MAXIMIZING WIOA’S POTENTIAL:
A Regional Analysis of the State Plans of Maryland, Virginia, and Washington, DC

High-Demand Sectors

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This module is one of five modules that correspond to the paper “Maximizing WIOA’s Potential: A Regional Analysis of the State Plans of Maryland, Virginia, and Washington, DC.”
Promising practices in high-demand sectors include:

- **Virginia**: The plan specifies that local boards allocate at least 40 percent of Title 1 funds annually on training services for jobseekers that lead to a high-demand industry credential.
- **DC**: Labor market analysis is focused on jobs that provide a living wage and require an associate’s degree or less.

One of the critical ways that WIOA is designed to improve upon WIA is by better aligning the education and training opportunities available in the workforce development system with the labor market needs at the state, regional, and local levels. To realize this goal, WIOA requires states and localities to identify in-demand industries and occupations as part of its state plan and encourages them to target training and services to these sectors, specifically in the form of career pathways with multiple entry points that will lead to industry recognized credentials and higher skill, higher wage jobs.

Virginia, Maryland, and DC all identify target industries, and offer a variety of strategies for directing support to these sectors in their state plans. Many of the strategies that one region employs are not used by the others, however, which presents an excellent opportunity to learn from the creative solutions of the others.

**A. CRITERIA FOR IDENTIFYING HIGH-DEMAND SECTORS**

The strategic plans required by WIOA must include an analysis of the economic conditions in the region and identify existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors. This analysis can serve as guidance to local areas as they develop their plans, and to training providers in developing their curricula. WIOA defines in-demand industries and occupations as those with large current or projected employment opportunities that can lead to economic self-sufficiency.

Each of the three areas uses a similar framework for identifying in-demand industries and occupations. They all combine labor market analysis with input from experts and state leaders to identify target sectors. They also identify many of the same industries to focus their education and training opportunities. This overlap of target industries should make each of these industries an area of strength in recruiting employers as they will have a regional pool of workers to recruit. The industries identified by all three plans, include: health care, information technology, and hospitality and tourism.
The plans differ in that Washington DC focused its analysis on job opportunities that can lead to economic self-sufficiency and are accessible to unemployed residents. The DC plan prioritizes job openings that pay at or above the District’s living wage of $13.85 per hour and that require an associate’s degree or less. Maryland and Virginia prioritize industries and occupations based on current and projected employment. Both provide information on the average wages and educational requirements, yet they do not prioritize this information in identifying the state’s target industries and occupations. In consequence, Virginia’s plan does not highlight in-demand occupations with a livable wage. The assessment of skills gaps in the plan identifies “retail salespersons, cashiers, waiters and waitresses, and combined food preparation and serving workers, including fast food workers” as having the largest labor shortages. None of these occupations have a median wage over $13.85 an hour.

By adopting the approach from DC, both Maryland and Virginia could help focus their labor market analysis to identify industries and occupations with sustainable wages and upward mobility.

**B. DISSEMINATION OF LABOR MARKET INFORMATION**

Sharing labor market information (LMI) on an ongoing basis with local areas and training providers is important to ensure that education and training opportunities stay aligned with the needs of the labor market as it evolves over time. To facilitate this, states have created online tools for employers and jobseekers to share real-time LMI in a navigable format.

Maryland, Virginia, and DC each have an online...
Work-based training is an important service for jobseekers as it teaches job-specific skills and can directly connect jobseekers to job opportunities. WIOA emphasizes the importance of work-based training by increasing reimbursement to employers for both on-the-job training and customized training and by requiring 20 percent of the local youth formula be used.
for work experiences. States can also play an important role by using their strategic plans to encourage the use of work-based training such as incumbent worker training, on-the-job training, apprenticeships, and other work-based learning.

Maryland, Virginia, and DC all emphasize work-based learning as a priority in their state plans and identify creative strategies for expanding on-the-job training and apprenticeships. Each area has taken a unique approach to accomplishing this shared mission, and this presents an excellent opportunity for each region to learn from one another in growing their work-based learning opportunities. For example, Virginia and DC have adjusted their eligible trainer policies to make them more inclusive of work-based learning opportunities. Both regions added apprentice-related instruction to eligible trainers for individual training accounts, and DC also included on-the-job training and customized training.

Regions have also identified funding to expand opportunities. Virginia’s governor made it a goal to double the number of registered apprenticeships by 2019 and dedicated financial resources to support employers in establishing new or expanding existing apprenticeship programs in information technology, cybersecurity, and professional business services. Virginia also established a state-funded need-based financial aid program for noncredit workforce training that leads to in-demand industry credentials, called Financial Aid for Noncredit Training leading to Industry Credentials (FANTIC).96

In Maryland, industry partnerships within the EARN program have utilized federal funds available through the Job Driven National Emergency Grant (JDNEG) program to provide work-based training for dislocated workers. Maryland’s plan indicates the state will pursue additional JDNEG funds with WIOA partners. Maryland’s governor has dedicated some of the WIOA set-aside funds to support apprenticeship opportunities in non-traditional apprenticeship fields.

Additionally, since submitting the WIOA State Plan, Maryland has been awarded $2 million under the federal ApprenticeshipUSA initiative. These funds will be utilized to grow Registered Apprenticeship opportunities for low income individuals, youth, women, communities of color, and persons with disabilities. Grant funds will provide the necessary staffing, technical, and administrative resources to grow the state’s apprenticeship system. The project will support a series of forums dedicated to increasing awareness of the benefits of apprenticeships to meet industry training needs, and will support an “Apprenticeship Innovation Fund” to invest in programs that support, evaluate and enhance apprenticeship expansion strategies, and a pilot program to create a pipeline for skilled immigrants to reenter jobs in health care. Targeted industries include health care, cybersecurity, construction, manufacturing, hospitality and tourism, and biotechnology. This initiative aims to expand Registered Apprenticeships in the state by 7 percent during the initial 18 months of the grant, including over 9,000 new apprentices.96

Partnering with high schools and employers in improving the quality of work-based learning is another strategy that regions have undertaken. Maryland’s general assembly approved a Youth Apprenticeship Advisory Committee97 with representation from state agencies, high schools, and employers to “engage a new generation of workers and employers.” The DC plan identifies adding business advisory committees for health care, security and law, and business administration, so that all five of their target sectors have a committee. These committees will confirm labor market trends and identify opportunities for customized training, on-the-job-training, and apprenticeships.
D. SUMMARY AND KEY TAKEAWAYS

Maryland, Virginia, and DC all use a similar framework for identifying in-demand industries and occupations. Each area combines labor market analysis with input from experts and state leaders to identify target sectors. DC takes it a step further by focusing on job opportunities that provide a living wage (currently $13.85 per hour) and those that are more accessible to unemployed residents (by requiring an associate’s degree or less). By adopting the approach from DC, both Maryland and Virginia could help focus their labor market analysis to identify industries and occupations with sustainable wages.

Maryland, Virginia, and DC all direct funding to high-demand occupations or industries using labor market information. Yet they differ in their approach for targeting these funds. Virginia’s plan is the most specific in its requirements. The plan requires each local workforce development board to allocate a minimum of 40 percent of WIOA Title I funds to training services that lead to a postsecondary education or workforce credential aligned with in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area or region. Virginia has also approved a grant program for noncredit training that leads to workforce credentials that must be for in-demand occupations. Both Virginia and Maryland have sought out additional funding for the expansion of apprenticeship programs aligned with high demand industries. ■
End Notes

2. ApprenticeshipUSA State Expansion Grant Summaries.
7. Phone conversation with staff at the Department of Employment Services, November 18, 2016.
8. See Adams, G. S. Spaulding, and C. Heller. 2015. “Bridging the Gap: Exploring the Intersection of Workforce Development and Child Care.” Urban Institute for more information on each of these issues.
10. Under WIOA, WIBs (Workforce Investment Boards) have been renamed WDBs (Workforce Development Boards).
13. DC’s Department of Employment Services provides an hourly stipend for its “earn and learn” programs, which is meant to include transportation assistance. Each jurisdiction also provides some type of transportation services to individuals with disabilities, through their VR agencies. This is discussed in more detail in the Individuals with Disabilities section.
17. For more information, see https://appam.confex.com/appam/2015/webprogram/Session6168.html and http://digital.graphcompubs.com/article/Partnering+For+Career+Readiness%3A+The+ACE+Model/2421111/0/article.html
18. Data provided by Maryland’s Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation.
19. Data provided by Virginia Department of Education. PluggedInVA is currently a strong model for GED students and higher. The state plans to expand its reach to serve adult learners not yet at the secondary skill level. For more information on PluggedInVA, see the module on Sector Partnerships and Career Pathways. DLLR and DHR internal document, “The Maryland Skilled Immigrants Task Force” Official Description, November 15, 2016.

https://www.vehiclesforchange.org/


http://does.dc.gov/service/project-empowerment-program

Phone communication with Brandon Butler, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning, Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation (DLLR), November 14, 2016.

http://doc.dc.gov/page/re-entry-services-doc

http://www.dcfpi.org/making-a-good-jobs-program-even-better-how-to-strengthen-dcs-project-empowerment


For more information on the Data Vault, see the module on Performance Measurement.

http://wwrc.virginia.gov/


https://www.dol.gov/odep/

According to Measure of America of the Social Science Research Institute, as of June 2015, there are 5,527,000 disconnected youth in America today, or one in seven teens and young adults (13.8 percent). http://www.measureofamerica.org/disconnected-youth/


http://osse.dc.gov/service/dc-reengagement-center

DC WIC Board Meeting Powerpoint Slides, April 12, 2016.


http://does.dc.gov/service/pathways-young-adults-0

The recommendations put forth by Maryland’s Youth Apprenticeship Advisory Committee are available at: https://www.dllr.state.md.us/aboutdllr/youthapprrep.pdf

http://www.ncwd-youth.info/node/342


For more information, see http://economicmobilitycorp.org/index.php?page=implementation-of-the-mi-best-initiative-in-maryland

http://www.sbctc.edu/colleges-staff/programs-services/i-best/


See https://www.dllr.state.md.us/whatsnews/apprgrant.shtml and http://go.wh.gov/KmmRV7


http://webapp.psc.state.md.us/Intranet/aboutus/elecunivsvc_new.cfm

http://www1.pgcps.org/masterplan/

In Maryland, TANF is called Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA).

http://dds.dc.gov/page/youth-transition-programs

http://www.dllr.state.md.us/earn/

Wilson, B., and DeRenzis, B. 2015. “Realizing Innovation and Opportunity in WIOA.” National Skills Coalition.

These program-level performance measures are not listed in the WIOA State Plan. They are taken from the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission, 2014. “Report to the Governor and the General Assembly of Virginia: Virginia’s Workforce Development Programs,” Appendix E.

WIOA language, see p. 56: https://www.congress.gov/113/bills/hr803/BILLS-113hr803enr.pdf

Email from Erin Roth, Policy Director, Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning, Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation (DLLR), November 16, 2016.

Phone conversation with Erin Roth, Policy Director, Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning, Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation (DLLR), November 14, 2016. These performance targets were included in the final Maryland WIOA State plan.

Implementation timetable retrieved from https://www.dllr.state.md.us/employment/wioa.shtml

Benchmarks retrieved from https://www.dllr.state.md.us/employment/wioa.shtml


Since the plan has been submitted, the monthly agency head meetings appear to have been replaced by several implementation groups on various WIOA-related issues, and are being led by agency staff, rather than the director. Meeting summaries are posted on the DCWorks website, available at http://dcworks.dc.gov/page/wioa-working-groups.

Wilson, B., and DeRenzis, B. 2015. “Realizing Innovation and Opportunity in WIOA.” National Skills Coalition.

http://www.dllr.state.md.us/earn/

http://www.govirginia.org/


According to the Maryland state plan, the state is home to over 10,000 businesses, but according to the state’s Department of Commerce, there are nearly 170,000 businesses in Maryland (http://commerce.maryland.gov/about/workforce-and-education.) Either way, the point is that there is ample opportunity for EARN Maryland to grow.


http://www.govirginia.org/


http://www.pluggedinva.com/