

## **WIOA State Plan 2018 Executive Summary**

### **Changing Maryland for the Better**

Providing businesses with the skilled workforce required to compete in global, regional, and local economies is central to Governor Hogan's strategic vision for Maryland and his charge to ensure that the State is "open for business." Maryland's workforce system provides that talent pipeline through the collaboration of State and local agencies, businesses, economic development, education, and community stakeholders.

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) is the federal law that governs Maryland's workforce system. WIOA is designed to integrate services to support both businesses and jobseekers through strategic cross-sector partnerships. It envisions connecting workforce, education, human services, and economic development entities to ensure strategic leveraging of resources and optimum results. The law addresses the needs of customers through establishing a comprehensive system that provides access to employment, education, training and support services. Through the American Job Centers (AJCs), WIOA works to prepare a trained and competitive workforce to meet the demands of employers and the labor market.

To establish the high quality network envisioned under WIOA, in 2016, Governor Hogan directed relevant Maryland agencies to jointly develop the State's workforce plan. This marked the first time that Maryland's Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation (DLLR), the Department of Human Services (DHS - previously titled as the Department of Human Resources), the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), the Governor's Workforce Development Board (GWDB), and local workforce partners collaborated to develop the operational components of Maryland's workforce system. The Governor's charge to these stakeholders was to develop a plan that maximized state resources in order to deliver outstanding customer service to the workers and businesses that are vital to Maryland's economic growth and prosperity.

During its first two years of implementation, Maryland successfully launched an integrated workforce network that ensures citizens have access to quality occupational training and employment opportunities. Moving forward, Maryland is expanding its WIOA system to include new partners and resources to further support the State's jobseekers and businesses. For the first time ever, effective with this State Plan revision, the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)'s Community Services Block Grant program, the DLLR Division of Unemployment Insurance, and the Senior Community Services Employment Program (SCSEP) will be formally added into Maryland's Combined State Workforce Plan. Recognizing that no single entity can exclusively provide *all* services to a customer, this more inclusive approach will diversify services and invest in new, integrated practices that surpass the traditional expectations of a workforce system.

As Maryland seeks to strengthen and enhance its practices through the implementation of this revised State Plan, success will require a commitment to innovation and collaboration, and a cohesive approach among the abovementioned partners. In keeping with the commitment of

“placing people before performance” and Governor Hogan’s principles of economic development and jobs, government reform, and improving the quality of life for Marylanders, the GWDB, WIOA Alignment Group, and additional network contributors developed the *Benchmarks of Success for Maryland’s Workforce System*. The *Benchmarks* will be a foundational outline used to build system effectiveness, support transparency about progress, and help State and local WIOA partners align resources and strategies with the vision and mission articulated in this Plan.

Maryland’s workforce system partners are committed to implementing the *Benchmarks*, which reflect a shared vision of excellence and provide a strategic tool for continuous improvement.

The *Benchmarks of Success* are built around five major strategic goals:

1. Increase the earning capacity of Maryland’s workforce system customers by maximizing access to employment;
2. Increase the earning capacity of Maryland’s workforce system customers by maximizing access to and use of skills and credentialing;
3. Increase the earning capacity of Maryland’s workforce system customers by maximizing access to and use of life management skills;
4. Increase the earning capacity of Maryland’s workforce system customers by eliminating barriers to employment; and,
5. Strengthen and enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of Maryland’s workforce system.

Maryland’s workforce system will use the *Benchmarks of Success* as a framework, guiding the shared goals and activities of the WIOA system. The *Benchmarks* will allow partners to think systematically about how workforce services are delivered, whether services are reaching priority populations, and where to eliminate existing gaps to build a more prepared, responsive workforce for Maryland’s businesses.