

MAXIMIZING WIOA'S POTENTIAL:

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



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MARYLAND
FACT SHEET

WIOA REGIONAL ANALYSIS: MARYLAND FACT SHEET



VULNERABLE SUBPOPULATIONS: BARRIER REMEDIATION

Infrastructure

Promising Practices in MD

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.

Areas of Improvement in MD

MD's plan expresses intent to braid funds to provide supportive services including transportation and child care, but doesn't make concrete funding commitments or specify implementation details.

Current efforts for barrier remediation are largely program-specific and disjointed. A more comprehensive approach should be taken if MD is to meet the draft performance benchmarks that were recently developed. A study of major barriers faced by job seekers and workers should be done, for each vulnerable subpopulation and geographic area. The job seeker focus groups can play a key role in informing the development of a more comprehensive barrier remediation strategy.

MD's plan also lists several general strategies to facilitate barrier removal, but does not include specifics for how those strategies will take shape, or what funding sources will be deployed to implement them.

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

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

Child Care

Areas of Improvement in MD

MD should identify specific strategies to increase access to child care resources for WIOA participants. MD should consider making more explicit in its WIOA materials the resources available to adult learners and jobseekers to remediate barriers related to child care.

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

DC's plan identifies federal funding resources to be utilized. DC's plan also includes strategies to make subsidies more accessible.

Transportation

Areas of Improvement in MD

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.

VULNERABLE SUBPOPULATIONS: SUBPOPULATIONS OF INTEREST

Adult Learners

Promising Practices in MD

The state'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.

Areas of Improvement in MD

MD should seek to establish and strengthen linkages between EARN and the adult education system as identified in the plan, as well as work to support the expansion of promising practices from MI-BEST and ACE, including the provision of state funding to support IET.

MD should identify strategies to better serve its large population of adult learners who are immigrants and English Language Learners.

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

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

In VA, the 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. Also, PluggedInVA provides career pathways specifically for adult learners through partnerships with community colleges and other post-secondary institutions.

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

Returning Citizens

Promising Practices in MD

Correctional education for inmates as described in MD's plan includes adult basic education, vocational programs, post-secondary education, certifications, pre-apprenticeships, and apprenticeships.

[Returning Citizens, *continued*]

Areas of Improvement in MD

MD should extend its existing “Ban the Box” employment policy to include private employers.

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

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.)

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.

Individuals with Disabilities

Promising Practices in MD

All WIOA implementation working groups include a vocational rehabilitation (VR) representative, improving inclusive governance.

MD’s apprenticeship program includes strong outreach to youth with disabilities.

MD’s plan includes good coordination with employers through a single point of contact model.

Areas of Improvement in MD

MD should use state resources as well as braiding strategies to serve applicants currently on the waiting list.

MD should continue to expand its efforts on coordination between VR and other WIOA agencies through data sharing and increased physical co-location.

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

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

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

Youth

Promising Practices in MD

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.

Areas of Improvement in MD

MD should specify barrier remediation strategies to serve youth with disabilities and youth who have aged out of the foster care system.

[Youth, *continued*]

MD should formalize the plan to co-enroll WIOA, TANF, and SNAP E&T recipients aged 18-24.

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

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

English Language Learners

Promising Practices in MD

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.

Areas of Improvement in MD

MD should translate more of the informational material provided at AJCs, and should add dedicated bilingual staff where population warrants.

MD should identify strategies to better serve its large population of adult learners who are immigrants and English Language Learners.

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

In DC, all 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.

Low-Income Individuals

Promising Practices in MD

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

Areas of Improvement in MD

MD's performance benchmarks could be strengthened by expanding them to include not only TANF recipients, DORS clients and foster care youth, but to also capture the broader population of low-income individuals who do not fall into these categories.

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

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

Performance Measures

Promising Practices in MD

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

Areas of Improvement in MD

As MD works to develop a comprehensive data system, it should ensure that it

[Performance Measures, *continued*]

includes strategies for assessing and referring candidates to the programs that best fit their needs and for tracking performance and outcomes across programs. DC's Data Vault can serve as a model.

Once performance targets are finalized, MD should outline the specific benefits for meeting and repercussions for failing to meet the performance goals. Currently, this is only mentioned for ETP providers.

VA should outline the specific benefits for meeting and repercussions for failing to meet performance goals.

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

DC's plan includes additional measures on TANF and youth. DC's new Data Vault can provide efficient data alignment.

**Sector Partnerships
and Career
Pathways**

Promising Practices in MD

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.

Areas of Improvement in MD

While EARN Maryland serves as an excellent sector partnership model, the program is ripe for expansion. Bringing EARN to scale and increasing opportunities for adult learners should be a main priority in the first years of WIOA implementation.

MD has several key initiatives that can be built upon to develop a more comprehensive career pathways strategy, including EARN Maryland, the ACE and MI-BEST pilot programs, and apprenticeship programs. Developing a strategic plan for career pathways that clearly delineates the roles and activities of various stakeholders and the integration of these existing initiatives will greatly aid in this effort. The WIOA Career Pathways workgroup can oversee this effort.

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

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 adult learners through partnerships with community colleges and other post-secondary institutions.

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.

High-Demand Sectors

Areas of Improvement in MD

MD should focus on job opportunities that provide a living wage in determining priority industries and occupations, particularly in the analysis of skills gaps.

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

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.

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

Governance and Management of Implementation

Promising Practices in MD

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

Areas of Improvement in MD

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

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

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