

# MAXIMIZING WIOA'S POTENTIAL:

A Regional Analysis of the State Plans of  
Maryland, Virginia, and Washington, DC



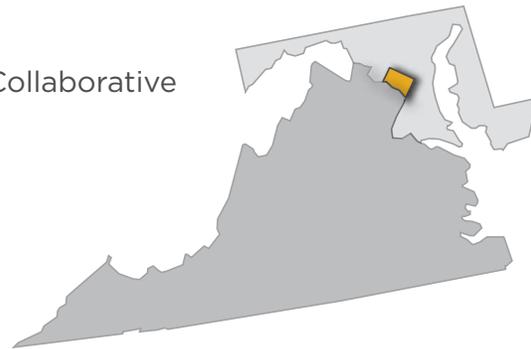
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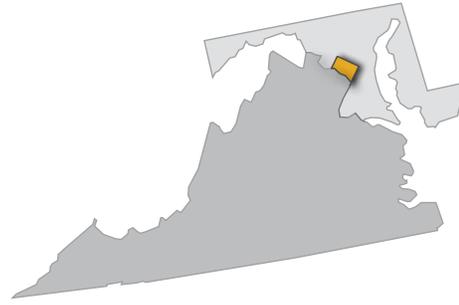
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**WASHINGTON, DC**  
**FACT SHEET**

# WIOA REGIONAL ANALYSIS: WASHINGTON DC FACT SHEET



## VULNERABLE SUBPOPULATIONS: BARRIER REMEDIATION

### Infrastructure

#### Promising Practices in DC

DC's plan shows a deep awareness of the many barriers faced by low-income and low-skilled residents as they battle temporary and long-term unemployment and underemployment

#### Areas of Improvement in DC

DC's plan for barrier remediation includes general goals like increasing "earn and learn" opportunities, but does not include specifics for how those opportunities will take shape, or what funding sources will be deployed to implement them.

DC should create an infrastructure for ongoing planning and improvement.

DC should ensure that American Job Centers (AJCs) are an effective resource for individuals with any barrier to employment, both in terms of accessing the services at the AJCs and identifying community resources and appropriate referrals. AJC staff should be empowered to identify gaps in resources and elevate that information to AJC leadership.

#### Promising Practices in MD/VA that Could Be Emulated in DC

MD's plan calls for continuous staff training, improved coordination to reduce duplication, and information sharing. The state's sector partnership model includes barrier remediation.

VA's plan includes an "integrated resources" team to determine strategies for helping multiple-barrier clients.

### Child Care

#### Promising Practices in DC

DC's plan identifies federal funding resources to be utilized.

DC's plan includes strategies to make subsidies more accessible.

#### Areas of Improvement in DC

DC should plan to integrate into its WIOA implementation team the agencies, organizations, and/or experts who can assist with child care planning in their

[Child Care, *continued*]

communities, and in particular those who can provide expertise on the child care subsidy system.

Supportive services funds, accessible through the AJCs, should be usable to fill gaps in child care when documentation or other barriers interfere with access to subsidized child care.

Transportation

**Areas of Improvement in DC**

While each of the state plans note that the lack or cost of reliable public and private transportation is a key barrier to employment, none of the state plans provide concrete plans for expanding transportation assistance programs. All three jurisdictions should integrate a comprehensive transportation assistance program into their WIOA implementation plans, and information and transportation resources should be accessible at the AJCs.

**VULNERABLE SUBPOPULATIONS: SUBPOPULATIONS OF INTEREST**

Adult Learners

**Promising Practices in DC**

The adult education and system performance dashboard, once fully developed, will outline key goals for the system with specific measures and targets to gauge performance.

**Areas of Improvement in DC**

DC mentions an interest in linking apprenticeships with adult learning, but has not outlined a clear, specific plan to connect adult learners to opportunities through sector partnerships or pre-apprenticeships, or to address the barriers that prevent these connections from being made or taking hold.

DC must address significant gaps in its career pathways strategy by ensuring that sector partnerships are established and technical training providers integrate opportunities to improve basic skills.

DC should also work to improve barrier remediation for adult learners.

**Promising Practices in MD/VA that Could Be Emulated in DC**

MD's oversight of adult education is housed within a DOL rather than DOE, which may enable greater integration of adult education with workforce development activities. The MI-BEST and ACE integrated education and training pilot programs include job placement staff and integrated wraparound services.

VA's Adult Learning Resource Center, dedicated to adult learners, provides professional development, technology integration, and technical assistance, and serves over 3,500 of VA's adult education administrators and practitioners annually.

## Returning Citizens

### Promising Practices in DC

DC provides the strongest policy environment for employment of returning citizens with its “Ban the Box” policy, as it applies to both government and private employers.

DC’s Jail Work Reentry Program—a six week program appropriate for jail rather than prison populations—links directly to transitional employment opportunities for participants upon release.

### Areas of Improvement in DC

DC should ensure that the Jail Work Reentry Program links to a career pathway. Career opportunities, including additional educational options, should be built into the transitional employment program model.

### Promising Practices in MD/VA that Could Be Emulated in DC

In MD, correctional education for inmates as described in the state plan includes adult basic education, vocational programs, post-secondary education, certifications, pre-apprenticeships, and apprenticeships.

VA’s plan includes a SNAP E&T ex-offender program—a partnership between state agencies and reentry organizations to help enroll returning citizens in employment and training services. (However, it is currently active in only one region.)

## Individuals with Disabilities

### Promising Practices in DC

DC’s plan includes promising youth outreach programs, including coordination with summer youth employment program.

### Areas of Improvement in DC

DC should emulate inclusive governance structures currently in place in MD and VA.

DC should increase its focus on removing the multiple barriers to employment that people with disabilities may face. It is especially important to develop strategies to address areas where participants and service providers have indicated that unmet needs exist, such as transportation and affordable housing, as well as ensuring that AJC services are physically and programmatically accessible.

DC should adopt a single point of contact model in its employer outreach efforts.

### Promising Practices in MD/VA that Could Be Emulated in DC

In MD, all WIOA implementation working groups include a vocational rehabilitation representative, improving inclusive governance. MD’s apprenticeship program includes strong outreach to youth with disabilities. MD’s plan also includes good coordination with employers through a single point of contact model.

VA’s plan includes a promising Common Needs Assessment tool, robust youth outreach activities, and good coordination with employers.

VA has initiated a Career Pathways for Individuals with Disabilities program that should yield important insights into making career pathways more accessible to people with disabilities and low basic skills.

## Youth

### Promising Practices in DC

DC's plan includes an education-focused Re-engagement Center with a new virtual component.

### Areas of Improvement in DC

The USDOL has identified issues related to WIOA Youth program enrollment, participant documentation and privacy, policies and procedures, and cost allocation. DC's Corrective Action Plan (CAP) stipulates that enrollment will be expanded through contracting and outreach, and performance will be improved through better sub-grantee coordination, service offerings, and case management. DC should ensure this CAP be followed, with transparency throughout the process.

DC should seek to co-enroll TANF recipients aged 18-24.

### Promising Practices in MD/VA that Could Be Emulated in DC

MD's plan includes a youth apprenticeship pilot program as well as local management boards that ensure coordinated implementation of a local inter-agency service delivery system for children, youth, and families.

## English Language Learners

### Promising Practices in DC

All DC one-stops have a bilingual workforce development specialist.

Vital documents at DC's Department of Employment Services are translated into six languages, and language helpline provided.

### Areas of Improvement in DC

With a growing population of immigrants in DC, and a high unemployment rate, DC should increase the availability of bilingual specialists and career training opportunities for non-native speakers of English.

### Promising Practices in MD/VA that Could Be Emulated in DC

Since submitting the WIOA plan, MD has begun two new initiatives to assist skilled immigrants in overcoming the barriers they face in accessing employment commensurate to their skills and experience: The Skilled Immigrants Task Force and a pilot apprenticeship program in health care.

## Low-Income Individuals

### Promising Practices in DC

DC's Workforce on Wheels mobile AJC helps to ensure that individuals in targeted low-income communities are reached.

### Areas of Improvement in DC

DC should set performance benchmarks or requirements for providing employment services to low-income individuals to ensure that this population is adequately served.

### Promising Practices in MD/VA that Could Be Emulated in DC

MD's plan includes concrete strategies for TANF integration and jobseeker focus groups.

## Performance Measures

### Promising Practices in DC

DC's plan includes additional measures on TANF and youth.

DC's new Data Vault can provide efficient data alignment.

### Areas of Improvement in DC

DC's plans are relatively vague on how meeting the set performance measures will impact programs. As performance benchmarks are set and adjusted over the first two years of implementation, DC should outline the benefits of meeting and specific repercussions for failing to meet the performance goals, so that providers have a clear understanding of their requirements and potential consequences.

While DC's Data Vault is a very promising data tool, the District should spell out a timeline for completing it, and make it a priority.

### Promising Practices in MD/VA that Could Be Emulated in DC

MD's plan includes additional measures on TANF, and performance targets for ETPs and TANF funding.

## Sector Partnerships and Career Pathways

### Promising Practices in DC

A Career Pathways Task Force has developed a city-wide strategic plan to design and develop career pathways specifically for adult learners. Sector-specific career pathways profiles have been developed through stakeholder engagement, and a Career Pathways Innovation Fund was established through legislation to pilot and scale best practices in career pathways implementation.

### Areas of Improvement in DC

DC should more specifically outline the roles and activities related to sector partnerships, and clarify the roles of DOES and DDS in ensuring employer compliance with ADA and job development for people with disabilities.

DC must address significant gaps in its career pathways strategy by ensuring that sector partnerships are established and technical training providers integrate basic skills education opportunities.

### Promising Practices in MD/VA that Could Be Emulated in DC

MD's plan includes a specific sector strategy model (EARN). MI-BEST and ACE programs integrate basic education and job training. They also include job placement staff and wraparound services.

VA's plan includes a strong directive to local workforce boards on expectations for high quality services to employers. A Career Pathways Workgroup helps develop and coordinate initiatives that involve multiple state agencies and workforce development programs. One example is PluggedInVa, which provides career pathways and Integrated Education and Training (IET) specifically for secondary level adult learners through partnerships with community colleges and other post-secondary institutions.

## High-Demand Sectors

### Promising Practices in DC

DC's Labor Market Information focuses on jobs that provide a living wage and require an associate's degree or less.

### Areas of Improvement in DC

DC should specify how alignment between WIOA funding and the five high-demand sectors will be demonstrated.

DC should also delineate a specific timeline and funding for its stated goal of expanding on-the-job-training and apprenticeship programs to all five high-demand sectors.

### Promising Practices in MD/VA that Could Be Emulated in DC

VA's plan and state law requires local boards to spend at least 40 percent of Title I funds annually on training services for jobseekers that lead to a high-demand industry credential.

## Governance and Management of Implementation

### Areas of Improvement in DC

It would be useful for DC to outline a specific timeline for implementation.

DC should seek to achieve greater transparency and accountability by making information on WIOA implementation and performance publicly available.

### Promising Practices in MD/VA that Could Be Emulated in DC

MD submitted a combined WIOA plan that includes a thorough and detailed implementation strategy and oversight structure.

VA submitted a combined WIOA plan that includes a concrete commitment to transparency.