal.

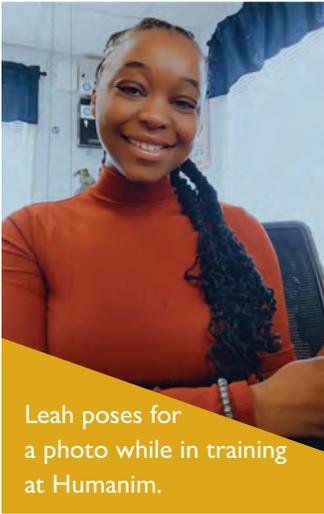
Healthcare Partnership of Maryland *Region: Central Maryland*

Led by IT Works Learning Center (IT Works), this partnership works closely with nearly 30 employer partners to grow the number of highly-skilled workers to support the healthcare industry. Students are prepared for positions as CNAs/ GNAs and PCTs. IT Works strategically involves employer and industry partners during the recruitment and screening process, and students receive contingent offers of employment early on in training. This serves as a great motivator for students to successfully complete training. In addition, IT Works provides extensive supportive services, including transportation and housing supports, which leads to strong retention rates. These strategies have proven successful as IT Works reported an impressive 85% placement rate on the organization’s recent grant. In 2023, IT Works expanded its offerings to Baltimore City, greatly expanding the partnership’s geographic reach.

Participant Success Story: Jacqueline had recently lost her job when she learned about the training offered by IT Works. Though she had earned a High School Diploma, Jacqueline had learning challenges which required extra support for her to be successful in class. During training, Jacqueline experienced personal difficulties, including an unsafe home environment and the death of a loved one. IT Works was able to help Jacqueline to secure safe housing and allowed her to take a break to mourn her loss. Upon her return, she received support from her instructor which allowed her to master the course material and pass her exams. Jacqueline graduated from training and is currently working as a CNA.



IT Works graduates pose for a photo after their graduation ceremony.



Leah poses for a photo while in training at Humanim.

Baltimore Regional Healthcare/Higher Education SIP

Region: Baltimore City

Led by Humanim, the Baltimore Regional Healthcare/Higher Education SIP offers a nine-week training program, which prepares participants for careers as administrative assistants in the healthcare and higher education fields. Students have the opportunity to earn industry-recognized certifications, including Microsoft Office and the Professional Certificate of Excellence from the Association of Administrative Professionals. Classroom training is augmented by advanced professional soft skills development, wraparound and financial stability reports, and a 2-week hands-on learning experience where students further hone their newly acquired skills in a real-life work environment. In 2023, Humanim incorporated new topics around mental health, work-life balance, and personal development into their curriculum. Leveraging the support of anchor employers like Johns Hopkins University, Towson University, Mercy Medical Center, and University of Maryland Medical System, nearly 85% of students who complete programming have been placed into employment.

Participant Success Story: Prior to enrolling in the Administrative Assistant training program, Leah had been working in the fast-food industry for several years. While she was ready to try something new that would offer her a career, she had barriers that she worried would preclude her from successfully completing training. She needed reliable and affordable childcare for her two children and did not have transportation to get to and from training. Her case manager was able to help with both challenges. Through training, Leah enhanced her computer skills and participated in mock interviews with employers where she received valuable feedback. Leah successfully obtained employment as an Administrative Assistant making \$16 per hour and has been employed for over one year!

Direct Support Professionals Consortium

Region: Montgomery

Led by Seeking Employment, Equality and Community (SEEC), this partnership provides training for incumbent workers who are currently employed as DSPs who support people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Since inception, this partnership has been hyper-focused on increasing the retention of DSPs through the creation of a true career pathway. This model has proven successful as employer partners report a 90% or greater retention rate for individuals who participate in this training which will exceed industry average. In addition, participants report greater job satisfaction and confidence in their skills. To date, the consortium has trained over 400 incumbent workers with 95% of individuals participating earning a new certification or credential. Based on employer feedback, the partnership recently developed and launched a training to support skill development of frontline supervisors which will continue in 2024.

Participant Success Story: Growing up in Ghana, Daisy knew she wanted a career in a profession where she could help people to be healthy and to overcome challenges. In college, Daisy earned a degree in psychology and a certificate in special education. However, when she came to the United States in 2017, she found herself working an unfulfilling job in retail. When a friend learned about her educational background, she encouraged Daisy to apply to SEEC. Shortly thereafter, Daisy was hired as a job coach, providing direct support in customized, integrated employment to adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Daisy honed her skills, working with a range of people and formulating progressively more ambitious goals. After four years, Daisy was encouraged to enroll in the DSP II training program. She successfully completed training, earned her credential, and subsequently, a wage increase. Daisy earned her DSP II credential, along with an hourly wage increase. Daisy noticed “profound changes in my style of support and overall approach to working with people with disabilities.” Within a year of earning her DSP II, Daisy was promoted to a salaried position and has gone on to earn additional credentials.



MD Labor Deputy Assistant Secretary Perkins-Cohen and Department of Disabilities Secretary Beatty attended an event to celebrate the work of DSPs who were nominated for awards by their employers and peers.

Ready to Care

Region: Eastern Shore

Led by the Eastern Shore Area Health Education Center (ESAHEC), Ready to Care leverages strong relationships with Cecil College, Chesapeake College, and Wor-Wic Community College to provide training for individuals on the Eastern Shore. The consortium seeks to prepare individuals for careers as CNAs. Since inception, Ready to Care has placed nearly 175 into employment, which has helped to make inroads on the shortage of healthcare workers in the region. To bolster employability among their students, the partnership is exploring incorporating additional credentialing opportunities, including Youth Mental Health First Aid and Community Health Worker training. The partnership will continue its work in 2024.

Participant Success Story: When Ellie relocated to Caroline County from Delaware, she decided it was the right time to grow her skillset. She was enjoying her current role at a school supporting individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities but yearned to become a CNA. The scholarship provided Ellie the opportunity for this, as she could not have otherwise afforded it. She worked hard to accomplish this while continuing to work full-time at her job. Once she graduated, Ellie was able to use her new skills working as a CNA and earned a \$2 per hour increase.

Specialized Nursing Bridge Program

Region: Montgomery County

According to the American Association of Colleges of Nursing, the United States is expected to experience a significant shortage of Registered Nurses, which will be further amplified as Baby Boomers age and the need for healthcare grows. To combat the projected shortage, the Specialized Nursing Bridge Program, led by Adventist, continues to focus on improving retention among first year nurses through their nurse preceptor training program. In response to industry trends, the partnership expanded to include a CNA preceptor program in 2023. Through this program, preceptors learn important skills like emotional intelligence, and develop leadership skills, which increases the level of supports provided to individuals newer to their roles. In 2023, the partnership enrolled 60 preceptors into the program.

Participant Success Story: Rhea, a nurse preceptor has been instrumental in leading several initiatives within her clinical unit. In addition to her leadership activities, she has created “badge buddies” with critical neonatal care information. These “badge buddies” allow her colleagues to have the vital information readily accessible. Participating in this program has afforded Rhea opportunities to reassess her own practice and growth in her professional role as a staff RN and preceptor.

Capital Region Healthcare Training Partnership

Region: Capital Region

Led by 1199 SEIU Training and Upgrade Fund, the Capital Region Healthcare Training Partnership seeks to increase access to healthcare training for low-income residents in Prince George's and Montgomery counties. The partnership works with Montgomery College and Prince George's Community College to prepare individuals to become CNAs. To strengthen the employability of their students, the partnership incorporated a vocational bootcamp to serve as a complement to the technical skills learned, which includes mock interviews and resume writing. To support the development of a career pathway for incumbent workers, the partnership also offers PCT training through MedCerts. Recent placements show wages starting at \$19 per hour.

Participant Success Story: Alex had always been passionate about healthcare, driven by a desire to make a difference in people's lives. He knew that becoming a CNA was the first step towards his ultimate goal of becoming an RN. However, the cost of CNA training was a significant obstacle for him. That's when he discovered 1199 SEIU's training program, a beacon of hope for individuals like him. With EARN's financial assistance, Alex enrolled in the CNA training program at Prince George's Community College. 1199 SEIU covered his tuition fees, study materials, and even provided financial supportive services to help with living expenses during his training. This financial support alleviated the burdens that held him back for so long, allowing him to fully focus on his studies. Alex excelled in his coursework, displayed empathy and compassion in his clinical rotations, and quickly became a role model for his peers.

Advancing Careers in Population Health

Region: Baltimore Metro

Led by CCBC, this partnership seeks to provide training opportunities to incumbent workers so that they may better understand the multiple social determinants of community health, and how to study and leverage data to define opportunities for interventions to improve the health of populations. In 2023, 24 incumbent workers participated in training in topics such as population health fundamentals and motivational interviewing. Participants report their participation in training has increased their ability to structure care delivery in a way that allows for specifically tailored interventions to address high risk and high-utilizer patients through increased outreach efforts. CCBC will work closely with employer partners to develop curriculum for other topics in 2024.

Industry Feedback: "Sandra is the Clinical Trainer for our team. She reports that she is better equipped to educate staff on the essence of Population Health and how instrumental it is to the community we serve. I believe she also had improved insight on the added value of quality assurance and data collection as it relates to structuring interventions specific to the population and measuring the outcomes of the interventions."

Rescue 2040

Region: Baltimore

Led by Dwyer, Rescue 2040 seeks to develop a person-centered, supportive career pathway for unemployed and underemployed individuals to enter and maintain employment in healthcare. The partnership prepares individuals for roles as CNA/GNA with a hyperfocus on supportive services and case management. In addition to technical training, Dwyer provides intensive supports around childcare, transportation, and technology access, in addition to mentorship, professional development, and recognition initiatives. In 2023, Dwyer placed nearly 97%



Dwyer scholars showcasing their certifications after graduation.

of graduates into employment, with 81% retaining employment as of this report. Based upon feedback garnered during bi-weekly feedback sessions with employer and industry partners, the partnership's case management processes have evolved to include coaching on professional communication and time management strategies which has enhanced student success.

Participant Success Story: Kerry was pleased to be selected as a Dwyer scholar. Early in the training, a prospective employer requested Kerry's shift availability for post-training employment. Kerry is a single mother with no support or childcare, so her availability was limited. When she completed training, she received a job offer but the shift did not work with her availability. Unfortunately, she was told there was no alternative. In many cases, this story would end with a well-trained but frustrated and unemployed individual. Fortunately, Kerry used the advocacy skills learned in training and reached out to her case manager. After meaningful dialogue, Kerry was offered interim part-time employment that worked with her schedule while waiting for a full-time position to become available. Just four weeks later, she was working full-time and is now fully licensed.

Community Health Access, Network and Career Equity (CHANCE)

Region: Central Maryland

Description: The Community Health Access, Network and Career Equity (CHANCE) partnership, led by Health Tech Alley (HTA), seeks to build a highly-skilled workforce for the niche industry that intersects healthcare and IT. The partnership provides training in healthcare fundamentals and digital literacy to unemployed and underemployed individuals in preparation for unique roles in the healthcare setting. In 2023, the partnership placed 15 individuals into employment. CHANCE has focused on providing services in the Druid Heights community in Baltimore, among other underrepresented communities.

Participant Success Story: Brandon visited the Mayor's Office of Employment Development's Northwest Career Center where he attended an information session about the CHANCE training. He enrolled in the training and was able to earn a Digital Literacy Certification. After graduation, HTA provided additional interview and coaching support which helped Brandon to land a full-time role as a Sanitation Safety Technician.

MANUFACTURING

Susquehanna Manufacturing Coalition

Region: Susquehanna

Led by the Susquehanna Workforce Network, the Susquehanna Manufacturing Coalition continues to meet the needs of its twenty employer partners, including W.L. Gore, Nu-Tek Precision, and PlastiPak Packaging, by providing an array of training opportunities to unemployed, underemployed, and incumbent workers. Manufacturers in the region continue to struggle to attract individuals to entry-level positions. Thus, the partnership is providing training and on-the-job training opportunities to build a pipeline of qualified workers. At the same time, the need remains to upskill incumbent workers. To date, close to 90 individuals have obtained employment and 60 incumbent workers have received training, increasing their skillsets and becoming more valuable to their employer.

Careers in Manufacturing Program

Region: Baltimore City

Based upon feedback from members of their Industry Advisory Council, which includes representation of 16 employers, JARC continues to provide in-demand training to support the needs of manufacturers. In addition to technical training, the Careers in Manufacturing Program offers intensive essential skills training and comprehensive wraparound services. To date, the partnership has placed more than 170 individuals into employment. Additionally, manufacturers identify a need to upskill their current workforce. JARC works with industry partners to develop customized curriculum that will meet their unique needs. The partnership has trained more than 90 incumbent workers.

Participant Success Story: Brody was gainfully employed working in a warehouse when he was laid off due to the COVID-19 pandemic. He began to work as a handyman but realized he needed something more stable and long-term. Brody loved the way that the program was structured, with classroom training and theory paired with hands-on experience. After completing training, Brody obtained employment as a CNC machinist. Of his experience he said, “JARC is a big investment. They gave me the training and expertise to get started in my career. Without their support, I don’t think I would have been able to get in to the industry.”

Manufacturing Bootcamp and Incumbent Worker Training Program

Region: Statewide

Led by the Maryland Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP), the goal of this partnership is to help Maryland manufacturers grow their workforce, increase profits, and improve processes. To meet these critical goals, MEP has worked with dozens of manufacturers to identify areas of opportunity. Employers continue to identify the need to upskill incumbent workers. As such, in 2023, this partnership provided training to nearly 150 incumbent workers in topics like safety, leadership, and compliance. In addition, with the support of Frederick County Economic Development and Frederick Community College, the partnership held a bootcamp focused on providing opportunities in biomanufacturing. The partnership continues to convene their Human Resources Peer Group, which includes representation from eight employers. In 2023, the peer group discussed topics like leadership, recruitment, retention, and improving culture.

Participant Success Story: Despite having a master’s degree in a related field, Kerry was having great difficulty entering the biotech industry, despite submitting many applications for open positions with local companies. She had the unique experience of being overqualified for many of the jobs that were of interest to her. The bootcamp model offered Kerry the opportunity to meet directly with local employers. Soon after completing the bootcamp, she was offered a full-time position as an Analytical Analyst earning more than \$55k annually.

PrintSIP

Region: Statewide

After an extended pause due to the pandemic, this partnership led by the Printing and Graphics Association Mid-Atlantic returned to full capacity in 2023. Based on learnings from the pandemic, the partnership is now offering virtual courses, a strategy that has grown the geographic reach of the program. In 2023, 26 incumbent workers participated in training topics such as graphic communications and offset print operations, and employers have identified these course offerings as a critical retention tool.

Industry Feedback: “As an employer in the Printing industry, we are excited to be able to share information that is so important to an employee’s growth. It is a valuable tool that our trade industry offers at no cost to us. Our team members have successfully integrated the class information into their daily jobs.”

Rural Maryland Manufacturing Partnership

Region: Statewide

Over the past year, the Rural Maryland Manufacturing Partnership continued to provide critical training opportunities to manufacturers in rural areas of the state. While manufacturers in rural regions report similar challenges as more urban manufacturers, recruitment and talent development hurdles are amplified due to limited public transportation, lower wages, and a smaller candidate pool. Manufacturers participating in this partnership have identified a need to upskill their current workforce, particularly as mid-to-high level employees are retiring. In 2023, more than 150 individuals were trained in leadership and supervisory skills, time management, and quality.

Rapid Advanced Manufacturing Partnership

Region: Statewide

As manufacturers continue to invest in new technologies and processes in advanced manufacturing, this partnership seeks to support employers with the adaptation, implementation, and training of advanced technologies. To that end, the partnership provides training in topics such as safety, Lean, and quality to more than 40 individuals in 2023. The partnership also tries to address the challenge of attracting young talent to the industry through their internship program. The goal of the program is to expose students to the manufacturing industry and the opportunities available. In 2023, the program had its largest cohort, with 36 interns placed with 16 different manufacturers across the state. Students have the opportunity to participate in meaningful projects while developing professional skills and connections that will help them to be successful in the industry upon graduation.

Industry Feedback: “The Maryland MEP Lean Six Sigma Black Belt Bootcamp has been fantastic experience for my current group, and I’ve heard nothing but praise for it. I’d like to continue to offer the opportunity to other employees and look forward to the impacts on the organization.”

CONSTRUCTION

BetterU University

Region: Baltimore City

This partnership, led by the Job Opportunities Task Force, continued to execute on their mission of eliminating barriers and increasing access to skills training, job opportunities, and higher wages for low-income workers. The program is an 87-hour pre-apprenticeship program that includes skills training in construction math, tools, safety skills and industry certifications. Students are prepared for entry-level positions in electrical, plumbing and carpentry occupations. In 2023, the partnership infused added math supports and technology training to increase the competitiveness of graduates. The partnership continues to work with graduates on job placement.

Participant Success Story: “After I graduated from high school, I had a hard time finding a consistent path. I would jump from one thing to another. I would never really stick to anything. At the same time, things were getting tough for my family. Money was tight. Then I heard about the BetterU Construction Training Program. I’ve learned about carpentry, electrical, and plumbing since I’ve been here. I even got a job with Miller Brothers Construction Services here in Baltimore because of what I learned in class.”

Suburban Maryland Construction Initiative

Region: Central Maryland

Led by the Finishing Trades Institute, the partnership focused its efforts on upskilling incumbent workers in 2023. In response to industry demand, more than 80 incumbent workers were trained to operate industrial forklifts and received commercial concrete certifications. The partnership plans to offer pre-apprenticeship programming in 2024.

Remediation and Construction Industry Partnership

Region: Baltimore City

In partnership with nearly 50 employer and industry partners, the Remediation and Construction Industry Partnership, led by Civic Works is providing in-demand training to grow the pipeline of qualified workers to be Brownfields Remediation and Stormwater Management Technicians. Participants earn a wide array of certifications, including EPA Asbestos Supervisor, Lead Abatement Worker, OSHA 40 Hour Hazardous Site Worker Protection and Emergency Response, OSHA Confined Space Operations, OSHA Bloodborne Pathogens, and OSHA Fall Protection. To date, nearly 270 individuals have obtained employment, with recent wages averaging nearly \$19 per hour.

Civic Works graduates pose for a picture.



Industry Feedback: “Civic Works is a trusted partner that has truly embraced our vision to develop a skilled and well-prepared workforce. This has benefited our company by helping us be better prepared to take new opportunities and meet the huge demand to rebuild our country’s infrastructure,” said the employer. “The key differentiator between hiring a Civic Works graduate and hiring through other channels is that they are better prepared and motivated to be successful in an infrastructure industry job. We strongly believe that employees that are trained properly are more productive and willing to stay with the company longer, which is important for the growth of the company and the employee”.

Marine Trades Industry Partnership

Region: Statewide

Led by the Marine Trades Association of Maryland (MTAM), the Marine Trades Industry Partnership continues to work diligently to meet the needs of more than 100 employers in the boating industry. MTAM experienced significant turnover in 2023, which presented the partnership with a unique opportunity to reinvigorate relationships and better understand the emerging needs of the industry. While training was somewhat limited as compared to other years, the partnership made important strides to grow awareness for the industry, particularly among youth. In addition to hosting their successful internship program, MTAM hosted a Career Day for marine technology students during the Annapolis Powerboat Show. Twenty-two students learned about the wide array of opportunities available in the marine trades industry and made important connections with industry partners. Employers continue to express the need for upskilling of their incumbents which will be a focus of the partnership in the coming months.

Participant Feedback: “The boat show was a fun and informational experience. So many different jobs in the field. With all the different stands and boats, you can find something that fits your taste. My favorite part was talking to all the different job experts and learning about their trade.”

Herbert J. Hoelter Vocational Training Center SIP

Region: Baltimore City

This partnership addresses the need for vocational training programs for unemployed and underemployed Baltimore City residents. With a focus on serving returning citizens and veterans, the partnership provides three different training tracks: Automotive Repair and Refinish; Commercial Driving; and Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration (HVAC-R). The 17-week training program includes theory-oriented, hands-on curriculum that provides students with the skills and industry-recognized certifications necessary to thrive in these careers. In addition, students receive wraparound services including mental health services, housing supports, and expungement services. Nearly 50 employers and a wide array of community-based organizations support this partnership.

Participant Success Story: Jermone enrolled in the training program while on home detention. With the support of his home detention representative and the staff at the National Center for Institutions and Alternatives, he was able to successfully complete the program, earning his Commercial Driver's License. He successfully obtained employment earning \$20 per hour and recently purchased his own vehicle.

Pre-Apprenticeship Construction Training Program

Region: Baltimore

Led by the Living Classrooms Foundation (LCF), this program is providing skills training to unemployed and underemployed Baltimore City residents. The students receive instruction based upon the National Center for Construction Education & Research (NCCER) Construction Skills Curriculum and participate in essential skills training one day per week. The partnership also provides intensive supportive services for up to one year post-training completion which includes housing and insurance benefits, food security, transportation support, academic support and GED obtainment, expungement and legal aid, and financial wellness lessons. In July of 2023, 22 students enrolled in training and completed coursework in October. As of this report, the partnership is working closely with employer partners like Mayson-Dixon and Whiting Turner on job placement.

Participant Success Story: When Ken came to the LCF, he was unemployed and raising a daughter with a learning disability. During the course of training, Ken lost his mother and was facing eviction. With the support of LCF, he persevered through these challenges and completed training, earning OSHA 10 and OSHA 30 certifications. He was hired soon after training, earning \$24 per hour. Today, he is earning \$28 per hour. He has secured stable housing and is using his new skills to make repairs on his own home. Ken looks forward to pursuing his dream of becoming an entrepreneur one day.

AUTOMOTIVE

Automotive Technicians for Change

Region: Baltimore, Lower Shore, Prince George's County

Led by Vehicles for Change, this program is training individuals, many of whom are returning from incarceration, to be automotive technicians. Automotive Technicians for Change (ATC), which lasts for up to six months, operates as a simulated work environment and provides hands-on experience and training, preparing interns to earn Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) certifications. The program offers comprehensive barrier removal and essential skills training, which are vital to participant success when they enter employment. The partnership continued to build on its successful expansion into Prince George's and Wicomico counties, in addition to offering programming in Baltimore County. To date, nearly 240 individuals have obtained employment with industry partners like DarCars, Toyota, and JiffyLube.

Participant Success Story: Marcus joined the ATC program following his recovery from a life-altering accident that left him unable to walk and unemployed. In addition to earning technical skills and securing vital ASE certifications, Marcus rebuilt his confidence and was able to access case management, mentorship, and financial literacy training. As a result, Marcus obtained employment with a local employer and now dreams of becoming an entrepreneur.

Prince George's Auto Technician Training

Region: Prince George's County

The Washington Area New Automobile Dealers Association's Auto Dealer Education Institute is utilizing EARN funding to expand their successful Registered Apprenticeship (RA) program to Prince George's County. In partnership with Prince George's County Public Schools and Employ Prince George's, the SIP is helping employers like DARCARS and Pohanka Automotive Group, to quell a critical staffing shortage and ensure technicians are highly trained. Students have the opportunity to earn several ASE certifications, and upon completion of the program, have the work experience and

education to become ASE-certified master technicians.

Participant Success Story: Ben was unsure of what he wanted to do for work, but due to his interest in cars, he enrolled in the program. With training, support, and mentorship, he thrived in the program and quickly earned a \$3 an hour wage increase. He is well on his way to becoming a thriving, successful technician.

CHILDCARE

Montgomery Alliance for Early Childhood Education

Region: Montgomery

Employers in the childcare industry continue to report a critical shortage of qualified workers to fill open positions. To address this need, the Montgomery Alliance for Early Childhood Education, led by Montgomery College, is offering courses that lead to the industry-recognized Child Development Associate certification. Training topics in 2023 included Infant and Toddler Development and Curriculum Planning, Communication Skills for Healthcare Professionals, and First Aid/CPR. Students are also offered English for Speakers of Other Language (ESOL) support and various workshops on resume writing and interview skills.

Participant Success Story: Velda completed training and obtained employment in a childcare center soon after. Two months later, she successfully earned her Child Development Associate certification. She uses the skills she learned in the program each day in her work.

HOSPITALITY

FoodWorks Culinary Training Program

Region: Baltimore

Led by the Maryland Food Bank, the FoodWorks Culinary Training Program provides 12 weeks of classroom and hands-on training to prepare individuals for positions in the culinary industry. Students earn their ServSafe Food Handler certification and hone their technical skills through hands-on experience in a commercial kitchen. In 2023, the partnership continued to operate on the Eastern Shore and expanded their commercial kitchen in Baltimore County, which has led to increased capacity. With more than 25 employer partners participating, this program has served as a vital pipeline for the hospitality industries in two key regions of the state. To date, more than 100 individuals have been placed into employment.

FoodWorks Wor-
Wic Students pose
for a photo at their
graduation ceremony.





Paul's Place culinary students presenting their dishes at the student showcase ceremony.

Participant Success Story: After recovering from a stroke, Monica enrolled in the FoodWorks program looking to reenter the workforce. She was experiencing food insecurity herself, and the Maryland Food Bank was able to provide her with a weekly food box and personal hygiene products. She took advantage of the other services offered by Food Works, such as financial literacy and career development. After graduation, Monica was hired on the spot by a local restaurant.

Groundwork Culinary Kitchen

Region: Baltimore City

Led by Paul's Place, the Groundwork Kitchen Culinary Training Program provides participants with 12 weeks of intensive culinary training in preparation for careers in the hospitality industry. Students have the opportunity to earn several industry-recognized credentials including ServeSafe Food Handler, ServeSafe Manager, American Hotel & Lodging Educational Institute (AHLEI) Restaurant Server, AHLEI Kitchen Cook, and AHLEI Guest Service Professional certifications. The partnership enjoys strong participation from their 21 employer partners who hold mock interviews with students, lead cooking demonstrations, and act as guest speakers throughout training. In addition to technical skills, the partnership builds in supportive services such as transportation, food, and case management services as part of the program to maximize success while in training. Through the first three cohorts, 29 students, or 88% of those completing training have been placed into employment.

Participant Success Story: George learned about the training offered by Groundwork Kitchen from the Maryland Department of Labor while he was receiving unemployment benefits. When he enrolled in training, he was also reliant on Medical Assistance and SNAP benefits after losing his previous job. George took this transition as an opportunity to follow his dream of starting a career in fine dining. During training, he received a small stipend, two meals per day, and gas cards to help him commute to and from training and defray his living expenses. He valued the training opportunity he received so much that he started working overnight to help make ends meet while he dedicated three months to finishing training. George earned his Servsafe Food Handler, Servsafe Food Protection Manager, AHLEI Certified Restaurant Server, AHLEI Certified Kitchen Cook and AHLEI Certified Guest Service Professional designations certifications during his 12-week training. After graduating, he was hired by an employer partner as a utility cook earning \$18.50 per hour. He is also pursuing a part-time opportunity in another employer partner's fine dining restaurant and plans to work in both jobs to gain the most experience.

LOOKING AHEAD

The Department looks forward to strategically growing the capacity and reach of EARN in 2024. On December 4, 2023, Labor released the Winter 2023 Solicitation for Implementation Grant Proposals. The Solicitation will fund new Strategic Industry Partnerships in key sectors, providing meaningful and equitable pathways to work, wages, and wealth for all Marylanders. Proposals are due in March of 2024 and awards will be made in June.

CONCLUSION

As is evident throughout the pages of this report, EARN continues to provide access to good jobs and viable career pathways that lead to economic prosperity for all Marylanders. The EARN model is increasing the state's economic competitiveness and remains a sound investment of public dollars. The Department is proud to support this program and looks forward to continued growth and success in 2024 and beyond.

APPENDIX A

To ensure accountability, the Department requires EARN Maryland Partnerships to comply with specific reporting requirements. These measures are meant to track the metrics set forth in the Labor and Employment Article § 11-709(b) (4) of the Maryland Annotated Code. Statutorily required data is presented below. The data below covers the time period July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023.

By Sex

SEX	# OF PARTICIPANTS	PERCENTAGE OF WHOLE
Male	2,790	53%
Female	2,445	46%
Not specified	31	1%

By Race

RACE	# OF PARTICIPANTS	PERCENTAGE OF WHOLE
White	1,366	29%
Black/African American	2,915	55%
Asian	326	6%
Native American/American Indian	22	<1%
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	8	<1%
Hispanic/Latino	334	6%
Two or More Races	163	3%
Other	73	1%
Not Specified	59	1%

By Income

INCOME LEVEL	# OF PARTICIPANTS	PERCENTAGE OF WHOLE
Less than \$10,000	1,963	37%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	101	2%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	378	7%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	504	10%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	682	13%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	697	13%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	439	8%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	329	6%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	100	2%
\$200,000 or more	33	1%
Unreported or Incalculable	40	1%

By National Origin

NATIONAL ORIGIN	# OF PARTICIPANTS	PERCENTAGE OF WHOLE
American	3,804	72%
North American (excluding USA)	102	2%
Central and Latin America	205	4%
European	103	2%
African	549	10%
Middle Eastern	44	1%
Asian	234	4%
Oceania	0	<1%
Two or More Identified	62	1%
Other	75	1%
Not reported	88	2%

By County of Residence

COUNTY OF RESIDENCE	# OF PARTICIPANTS	PERCENTAGE OF WHOLE
Allegany County	33	0.6%
Anne Arundel County	329	6.2%
Baltimore City	1,411	26.8%
Baltimore County	708	13.4%
Calvert County	16	0.3%
Caroline County	40	0.8%
Carroll County	75	1.4%

COUNTY OF RESIDENCE	# OF PARTICIPANTS	PERCENTAGE OF WHOLE
Cecil County	52	1.0%
Charles County	75	1.4%
Dorchester County	11	0.2%
Frederick County	284	5.4 %
Garrett County	4	0.1%
Harford County	129	2.4%
Howard County	220	4.2%
Kent County	9	0.2%
Montgomery County	722	13.7%
Prince George's County	514	9.8%
Queen Anne's County	18	0.3%
Somerset County	10	0.2%
St. Mary's County	33	0.6%
Talbot County	17	0.3%
Washington County	105	2.0%
Wicomico County	103	2.0%
Worcester County	74	1.4%
Outside of Maryland	235	4.4%
Not reported	39	0.7%

By Educational Attainment

EDUCATION LEVEL	# OF PARTICIPANTS	PERCENTAGE OF WHOLE
Some High School or Less	199	4%
High School Diploma/GED/Equivalent	1,939	37%
Some College	943	18%
Associate's Degree	359	7%
Bachelor's Degree	1,157	22%
Advanced Degree (Master's, PhD, other)	514	10%
Trade School	89	2%
Other/Undisclosed	66	1%

Credential or Certification – 2,346

Identifiable Skill – 2,992

A new Employment Position – 1,369

A Title Promotion - 350

A Wage Promotion – 1,261

APPENDIX B

Using Labor Market Information

The Department of Labor prepares employment projections for statewide and substate areas. These projections are important for individuals who want to make informed decisions about their careers and for agencies to plan future training needs. There are four types of projections:

1. Short-Term Industry Projections (STIP),
2. Long-Term Industry Projections (LTIP), and
3. Short-Term Occupational Projections (STOP), and
4. Long-Term Occupational Projections (LTOP).

This analysis uses LTIP and LTOP data. This long-term data reports estimated employment trends between 2020 and 2030.

Long-Term Industry Projections

This section contains projections for employment in Maryland between 2020 and 2030 by industry. Although industry projections are prepared for 2-digit and 3-digit NAICS (North American Industry Classification System) codes, this section contains 2-digit NAICS codes (the most general codes). Further information is available upon request.

2.1 Top Industries by Projected Employment Change, 2020-2030

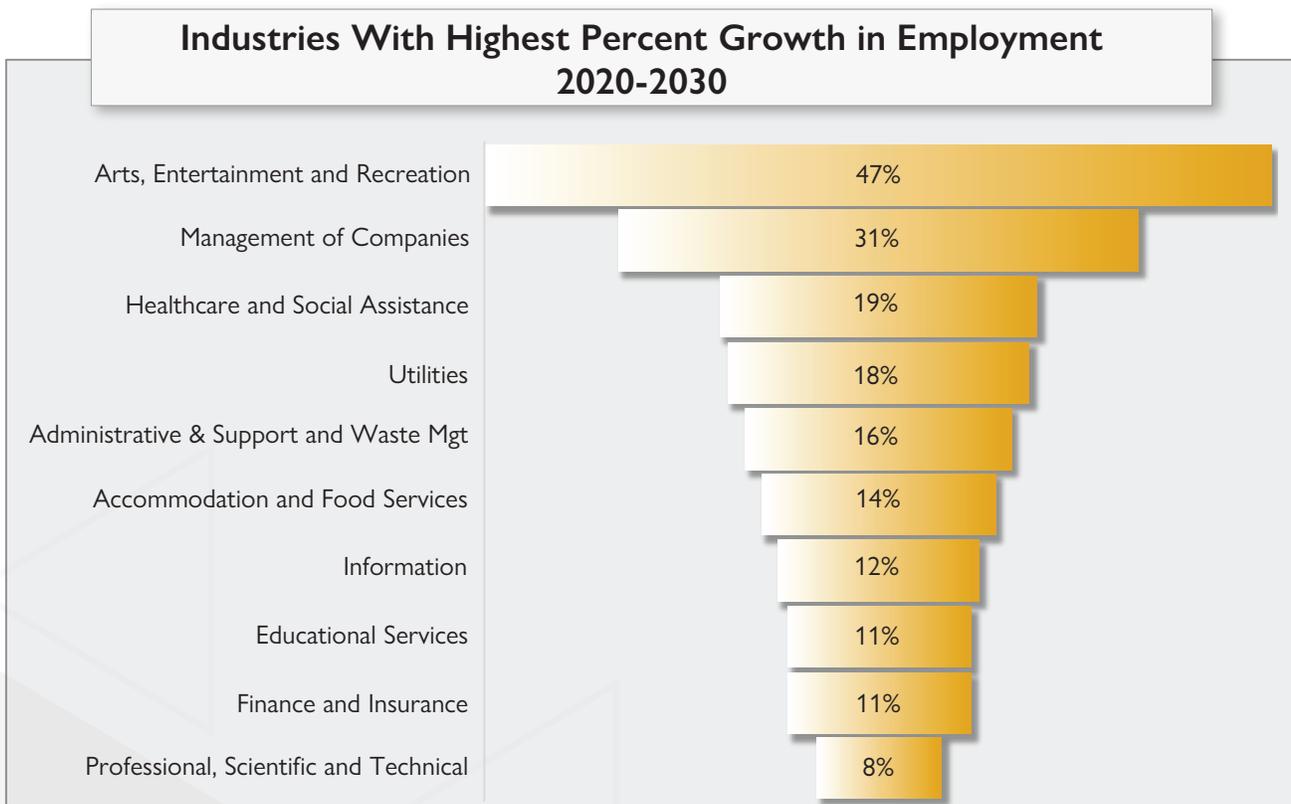
According to the Maryland Department of Labor's LTIP data, total employment in Maryland is expected to increase by 305,269 between 2020 and 2030. The Healthcare and Social Assistance sector (which includes childcare) will experience the largest positive change, accounting for 31% of the total projected growth. The table on the next page shows the top ten sectors projected to add the most new jobs in employment between 2020-2030.

INDUSTRY	PROJECTED EMPLOYMENT GROWTH, 2020 - 2030
Healthcare and Social Assistance	88,293
Educational Services	32,323
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	29,363
Accommodation and Food Services	27,122
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	22,950
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	16,868
Construction	13,713
Finance and Insurance	11,828
Management of Companies and Enterprises	9,772
Manufacturing	6,729

EARN collaborates with five of the 10 industries highlighted in the table. These industries include Healthcare, Hospitality, Construction, Manufacturing, and Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services. The Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services sector comprises research and development in biotechnology and computer system design, among other areas. The Accommodation and Food Services sector contains the hospitality industry.

2.2 Top Industries by Projected Percentage Growth in Employment, 2020-2030

In addition to looking at the industries adding the most new jobs between 2020 and 2030, this analysis covers those industries projected to grow the most on a percentage basis. The Healthcare and Social Assistance (which includes childcare), Hospitality, and Utilities sectors are among the top ten growing industries. These industries are the focus of the EARN program. The Utilities sector includes green energy industries that use renewable energy sources such as hydroelectric, solar, wind, and geothermal power. Although not EARN-focused industries, Educational Services and Arts, Entertainment and Recreation are also projected to be among the top ten growing industries.

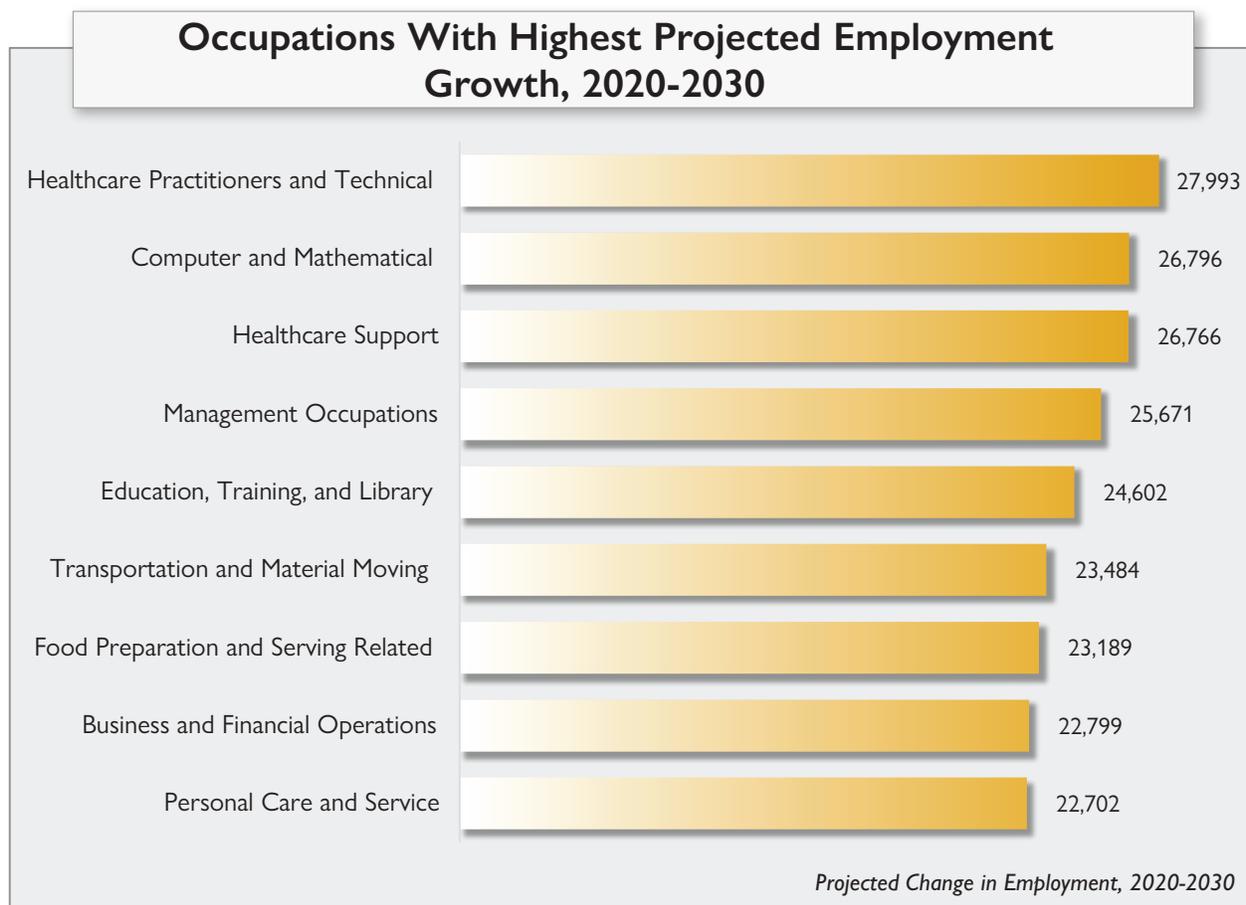


3. Long-Term Occupational Projections

The Maryland Occupational Projections utilize a standardized system called Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) codes to classify both workers and jobs into occupational groups. The SOC system has four levels of classification, ranging from major groups to detailed occupations. The Department of Labor provides long-term occupational projections based on the 2-digit and detailed SOC codes, as well as industry projections. This analysis uses 2-digit and 4-digit SOC codes and employment projections between 2020 and 2030.

3.1 Top Occupations by Projected Employment Change, 2020-2030

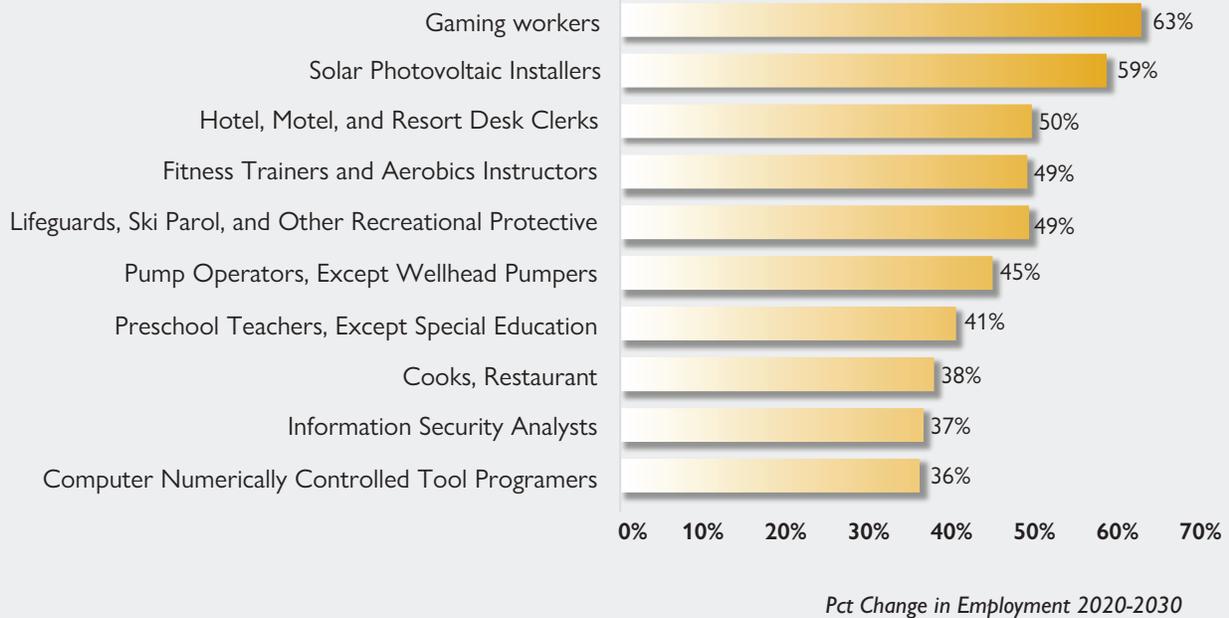
The following graph, using the 2020-2030 projections data, shows that the top occupations by projected employment growth are mostly related to the health, IT, transportation, and hospitality sectors. Based on the data, it appears that these four sectors have a greater potential for job opportunities.



3.2 Top Occupations by Projected Percentage Growth in Employment, 2020-2030

This section contains the ranking of Maryland occupations based on their projected percentage change. The chart on the next page uses 4-digit SOC codes (more detailed occupation levels). The list of fastest-growing occupations in terms of percentage change includes the IT, hospitality, and green energy sectors. Furthermore, recreation and educational occupations are also projected to be among the fastest-growing industries.

Occupations With Highest Percent Growth in Projected Employment 2020-2030



4. Industry-Specific Projections and Earnings Data

This section provides an overview of employment, estimated annual job openings, and earning potential in EARN-focused industries, using 2022 BLS data and the 2020-2030 projections data for industries and occupations. The estimated number of annual job openings in this section are reported in the long-term occupational projections data. Job openings occur due to projected growth in an occupation, due to labor force exits (e.g., retirements), and due to workers in the occupation switching careers.

4.1 Information Technology (IT)

- Industry-level projections are not available for subsectors within the broader Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services industry. However, that sector, which includes subsectors such as the Computer Systems Design industry, is expected to grow at a rate of 7% and add 19,500 jobs through 2030.
- The Other Information Services sector is expected to experience a high growth rate of 71% and add 1,463 jobs through 2030.
- Employment in the Data Processing, Hosting and Related Services industry is projected to grow by 42% through 2030 for a total increase of 1,755 jobs.

Earning Potential and Employment Projections for Sample Occupations in the IT Industry

OCCUPATION NAME	EMPLOYMENT 2022	ANNUAL AVG OPENINGS 2020-2030	HOURLY MEAN WAGE	ANNUAL MEAN WAGE
Computer Network Architects	7,370	582	\$72.33	\$150,450
Information Security Analysts	9,070	1,003	\$65.35	\$135,920
Computer and Information Research Scientists	2,160	255	\$63.64	\$132,370
Computer Systems Analysts	14,440	1,591	\$51.98	\$108,120
Network and Computer Systems Administrators	9,310	1,178	\$51.89	\$107,930
Computer User Support Specialists	9,300	1,230	\$28.88	\$60,080

4.2 Healthcare:

- Within Healthcare and Social Assistance:
 - The Hospitals subsector is expected to grow by 20% and add 29,395 jobs through 2030,
 - The Nursing and Residential Care Facilities industry is projected to grow by 25% and add 21,760 jobs through 2030, and
 - The Social Assistance subsector (which includes childcare) is expected to grow by 48% and add 27,363 jobs through 2030.

Earning Potential and Employment Projections for Sample Occupations in the Healthcare Industry

OCCUPATION NAME	EMPLOYMENT 2022	ANNUAL AVG OPENINGS 2020-2030	HOURLY MEAN WAGE	ANNUAL MEAN WAGE
Medical and Health Services Managers	12,530	1,497	\$71.47	\$148,650
Nurse Practitioners	4,170	417	\$57.53	\$119,650
Registered Nurses	49,790	5,252	\$42.30	\$87,990
Mental Health and Substance Abuse Social Workers	2,570	392	\$26.86	\$55,880
Home Health and Personal Care Aides	24,960	7,414	\$15.67	\$32,590
Childcare Workers	6,750	2,635	\$15.18	\$31,570

Note that according to QCEW data, Maryland has had the largest drop in employment and establishments in the childcare industry of any state between 2019 and 2022.

4.3 Construction:

- The construction industry is projected to add 13,713 jobs through 2030.
 - This growth is largely in the Specialty Trade Contractors subsector which is projected to grow by 9.9% (12,670 jobs).
- For occupations, the Construction and Extraction Occupations as a whole are projected to grow by 13,875 jobs for an 8.4% growth rate.
 - Each year, there are projected to be 18,088 job openings in this occupation group each year through 2030 due to growth, labor force exits, and job transfers.

Earning Potential and Employment Projections for Sample Occupations in the Construction Industry

OCCUPATION	EMPLOYMENT 2022	ANNUAL AVG OPENINGS 2020-2030	HOURLY MEAN WAGE	ANNUAL MEAN WAGE
Construction Managers	6,110	997	\$56.74	\$118,020
First-Line Supervisors of Construction Trades and Extraction Workers	15,360	1,891	\$37.11	\$77,190
Operating Engineers and Other Construction Equipment Operators	5,610	769	\$27.27	\$56,730
Painters, Construction and Maintenance	3,920	882	\$22.76	\$47,340
Construction Laborers	20,060	3,284	\$20.73	\$43,120
Electricians	11,770	2,198	\$31.84	\$66,230
Carpenters	11,140	2,387	\$27.37	\$56,940

4.4 Manufacturing:

- According to projections from the Maryland Department of Labor, the Manufacturing sector will see a 6% growth rate through 2030, and is expected to create 6,729 new jobs.
- The Food Manufacturing subsector is anticipated to have the largest impact, growing by an estimated 3,691 jobs, followed by the Plastics and Rubber Products Manufacturing industry, which is projected to add 2,112 jobs through 2030.
- For occupations, Production Occupations are projected to grow in employment by 4.2% (3,752 new jobs) through 2030.
 - On average, there are projected to be 10,378 job openings in this occupation group each year through 2030 due to growth, labor force exits, and job transfers

Earning Potential and Employment Projections for Sample Occupations in the Manufacturing Industry

OCCUPATION	EMPLOYMENT 2022	ANNUAL AVG OPENINGS 2020-2030	HOURLY MEAN WAGE	ANNUAL MEAN WAGE
Chemical Plant and System Operators	660	97	\$32.58	\$67,762
Stationary Engineers and Boiler Operators	820	236	\$32.18	\$66,925
Machinists	1,780	290	\$28.76	\$59,815
Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers	2,370	397	\$26.15	\$54,397
Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, and Weighers	5,040	682	\$25.72	\$53,503
Miscellaneous Assemblers and Fabricators	5,440	761	\$19.90	\$41,390
Packaging and Filling Machine Operators and Tenders	2,470	547	\$17.65	\$36,710

4.5 Transportation:

- The Transportation and Warehousing industry is projected to grow by 2.3% (2,602) jobs through 2030.
 - The Warehousing and Storage subsector is projected to grow by 14,769 jobs (a 45.5% growth rate) through 2030.
- Transportation and Material Moving Occupations as a whole are projected to grow by 10% and add 23,484 jobs through 2030.

Earning Potential and Employment Projections for Sample Occupations in the Transportation Industry

OCCUPATION	EMPLOYMENT 2022	ANNUAL AVG OPENINGS 2020-2030	HOURLY MEAN WAGE	ANNUAL MEAN WAGE
Transportation, Storage, and Distribution Managers	3,750	266	\$52.92	\$110,070
First-Line Supervisors of Transportation and Material Moving Workers	11,790	1,434	\$30.56	\$63,560
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	26,150	3,366	\$26.83	\$55,800
Light Truck or Delivery Services Drivers	26,660	3,189	\$22.80	\$47,420
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	36,660	6,626	\$18.21	\$37,880
Stockers and Order Fillers	48,660	8,360	\$17.48	\$36,360

4.6 Green energy:

- The Utilities sector which includes green energy industries such as hydroelectric, solar, wind, and geothermal power is expected to grow by 18% (2,573 jobs) through 2030

Earning Potential and Employment Projections for Sample Occupations in the Green Energy Industry

OCCUPATION	EMPLOYMENT 2022	ANNUAL AVG OPENINGS 2020-2030	HOURLY MEAN WAGE	ANNUAL MEAN WAGE
Environmental Engineers	810	116	\$51.07	\$106,230
Environmental Scientists and Specialists, Including Health	1,790	288	\$40.27	\$83,760
Environmental Engineering Technologists and Technicians	240	41	\$31.08	\$64,640
Solar Photovoltaic Installers	560	35	\$25.64	\$53,340

4.7 Biotech:

- Research and Development in Biotechnology, as well as Physical, Engineering, and Life Sciences, fall under Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services. That larger industry sector is projected to grow by 7% and will add 19,500 jobs through 2030.

Earning Potential and Employment Projections for Sample Occupations in the Biotech Industry

OCCUPATION	EMPLOYMENT 2022	ANNUAL AVG OPENINGS 2020-2030	HOURLY MEAN WAGE	ANNUAL MEAN WAGE
Bioengineers and Biomedical Engineers	590	58	\$52.50	\$109,200
Biochemists and Biophysicists	800	73	\$51.21	\$106,510
Microbiologists	1,810	187	\$50.61	\$105,280
Zoologists and Wildlife Biologists	330	38	\$40.38	\$84,000
Biological Technicians	3,550	324	\$25.22	\$52,450

Maryland was recently ranked as the *number three* biopharma cluster in the country according to Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology News (GEN).

4.8 Hospitality:

- The Accommodation industry is expected to grow by 64% and add 15,427 jobs through 2030.
- Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations are expected to grow by 12% and add 23,189 jobs through 2030.

Earning Potential and Employment Projections for Sample Occupations in the Hospitality Industry

OCCUPATION	EMPLOYMENT 2022	ANNUAL AVG OPENINGS 2020-2030	HOURLY MEAN WAGE	ANNUAL MEAN WAGE
Chefs and Head Cooks	2,770	355	\$28.43	\$59,130
First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers	17,940	2,985	\$20.97	\$43,620
Food Preparation Workers	13,170	2,996	\$15.47	\$32,180
Food Servers, Nonrestaurant	4,820	1,562	\$15.25	\$31,720
Hotel, Motel, and Resort Desk Clerks	3,160	821	\$14.63	\$30,430

5. Summary

Based on both long-term industry and occupational projections, it is evident that the sectors on which EARN is currently working are expected to be among the top growing industries from 2020 to 2030. Additionally, two sectors that are not included in SIPs, Education and Arts, Entertainment and Recreation, exhibit high potential in terms of future demand.

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