Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning (DWDAL)

Policy Issuance

PI 2026-XX Registered Apprenticeship Qualified Intermediary Program

TO	Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning (DWDAL) staff, Local Workforce Development Area (Local Area) directors, and Registered Apprenticeship Sponsors
FROM	DWDAL Maryland Department of Labor (MD Labor)
SUBJECT	Guidance on the Registered Apprenticeship Qualified Intermediary Program
PURPOSE	To provide policy guidance on the Registered Apprenticeship Qualified Intermediary Program
ACTION	American Job Center (AJC) Reemployment Program Directors, central office managers, and Office of Apprenticeship staff will ensure all employees are aware of and receive copies of this policy. DWDAL policies are available on the MD Labor website.
EXPIRATION	Until Cancelled.

QUESTIONS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Maryland Department of Labor (MD Labor)'s Registered Apprenticeship Qualified Intermediary Program (Program), administered by the Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning (DWDAL), is designed to expand apprenticeship opportunities in Maryland's non-traditional sectors. An investment in apprenticeship intermediaries will result in increased uptake and recruitment and will support multiple businesses within a given sector with apprenticeship-related needs, technical assistance, and related administrative and regulatory activities, allowing individual employers to focus on their core business operations while developing a skilled workforce through apprenticeship pathways. The Program supports Maryland's broader workforce goals by increasing industry awareness and connecting employers and labor organizations with essential workforce and education partners.

Under this policy, eligible Registered Apprenticeship Intermediaries may compete for grant awards ranging from $1 million to $2.5 million over a 36-month performance period. To qualify, applicants must demonstrate expertise in convening stakeholders and successfully building or scaling Registered Apprenticeship models, among other activities. The Program specifically targets new and nontraditional industries, as well as sectors poised for significant growth. Preference is given to projects utilizing the priority strategy of High School Level of Registered Apprenticeships (HSLRA).

The Program establishes a competitive application process, reviewed by a panel of subject matter experts, to ensure proposals meet strict budgetary and programmatic requirements. Approved grantees receive funding on a cost-reimbursement basis and are required to comply with quarterly fiscal and programmatic reporting to ensure accountability and program quality. Furthermore, all grantees must adhere to Maryland's standards for nondiscrimination, accessibility, and the protection of personally identifiable information (PII).

By leveraging the expertise of intermediaries and focusing on high-growth, nontraditional sectors, the Registered Apprenticeship Qualified Intermediary Program advances Maryland's commitment to building a skilled, productive workforce that meets the demands of the modern economy.

REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP

Registered Apprenticeship is a proven model of job preparation that combines paid On-The-Job Learning (OJL)[1] with Related Instruction to progressively increase workers' skill levels and wages. Registered Apprenticeship is a business-driven model that provides an effective way for employers and Sponsors to recruit, train, and retain highly skilled workers. It allows employers to develop and apply industry standards to training programs, thereby increasing productivity and the quality of the workforce. As an "earn and learn" strategy, Registered Apprenticeship offers job seekers immediate employment opportunities that provide sustainable wages and advancement along a career pathway. Graduates of Registered Apprenticeship programs receive nationally recognized, portable credentials, and their training may be applied towards further post-secondary education credit.

All Registered Apprenticeship programs consist of the following five core components:

1. Business Involvement – Businesses are the foundation of every Registered Apprenticeship program. The skills needed for workforce success, provided through business input, form the core of the model. Businesses must play an active role in building Registered Apprenticeship programs and are involved in every step of their design and execution.[2]
2. OJL – Every Registered Apprenticeship program includes structured OJL. Companies hire apprentices and provide hands-on training from an experienced mentor. This training is developed by mapping the skills and knowledge that the apprentice must learn over the course of the program to become fully proficient at the job. In Maryland, OJL must consist of no less than 2,000 hours of full-time, W-2 paid employment per year of the apprenticeship and must take place at the work site under the direction of a highly skilled journeyworker.
3. Related Instruction (classroom style training) – Apprentices receive Related Instruction or classroom style training that complements the OJL. This instruction helps refine the technical and academic skills that apply to the job. Related Instruction may be provided by a community college, technical school or college, an apprenticeship training school, nonprofit, community-based organization, industry, labor organization, business association, or by the business itself. The instruction may be provided at the school, online, or at the work site. Registered Apprenticeships must include at least 144 hours of Related Instruction per year of the apprenticeship.
4. Rewards for Skill Gains – Apprentices receive increases in pay as their skills and knowledge increase. Progressive wage gains reward and motivate Apprentices as they advance through training and become more productive and skilled at their job.
5. National Occupational Credential – Every graduate of a Registered Apprenticeship program receives a nationally recognized credential, referred to as a Certificate of Completion. This portable credential signifies that the apprentice is fully qualified to successfully perform an occupation. Many Registered Apprenticeship programs, particularly in high-growth industries such as healthcare, advanced manufacturing, and transportation, also offer interim credentials as apprentices master skills as part of their career pathway.

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[1] Sometimes also referred to as On-the-Job Training (OJT).

[2] Certain Joint Registered Apprenticeship programs may operate differently. Additionally, business involvement may involve coordination between the business, Sponsor, and bargaining units (if applicable).

REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP IN MARYLAND

The U.S. Registered Apprenticeship system is authorized through the National Apprenticeship Act of 1937. MD Labor serves as the "State Apprenticeship Agency" and, in consultation with the Maryland Apprenticeship and Training Council, is responsible for the following functions:

1. Registering apprenticeship programs that meet federal and State standards;
2. Issuing certificates of completion to Registered Apprentices;
3. Encouraging the development of new programs through outreach and technical assistance;
4. Protecting the safety and welfare of Registered Apprentices; and,
5. Assuring that all programs provide high-quality training.

In Maryland, Registered Apprenticeships are approved through the Maryland Apprenticeship and Training Council. More information on requirements for Registered Apprenticeships in Maryland is available at http://www.labor.maryland.gov/employment/appr/.

High School Level of Registered Apprenticeship

High School Level of Registered Apprenticeship (HSLRA) is a pathway into Registered Apprenticeship for high school juniors or seniors. Nationally, this model is sometimes called "School to Apprenticeship" or STA. HSLRA is designed to allow high school students to participate in a Registered Apprenticeship program while also completing high school. Participating students/apprentices receive Related Instruction directly from their high school system or from the Registered Apprenticeship Sponsor, as defined in the Standards of Apprenticeship. The Apprentice begins their OJL while in high school through paid work directly for the Sponsor or participating/signatory employer, completing at least 144 hours of Related Instruction and at least 250 hours of OJL prior to graduation. The Apprentice must be properly registered with the MD Labor Office of Apprenticeship and receives full credit for Related Instruction and OJL hours/competencies accrued during the HSLRA portion of their Registered Apprenticeship. Upon graduation from high school, all Apprentices can continue with their Registered Apprenticeship as full-time Apprentices.

REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP INTERMEDIARIES

Nationally, Registered Apprenticeship Intermediaries offer expertise to help employers and labor organizations successfully launch, promote, and expand Registered Apprenticeship programs in growing industries. These partners are uniquely positioned to increase awareness through industry outreach, connect employers and labor organizations with workforce and education partners, and provide technical assistance to launch and expand Registered Apprenticeship programs. Intermediaries are able to help Apprenticeship Sponsors augment and refine recruiting, hiring, and retention strategies to increase access to Registered Apprenticeship opportunities. Effective apprenticeship intermediaries help manage administrative and related activities for participating businesses, which can better allow individual employers to focus their primary attention on core business operations, while still developing a skilled workforce through apprenticeship pathways.

In 2025, the Maryland General Assembly passed SB 431, Chapter 2, "Registered Apprenticeship Investments for a Stronger Economy (RAISE) Act," which, among other items, established the Registered Apprenticeship Qualified Intermediary Program (Program) in Maryland. The purpose of the Program is to:

1. Provide technical assistance to launch and expand Apprenticeship programs with a focus on nontraditional sectors;[3]
2. Increase awareness of Registered Apprenticeship Programs through industry outreach; and,
3. Connect employers and labor organizations with workforce and education partners.

The Program is a competitive grant opportunity for intermediaries to support Maryland's efforts to expand Apprenticeship opportunities across the State. In FY26, MD Labor has allocated $5 million for the Program. The grant award floor is $250,000, with a grant ceiling of $2.5 million. The period of performance is up to 36 months.

ELIGIBLE ENTITIES

All Registered Apprenticeship Intermediaries as defined below are eligible for the Program. MD Labor defines Registered Apprenticeship Intermediaries as any organization that can demonstrate expertise in:

1. Connecting sponsors, employers, or potential Apprenticeship program participants with Registered Apprenticeship programs;
2. Convening stakeholders to develop Registered Apprenticeship programs, including previous sector strategies or sectoral work; or,
3. Other key functions to successfully build and scale Registered Apprenticeship programs.

TARGET INDUSTRY SECTORS

To ensure the growth and expansion of Apprenticeship opportunities throughout Maryland, the Program specifically targets industry sectors in two categories: 1) new and nontraditional industries; and, 2) industries with a small number of active apprentices and participating employers that are poised for significant growth. Specific industries have been identified by the Office of Apprenticeship,[4] in collaboration with MD Labor's Labor Market Information team, as industries that will experience future growth, but currently lack Registered Apprenticeship opportunities to scale and fully meet that demand.

Note: the below industry sectors correspond with the United States Department of Labor's North American Industry Classification System (USDOL NAICS) industry codes. All occupations within these sectors are considered eligible for the program. More information on the specific occupations within these industries may be found here: https://www.census.gov/naics/.

For purposes of the Qualified Intermediary Program, the following chart provides a breakdown of eligible "new and non-traditional" sectors in addition to sectors that could benefit from significant Apprenticeship scaling and expansion:

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[3] MD Labor defines "nontraditional" as any non-construction occupation.
[4] As of October 1, 2025, the "Maryland Apprenticeship and Training Program" transitioned into the Office of Apprenticeship."

SECTOR CATEGORY	INDUSTRY SECTOR	DESCRIPTION
Category 1: New & Non-Traditional Registered Apprenticeship	Finance and Insurance	The Finance and Insurance sector is comprised of businesses that are primarily engaged in financial transactions and/or in facilitating financial transactions including: raising funds by taking deposits and/or issuing securities and, in the process, incurring liabilities; pooling of risk by underwriting insurance and annuities; providing specialized services facilitating or supporting financial intermediation, insurance, and employee benefit programs.In addition, monetary authorities charged with monetary control are included in this industry sector. Details can be found here.
	Health Care and Social Assistance	The Healthcare and Social Assistance sector is comprised of businesses providing healthcare and social assistance for individuals within ambulatory healthcare services, hospitals, nursing and residential care facilities, and social assistance. Details can be found here.
	Information Technology	The Information sector is comprised of businesses engaged in: producing and distributing information and cultural products; providing the means to transmit or distribute these products as well as data or communications; and processing data. Details can be found here.
	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	The Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services sector is comprised of businesses that specialize in performing professional, scientific, and technical activities for others. These activities require a high degree of expertise and training. The establishments in this sector specialize according to expertise and provide these services to clients in a variety of industries and, in some cases, to households. Activities performed include: legal advice and representation; accounting, bookkeeping, and payroll services; architectural, engineering, and specialized design services; computer services; consulting services; research services; advertising services; photographic services; translation and interpretation services; veterinary services; and

		other professional, scientific, and technical services. Details can be found [here](#).
Category 2: Poised for Registered Apprenticeship Scaling & Expansion	Public Administration	The Public Administration sector consists of establishments of federal, state, and local government agencies that administer, oversee, and manage public programs and have executive, legislative, or judicial authority over other institutions within a given area. These agencies also set policy, create laws, adjudicate civil and criminal legal cases, and provide for public safety and for national defense. In general, government establishments in the Public Administration sector oversee governmental programs and activities that are not performed by private establishments. Establishments in this sector typically are engaged in the organization and financing of the production of public goods and services, most of which are provided for free or at prices that are not economically significant. Details can be found [here](#).
	Educational Services	The Educational Services sector is comprised of businesses that provide instruction and training in a wide variety of subjects by specialized establishments, such as schools, colleges, universities, and training centers. Educational services are usually delivered by teachers or instructors that explain, tell, demonstrate, supervise, and direct learning. Details can be found [here](#).
	Accommodation and Food Services	The Accommodation and Food Services sector is comprised of businesses that are providing customers with lodging and/or preparing food or beverages for immediate consumption. Details can be found [here](#).
	Transportation and Warehousing	The Transportation and Warehousing sector is comprised of businesses that provide transportation of passengers and cargo, warehousing and storage for goods, scenic and sightseeing transportation, and support activities related to modes of transportation (ie., air, rail, water, road, and pipeline). Details can be found [here](#).

MD Labor may consider applications that support industries outside of the listed industry sectors, however, prospective applicants will need to demonstrate a strong rationale for why that industry should be considered for inclusion within a category and why it would benefit from apprenticeship intermediary support.

PRIORITY STRATEGIES

The Program identifies specific strategies to ensure that new Registered Apprenticeship opportunities reach all Marylanders and are aligned with the demands of the modern economy. MD Labor identifies creating, expanding, or scaling HSLRA opportunities as the priority strategy for the Program.

Preference points will be given during the evaluation process to applicants that incorporate the priority strategy into their application.

PROJECT TRACKS

Proposals for the Program must include a plan that aligns with either:

1. Category A: Building Track Projects; and,
2. Category B: Expansion Track Projects.

CATEGORY A. BUILDING TRACK

For the "Building Track," MD Labor expects its grantees to to establish a Registered Apprenticeship Program(s) within the given industry sectors above,[5] that can engage employers and train apprentices in at least one of the identified Category A target industry or industries. Category A grantees are expected to conduct activities including, but not limited to:

1. Identifying in-demand apprenticeable occupations;
2. Developing standards, occupation-specific OJL, and Related Instruction materials;
3. Identifying training partners and providers;
4. Supporting programs to secure approval by the Maryland Apprenticeship and Training Council for apprenticeship program registration;
5. Onboarding and/or recruiting new employers into apprenticeship program(s);
6. Providing technical assistance to employers to utilize Registered Apprenticeship as a tool for recruitment and to redesign career pathways to maximize the number of Registered Apprentices;
7. Support Sponsors and employers to register Apprentices into the program; and,
8. Tracking and supporting apprentices through completion, as appropriate and applicable.

CATEGORY B. EXPANSION TRACK

For the "Expansion Track," MD Labor expects its grantees to operate or partner with an existing Registered Apprenticeship program(s) to scale and exponentially expand opportunities for employers and Apprentices in the identified target industry. Category B grantees are expected to conduct activities, including but not limited to:

1. Identifying existing programs poised for expansion;
2. Onboarding and/or recruiting new employers into apprenticeship program(s);

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[5] MD Labor may consider applicants outside of the listed industry sectors, however, prospective applicants will need to demonstrate a strong rationale for why that industry should be considered for inclusion within a category and why it would benefit from apprenticeship intermediary support.

3. Providing technical assistance to employers to utilize Registered Apprenticeship as a tool for recruitment and to redesign career pathways to maximize the number of Registered Apprentices;
4. Increasing the number of apprentices registered into the apprenticeship program(s);
5. Revising or developing standards, occupation-specific OJL and Related Instruction materials;
6. Identifying training partners and providers, as needed; and,
7. Tracking and supporting apprentices through program completion, as appropriate and applicable.

ALLOWABLE USE OF FUNDS

MD Labor allows grantees flexibility to utilize Qualified Intermediary Program funds as needed to accomplish the goals of the Program and the deliverables outlined in the applicant's approved proposal. Prospective applicants must outline all anticipated activities within their project proposal.

Examples of potential activities include, but are not limited to:

1. Staffing;
2. Administrative costs;[6]
3. Recruitment and outreach;
4. Curriculum development;
5. Employer convenings;
6. Other costs as approved by MD Labor.

Grant recipients are eligible for initial funding advances of up to 15% of the total grant award upon request. From there, MD Labor shall provide funds to the approved program on a cost reimbursement basis. If the grant recipient requests an initial funding advance, MD Labor will not reimburse additional money until the advanced funds are fully obligated.

PROHIBITED USE OF FUNDS

While the Program allows for applicants to have maximum flexibility when determining the activities to achieve their project goals, MD Labor does not allow for costs to be used for certain activities, such as:

1. Construction, purchase of facilities or buildings, or other capital expenditures for improvements to land or buildings; and,
2. Equipment.[7]

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[6] MD Labor defines administrative costs as: accounting, budgeting, financial and cash management; procurement and purchasing; property management; personnel management; payroll; audits, reviews, investigations and incident reports; general legal services; developing systems and procedures, including information systems, required for these administrative functions; fiscal agent responsibilities; oversight and monitoring responsibilities; costs of goods and services required for administrative functions of the program; travel costs incurred for official business in carrying out administrative activities; and, costs of information systems related to administrative functions. Administrative costs are capped at 10% of the total grant award.

[7] MD Labor defines equipment as items costing $5,000 or more per item.

APPLICATION PROCESSES

To apply for the Registered Apprenticeship Qualified Intermediary Program, prospective applicants must submit the application provided in the Registered Apprenticeship Qualified Intermediary Program solicitation. Applicants may find the solicitation on MD Labor's website at https://labor.maryland.gov/employment/grantlist.shtml and must submit the application per the solicitation's guidelines.

Applications are due no later than the date listed in the Registered Apprenticeship Qualified Intermediary Program solicitation. MD Labor will not grant requests for extensions and will not consider applications received after the due date.

APPLICATION REVIEW

MD Labor will convene a review panel of subject matter experts to evaluate proposals for consideration of grant funding. The panel must ensure that selected proposals meet budgetary and programmatic requirements as outlined in this policy and the related solicitation. As noted above, preference will be given to applications that utilize at least one of the four priority strategies.

To ensure compliance with the Public Ethics law, MD Code Ann. Gen'l Provisions, Title 5, all staff who participate in discretionary grant reviews are required to complete the DWDAL Reviewer Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest Form. Should a conflict of interest exist, staff must recuse themselves from application review and if staff becomes aware that a conflict may exist during the process, that person must immediately notify the DWDAL Assistant Secretary.

APPLICATION APPROVAL/DENIAL

MD Labor must inform applicants via email of approvals or denials at the conclusion of the internal review process. If approved, the MD Labor Office of Strategic Initiatives shall provide the applicant with a Grant Award Notification to be signed by the applicant.

MD Labor will deny incomplete applications. If a grant application is denied, the MD Labor Office of Strategic Initiatives shall provide the applicant with a Grant Denial Notification containing feedback on the application.

A denied applicant may not request reconsideration of the decision.. However, denied applicants are encouraged to reapply for future funds should they become available. MD Labor will provide unsuccessful applicants with feedback on how to improve future applications upon request.

REPORTING, MONITORING, AND RECORD RETENTION

REPORTING

MD Labor requires Registered Apprenticeship Qualified Intermediary Program grantees to submit quarterly programmatic and fiscal reports. Reports are due on the 10th of the month following the end of the quarter. All reports should be sent to Chanel Viator at chanel.viator@maryland.gov and Alex Sackey-Ansah at alex.sackey-ansah1@maryland.gov.

Grantees must invoice MD Labor via the quarterly fiscal report and invoice to receive reimbursement for costs incurred.

MONITORING

MD Labor may conduct fiscal and programmatic monitoring of the project to ensure that grantees are following policies and meeting expectations, including nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions. Monitoring may include desk and/or on-site monitoring. Failure of MD Labor to supervise, evaluate, or to provide guidance and direction shall not relieve the grantee of any liability to comply with the terms of the grant or award agreement.[8]

If, during monitoring, MD Labor finds that a Sponsor or employer has failed to meet the requirements of the Program, MD Labor may require corrective action, which may include, but is not limited to, requiring the repayment of disallowed costs.

RECORD RETENTION

In accordance with the Standards of Apprenticeship, Maryland requires participating Registered Apprenticeship Sponsors to maintain records for at least five years of all persons applying for the apprenticeship program indicating whether or not the applicant:

1. Completed the application process;
2. Met the apprenticeship program qualifications;
3. Was placed on the eligibility list; and,
4. Was registered.

All records, both electronic and physical, must be maintained in accordance with TEGL 39-11, "Guidance on the Handling and Protection of Personally Identifiable Information (PII)," as well as DWDAL's policy concerning privacy and data security. PII is participant-level and employee data that either by itself or combined with other data can link to a specific individual or identity.

When emailing documents containing PII, all awardees and MD Labor staff must use password-protection, encryption-preferred, strong authentication procedures, or other security controls to make the information unusable by unauthorized individuals. Physical records must be kept in locked offices or file rooms. If the file room is shared with other programs and/or staff other than staff authorized for this program have access to that room, then the files must be maintained in locked cabinets.

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[8] DWDAL's Policy Issuance on monitoring can be found here: http://www.labor.maryland.gov/employment/mpi/.

FAIR PRACTICES AND ACCESSIBILITY

It is MD Labor's policy that all persons have equal opportunity and access to services and facilities without regard to race, religion, color, sex (including pregnancy, childbirth and related medical conditions, transgender status, gender identity, and sexual orientation), marital status, genetic information, age, national origin or ancestry (including Limited English Proficiency), disability, veteran status, political affiliation or belief. Interested parties may refer to MD Labor's Nondiscrimination Plan[9] and Language Access Plan[10] for more information on accommodations and services.

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[9] https://labor.maryland.gov/employment/wioa-nondis.pdf
[10] https://labor.maryland.gov/employment/wioa-access.pdf

REFERENCES

LAW

- MD. Code Ann., Labor and Emp. Art., 11-607;
- MD. Code Ann., Labor and Emp. Art., 11-401 et. seq, Planned Apprenticeship Standards and Activities.

REGULATION

- COMAR 09.12.42 Equal Employment Opportunity;
- COMAR 09.12.43 Maryland Apprenticeship and Training; and,
- COMAR 09.37.01 *et* seq. Workforce Development and Adult Learning.

OTHER RESOURCES

- TEGL 39-11, Guidance on the Handling and Protection of Personally Identifiable Information, dated June 28, 2012;
- DWDAL Policy Issuance Page;
- Language Access Plan;
- Maryland Local Plans;
- Maryland WIOA Combined State Plan; and,
- MD Labor's Non-Discrimination Plan.