EVALUATION OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

OCTOBER 2024

PART 2

OFFICE OF PROGRAM EVALUATION AND GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

DEPARTMENT OF LEGISLATIVE SERVICES

MARYLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Evaluation of Workforce Development, Part II

Department of Legislative Services
Office of Program Evaluation and Government Accountability
Annapolis, Maryland

October 2024

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DEPARTMENT OF LEGISLATIVE SERVICES
OFFICE OF PROGRAM EVALUATION AND
GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY
MARYLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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October 7, 2024

Senator Clarence K. Lam, M.D., Senate Chair, Joint Audit and Evaluation Committee
Delegate Jared Solomon, House Chair, Joint Audit and Evaluation Committee
Members of the Joint Audit and Evaluation Committee

Dear Senator Lam, Delegate Chang, and Members:

At the request of the Executive Director of the Department of Legislative Services, the Office of Program Evaluation and Government Accountability has conducted a second evaluation of Maryland's workforce development programs. This evaluation focused on the Employment Advancement Right Now program and was performed consistent with § 2-1234 of the State Government Article.

Our primary observations and recommendations begin on page 21. The response from the Maryland Department of Labor (MDL) is included as Appendix A.

We wish to express our appreciation for the cooperation and assistance provided by MDL.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Powell
Director

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Evaluation of Workforce Development, Part II
The Maryland Employment Advancement Right Now (EARN) Grant Program
Executive Summary

Between fiscal 2018 and 2023, the Maryland Department of Labor (MDL) awarded a total of $46.7 million in competitive grants under the State-funded Maryland Employment Advancement Right Now (EARN) grant program.

EARN Summary Statistics for Grants Awarded
Fiscal 2018-2023

256
EARN grants awarded
by the Maryland Department of Labor

86
Strategic Industry Partnerships (SIP)

Many SIPs have renewed their grants multiple times.

63
Lead Applicants/Grantees

Some Lead Applicants (Grantees) represent multiple SIPs and multiple grants.

Approximately 1,100
employers and organizational partners participated in a SIP.

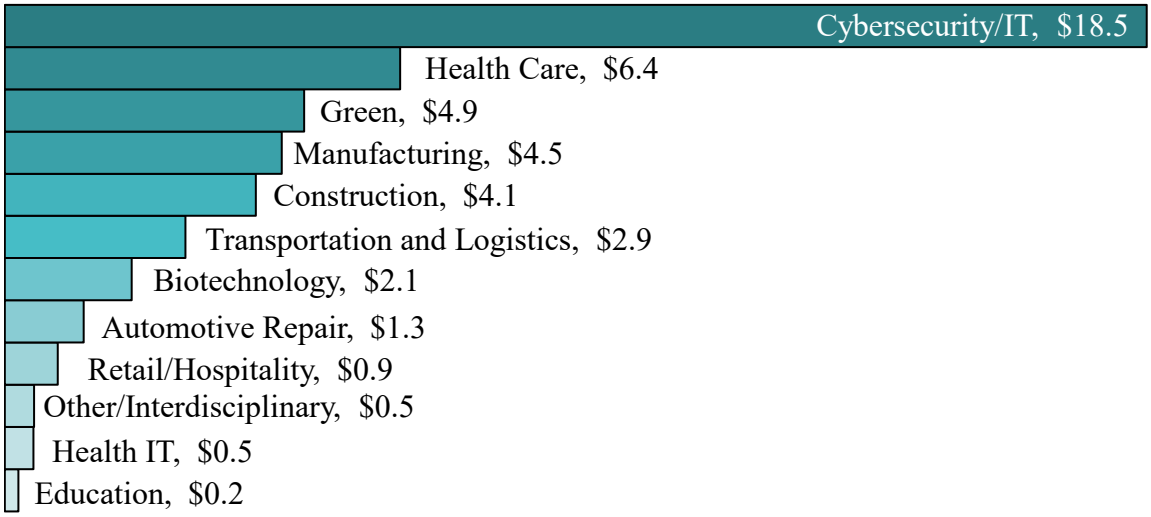
Each SIP must include at least 5 employers and 2 additional partners. Some SIPS have far more than the minimum number of members.

Approximately 14,000
individuals participated in training,
based on Final Reports to date by Grantees.

Approximately 12,700
individuals completed training,
based on Final Reports to date by Grantees.

Currently, EARN has SIP grantees across more than 10 industries (as these industry sectors are uniquely defined for the EARN program). Over fiscal 2018 to 2023, SIPs in the cybersecurity/information technology industry received the largest portion of EARN grant funds – about $17 million.

EARN Grants by Industry
Fiscal 2018-2023
($ in Millions)



Highlights of OPEGA Observations and Recommendations

- MDL monitors and assesses the performance of the EARN grant program through several mechanisms discussed in this report, including an annual evaluation of EARN by the Business, Economic, and Community Outreach Network (BEACON) at the Franklin P. Perdue School of Business at Salisbury University.

  The Office of Program Evaluation and Government Accountability (OPEGA) sought to build on BEACON's evaluations by determining (1) if trainee workforce outcomes reported by grantees persisted after exit from training and (2) if employers participating in EARN had positive workforce outcomes as compared to a similar group of employers who did not participate in EARN. OPEGA could not answer these questions, however, because of how EARN data is currently collected and retained.

  This report offers options for how EARN program performance could be more fully evaluated in the future with additional data collection.

- The Maryland EARN program uses a "sector partnerships" model for workforce training also used in other states and encouraged by the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014. But wage and employment outcomes for trainees under the State EARN program cannot be verified in the same way as for the federally funded WIOA programs because of how MDL collects and retains EARN trainee data. MDL could ask EARN grantees

to report more information on their EARN trainees to enable matching the reported trainee outcomes against unemployment insurance (UI) or other wage records to verify reported outcomes and see if they persist over time. Requesting more data from grantees has pros and cons, as discussed in this report.

- MDL retains administrative records on EARN for three years, which precludes evaluating many aspects of EARN over a longer term. To enable longer term impact evaluations, MDL could retain administrative records for a longer period, as it now does for apprenticeships.

- OPEGA cannot validate the estimated economic impact of EARN in the BEACON evaluations with the information provided in those evaluations. MDL could request that in future evaluations BEACON provide more detail on its economic impact methodology.

- EARN participants (trainees and employers) are not registered in a central database. MDL could add EARN participants to the Maryland Workforce Exchange and track performance metrics as it does for participants of WIOA-funded workforce development programs.

- Noncredit EARN training could be added to the Maryland Longitudinal Data System to facilitate comparing the effectiveness of workforce training across different delivery systems.

- EARN uses its own unique industry categorizations. MDL could align the industry categorizations used for EARN with those used by federal statistical agencies and MDL's workforce and labor market data. Such standardization would facilitate using current workforce data to assess EARN by industry and compare it to other workforce training.

The Maryland EARN program presents an opportunity to assess unique approaches to sectoral training taken by EARN grantees and SIPs. More robust assessment of these approaches could facilitate considering whether they merit being scaled up, scaled back, or used in other workforce training contexts such as the community colleges. The evaluability limitations encountered by OPEGA for EARN also serves as a case study in broader opportunities to strengthen State evaluation capacity.

Evaluation Purpose and Scope

The Executive Director of the Department of Legislative Services directed the Office of Program Evaluation and Government Accountability (OPEGA) to evaluate Maryland's workforce development programs. Part I of this evaluation[1], which included an inventory, was published in March 2024. For this report, OPEGA chose to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the Maryland Employment Advancement Right Now (EARN) grant program, administered by the Maryland Department of Labor (MDL).

This evaluation reviewed EARN program implementation over the fiscal 2018 through 2023 period, including how wage and employment outcomes for participants are currently measured and reported, limitations to those performance measures, and the extent to which the program can be evaluated (*i.e.*, its evaluability) based on available program data. It offers options for how EARN program performance could be further assessed in the future if additional data is collected and retained.

Appendix F describes the OPEGA methodology for this evaluation.

Introduction to the Maryland EARN Grant Program

The Maryland General Assembly (MGA) authorized the State-funded EARN grant program during its 2013 session. EARN uses a dual-customer sectoral approach that serves both workers and employers. The EARN program awards grants to Strategic Industry Partnerships (SIP) for workforce training tailored to the needs of employers. Grantees use the awards to address skills gaps and personnel shortages specific to their industry and region by training incumbent (current) employees, unemployed people, and/or underemployed/low-wage workers.

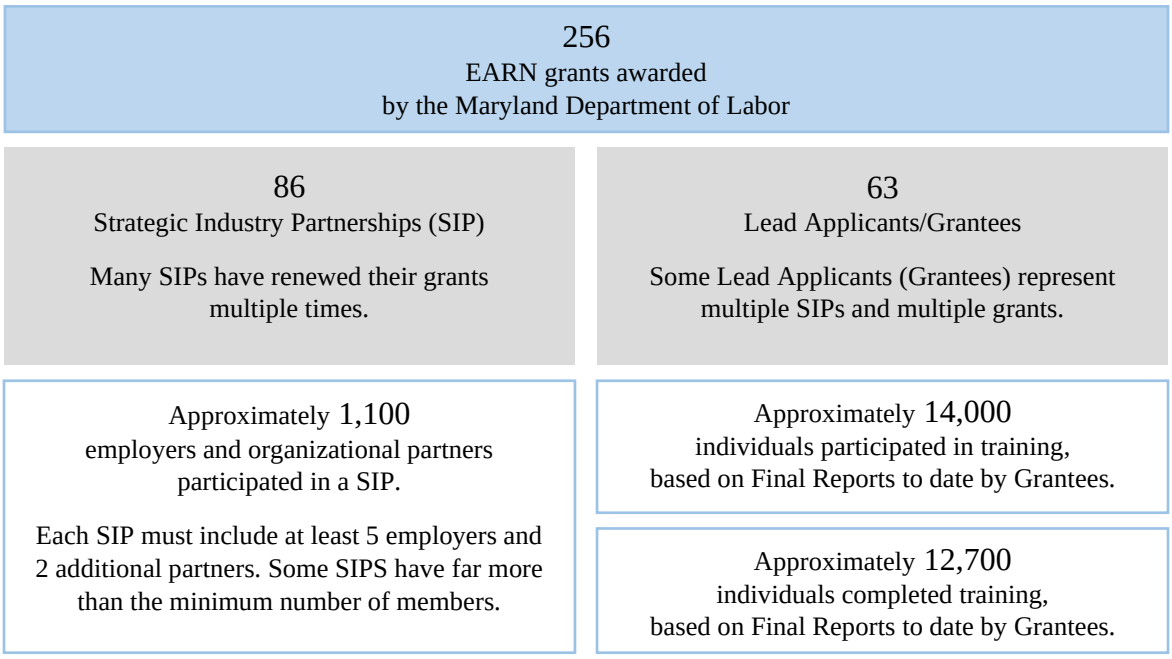
Key features of EARN workforce training are as follows:

- EARN grants are organized around SIPs of employers and support organizations;
- EARN grants can fund workforce training for jobs in a variety of industry sectors;
- grantees can customize training to the current workforce needs of employers in their SIP; and
- SIPs define their own criteria for selecting training participants.

MDL administers EARN. MDL issues grant solicitations, selects grantees, and monitors awards. MDL consults with the Department of Commerce, the Governor's Workforce Development Board, and other stakeholders in administering EARN. MDL has contracted with the Business, Economic, and Community Outreach Network (BEACON) at the Franklin P. Perdue School of Business at Salisbury University (SU) in Maryland to assist with program implementation and evaluate EARN outcomes annually.

Between fiscal 2018 and 2023, MDL awarded a total of $46.7 million in competitive EARN grants. These EARN awards can be described in terms of the individual grants, the SIPs, the Lead Applicants (also called Grantees), and the participating employers and trainees, as shown in **Exhibit 1**.

Exhibit 1
EARN Summary Statistics for Grants Awarded
Fiscal 2018-2023



EARN: Employment Advancement Right Now

Note: Trainee participation and completions only includes grants that have spent their total award and submitted Final Report data on all trainees who entered and exited.

Source: Maryland Department of Labor; Department of Legislative Services.

Since its inception, EARN has held nine rounds of solicitation for grant proposals. SIPs applying for an EARN grant must have at least five employers in the same industry plus two more partner organizations, but many SIPs have far more than the minimum number of employers. One organizational entity in each SIP serves as Lead Applicant (the Grantee) for each EARN grant. Over fiscal 2018 through 2023, EARN has maintained about 70 active SIPs.

Appendix C lists the EARN grants (including the SIP and Lead Applicant for each grant) awarded during fiscal 2018 through 2023.

EARN grants are funded with general funds. EARN has no line-item appropriation; it is funded within MDL's Executive Direction – Office of the Secretary. **Exhibit 2** shows recent State expenditures.

Exhibit 2
State Expenditures on the EARN Program
Fiscal 2020-2023

	2020 Actual	2021 Actual	2022 Actual	2023 Actual
General Funds (100%)	$7,076,952	$6,986,744	$7,081,426	$8,088,618

EARN: Employment Advancement Right Now

Source: Department of Budget and Management; Department of Legislative Services

EARN requires grantees to provide leveraged funding. While it sets no minimum match, EARN prioritizes SIP applicants that maximize contributions. Leveraged amounts may be in-kind or cash and may be funds from other public, private, or philanthropic sources.[i]

EARN uses a "sector partnerships" model for workforce training also used in other states and encouraged by the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014.

EARN is organized around SIPs, which are regional collaborations of at least five businesses in an industry sector, plus at least two more organizations such as nonprofits, community colleges, and local governments, designed to ensure that the skills taught in EARN-funded training match the workforce needs of employers in that SIP. EARN is an example of a sector partnership approach to workforce development. When EARN began in Maryland, other workforce training programs using a similar sector partnership model were already underway throughout the United States.

Sector partnerships (also called industry partnerships) for workforce development first gained popularity in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Over the last 30 years, many entities (including states, think tanks, advocacy groups, and academic institutions) have developed their own sector

[i] EARN awards can also be used to leverage other funds. For example, because EARN is State funded, EARN grantees may use their award as the cost match to federal Food Supplement Employment Training funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

partnership models. There are now hundreds of examples of sector partnerships across the United States. The sector partnership approach is also encouraged under WIOA.

Sector partnerships usually have some key features in common, involving similar types of participants (partner organizations and individuals) that operate in similar ways to accomplish their goals. These similar characteristics are outlined in **Exhibit 3**.

Exhibit 3
Common Participants and Characteristics of Programs Using the Sector Partnership Model

Participants **Typical of Sector Partnerships**	**Characteristics** **Typical of Sector Partnerships**
• ***Convening Organization:*** Organizes industry partnership activities, provides administrative support, manages projects, and facilitates collaboration.	• Each sector partnership is focused on a specific labor market defined by geographic region and industry.
• ***Employers and Businesses:*** A critical mass of industry representatives that define the sector partnership goals and co-create solutions to shared workforce challenges.	• Activities undertaken are driven by employer workforce needs.
• ***Support Organizations:*** A network of education, workforce development, economic development, labor, and community service organizations that support the sector partnership through training and services.	• Funding source does not dictate the implementation activities of the industry sector partnership.
• ***Individuals (Workers and Jobseekers):*** Participants in the sector partnership's training and support services, including. incumbent, underemployed/low-wage, unemployed, and new workers.	• Sector partnerships work formally and directly with support organizations. • Individuals are targeted and selected for participation in training and support activities based on sector partnership goals.

Source: Department of Legislative Services

The sector partnership model has held wide appeal because it promotes deep knowledge of an industry to better design training for current industry needs. Directly involving businesses in defining the industry needs may also increase the chances of training people for current job openings.

Exhibit 4 highlights three prominent examples of sector partnership models that were being implemented in other states when EARN was set up in Maryland.

Exhibit 4
Sector Partnership Case Studies

Case Study: Pennsylvania Industry Partnerships (Began in 2005)

Pennsylvania established its Industry Partnership program in 2005. Between 2005 and 2010, the state spent nearly $100 million on the program using a combination of federal Workforce Investment Act discretionary funds and state funds to award grants to almost 80 industry partnerships involving more than 6,000 businesses, a dozen industry sectors, and 80,000 trained workers.

Case Study: Colorado Sector Partnerships (Began in 2009)

The Colorado SECTORS Initiative pilot program launched in 2009 as a partnership between the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment and the Colorado Workforce Development Council (CWDC). Active sector partnerships may receive technical assistance, participate in communities of practice, and apply for grants provided by CWDC. As of fall 2022, CWDC recognized 17 active sector partnerships.

Case Study: WorkAdvance Model (Began in 2011)

The WorkAdvance Model, designed by MDRC (a nonprofit that began by evaluating state welfare-to-work programs), was developed from MDRC research on sectoral strategies, job retention, and career advancement. The model was influenced by the positive findings of the 2010 Sectoral Employment Impact Study. Between 2011 and 2013, MDRC evaluated this model at four sites in Oklahoma, New York, and Ohio.

As OPEGA noted in the *Evaluation of Workforce Development, Part I*[2], while workforce training is offered in many settings and by many entities in Maryland, SIPs are the hallmark of EARN workforce training. Like other programs using a sector partnership model, EARN aims to keep a tight connection between worker training and employer needs to benefit trainees as well as employers.

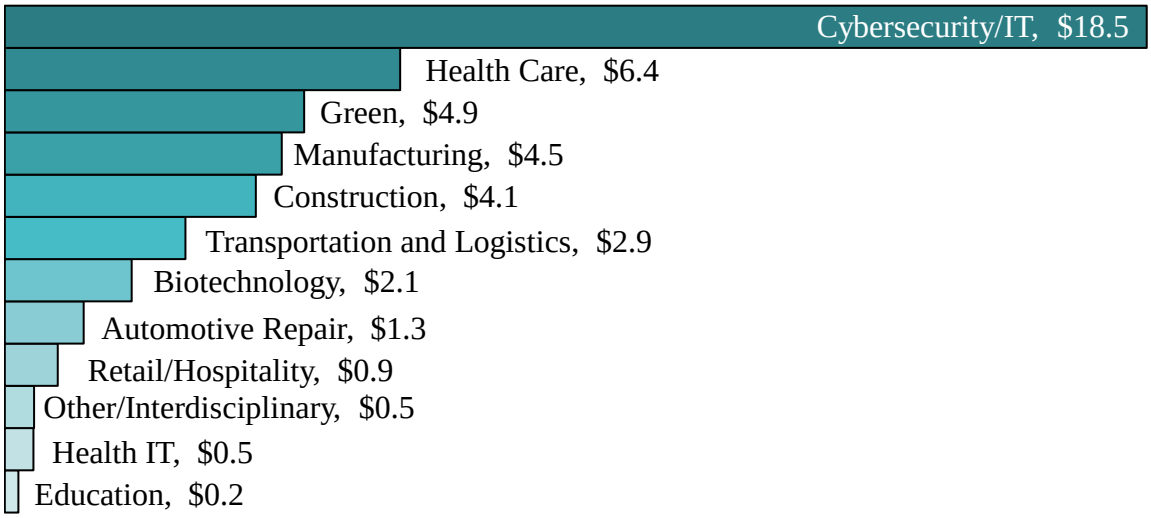
When applying for an EARN grant, SIPs must show (among other things) evidence of sustained shortages in skilled employment within their target industry. SIPs must identify common

workforce needs for high-demand occupations in their industry and then develop and implement training strategies to meet their common workforce needs and shortages. Once the project is underway, SIP employers may take part in selecting, training, observing, and mentoring the trainees. This active participation is intended to ensure that the training meets the vision of the industry partners. Direct employer participation also exposes the employers to the trainees as potential job candidates.

Over half of all EARN awards between fiscal 2018 and 2023 went to SIPs in the information technology (IT) and health care industry sectors.

Currently, EARN has SIP grantees across more than 10 industries (as these sectors are defined by the EARN program). Over fiscal 2018 to 2023, SIPs in the cyber security/IT industry received the largest portion of EARN grant funds – about $17 million.[ii] **Exhibit 5** shows the proportion of all grants by EARN industry sector.

Exhibit 5
EARN Grants by Industry
Fiscal 2018-2023
($ in Millions)



EARN: Employment Advancement Right Now
IT: information technology

Source: Maryland Department of Labor; Department of Legislative Services

[ii] $3 million of the EARN grants for cybersecurity/IT were allocated for Baltimore Cyber Range LLC to train 100 State employees in cybersecurity. Source: MDL press release dated Oct. 27, 2022.

EARN's industry categories do not always align with the standardized industry or occupational categorization systems used by federal statistical agencies and MDL's workforce and labor market data.

EARN projects can vary in several important ways – and by design, each SIP is unique.

EARN is intended to be flexible and encourage innovation. As a result, EARN projects can vary as listed in **Exhibit 6**. While such variation between SIPs can make broad generalizations more challenging, it also allows EARN grant projects the flexibility to experiment with industry-led training.

Exhibit 6

EARN Projects Can Vary in Several Ways – and by Design, Each SIP Is Unique

Trainee Employment Status Varies	The EARN program allows grantees to use their awards to pay for education and skills training for two categories of individual trainees, as defined by the EARN program: *(1) incumbent (current) workers*; *and* *(2) unemployed people and underemployed (low-wage) workers*. Some projects funded by EARN grants focus on one of those categories of individuals, while others train people in both categories.
Training Content Varies by SIP	Under an EARN grant, SIP members (that is, the Lead Applicant and all other employer and partner members of that SIP) collaborate to identify common workforce needs for high-demand occupations in a target industry and then develop and implement strategies to meet their common workforce needs and shortages. By design, the skills training offered may be specific to each SIP.
Training Duration Can Vary	Training length can vary from one day to three to four months, depending on the skills taught, the industry, and the employment needs of SIP members. According to MDL, incumbent worker training is typically shorter in length, while training of low-wage workers or unemployed people is typically longer.
EARN Grant Duration Can Vary	Most EARN grant projects last two years (although some projects are completed in less time, and some have requested extensions). Training during that project may be done in cohorts: a grantee may train several groups of individuals during the project.

How Trainees Are Selected Varies by SIP	Grantees screen and select the trainees who will participate in EARN-funded training. MDL does not predefine which individuals may participate in EARN training. This variable can result in trainees differing from each other from one SIP to another, and the selection process itself can be a predictor of trainee success.
Barriers to Employment for Trainees Can Vary, and Some Trainees Face No Barriers	Examples of barriers to employment can include a criminal background, failing a drug test or having a history of substance abuse, having a low level of literacy and/or numeracy, lack of education (or specifically a high school degree), lack of transportation to a job site, lack of child care during working hours, and others. Some trainees have no barriers to employment, while others may have one or more barriers to employment. Each SIP applying for an EARN grant must include at least two organizational partners. MDL encourages, but does not require, that these partners have experience in barrier removal. For SIPs focused on incumbent worker training, barrier removal is less important. Examples of barrier removal can include record expungement, bus tokens, a vehicle, instruction in math and reading, GED® courses, and stipends during training.

EARN: Employment Advancement Right Now
MDL: Maryland Department of Labor
SIP: Strategic Industry Partnership

Source: Department of Legislative Services

One Lead Applicant may have multiple SIPs and multiple grants.

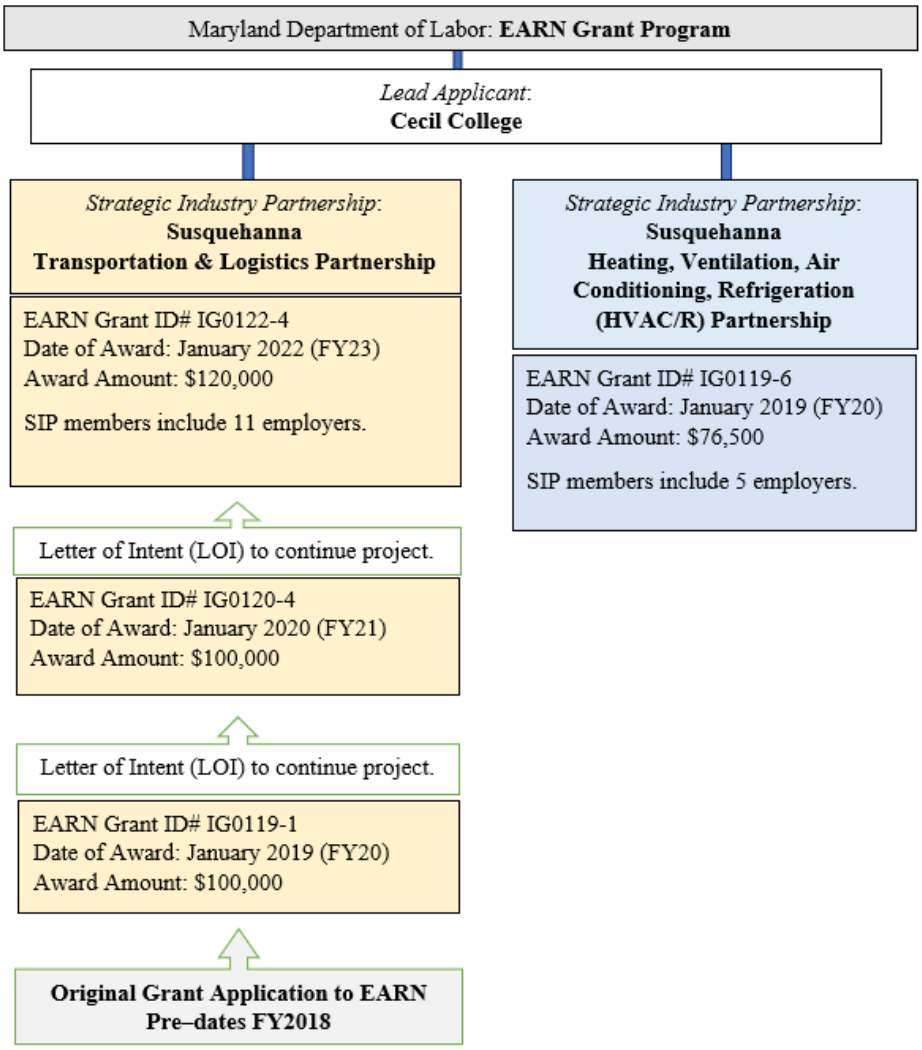
Under EARN, one Lead Applicant can be the fiscal agent[iii] for multiple SIPs and multiple grants over time. For example, as illustrated in **Exhibit 7**, Cecil College was the Lead Applicant for two SIPs awarded EARN grants during fiscal 2018 through 2023, as follows:

- The SIP entitled the "Susquehanna Transportation and Logistics Partnership" received three EARN grants during fiscal 2018 through 2023. Each grant continued an earlier grant award, which the Lead Applicant (Cecil College) requested via a Letter of Intent sent to MDL. The original application for an EARN grant predates fiscal 2018.

[iii] Full definition of Lead Applicant: "1.2.16 Lead Applicant – The entity designated by the Partnership to serve as the Fiscal Agent for the partnership for the purposes of the Implementation Grant. The Lead Applicant will also be responsible for managing the grant and all aspects of implementing the Workforce Training Plan."

- The other SIP, entitled "Susquehanna HVAC/R Partnership," received one EARN grant during fiscal 2018 through 2023. This example illustrates how one Lead Applicant can be fiscal agent for more than one SIP and more than one EARN grant.

Exhibit 7
One Lead Applicant May Have Multiple SIPs and Multiple Grants

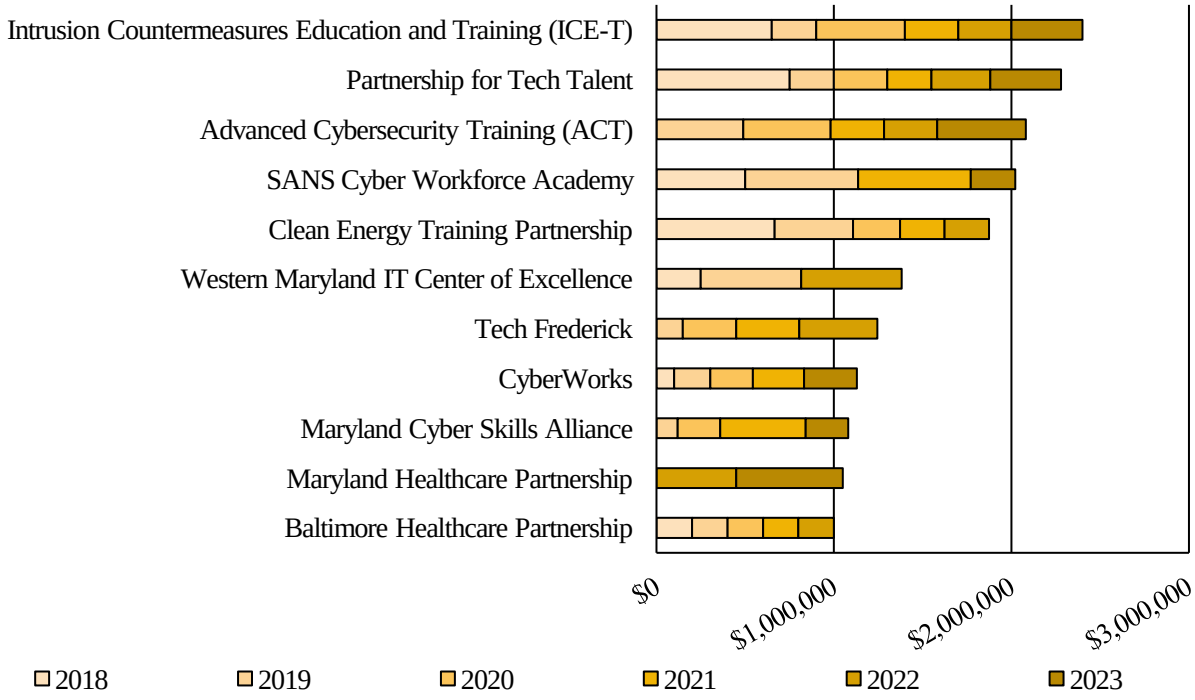


EARN: Employment Advancement Right Now
SIP: Strategic Industry Partnership

Source: Department of Legislative Services

Exhibit 8 and **Exhibit 9** summarize the SIPs and Lead Applicants (Grantees) that received the most EARN grant funds over fiscal 2018 through 2023. (Appendix C lists all EARN grants by SIP and Lead Applicant.)

Exhibit 8
Strategic Industry Partnerships Awarded EARN Grants Totaling More Than $1 Million
Fiscal 2018-2023



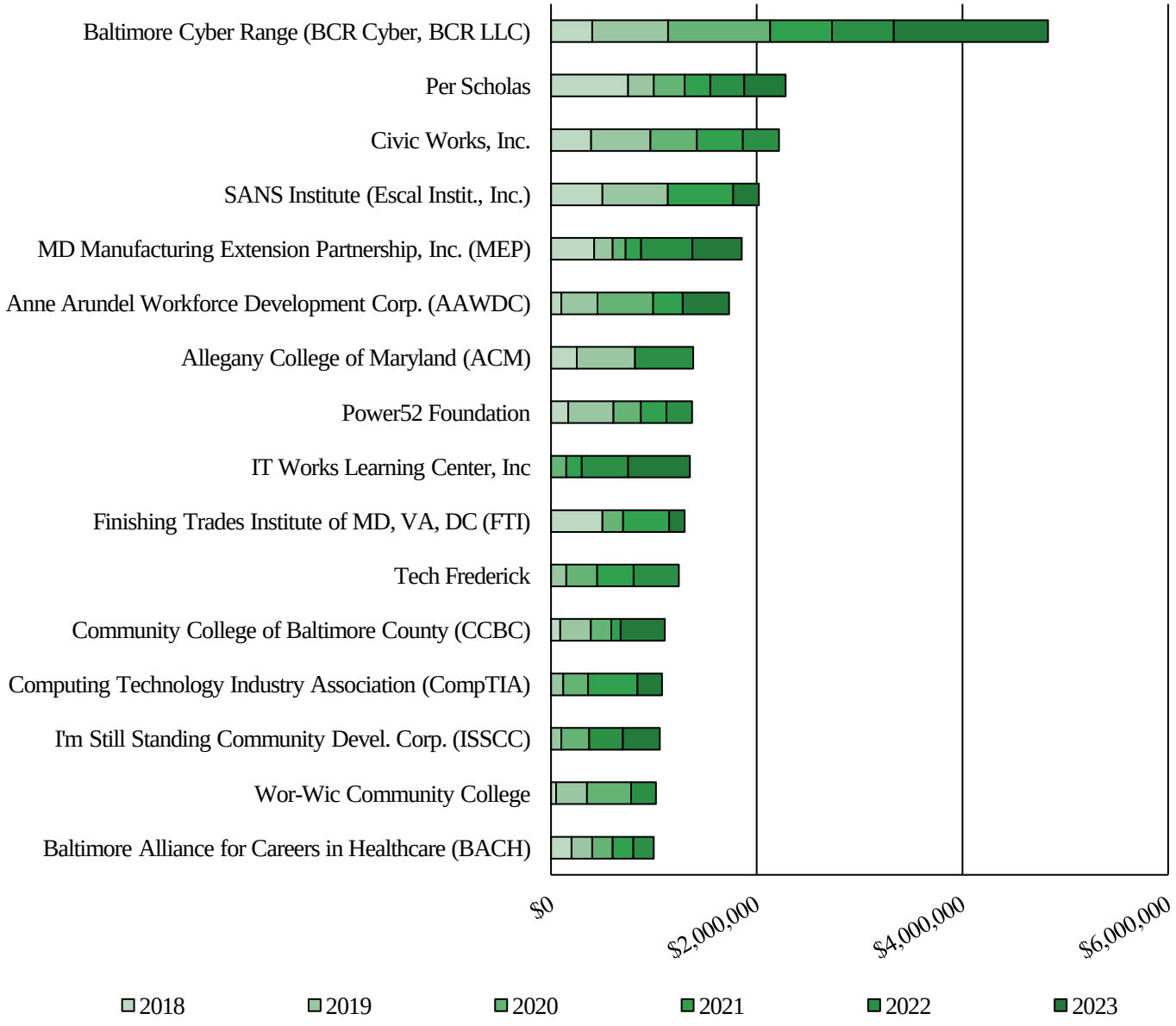
EARN: Employment Advancement Right Now
IT: information technology

Source: Maryland Department of Labor; Department of Legislative Services

Exhibit 8 shows SIPs awarded EARN grants that cumulatively totaled more than $1 million over fiscal 2018 through 2023.

Exhibit 9 shows Lead Applicants (Grantees) that were fiscal agents for more than $1 million in total EARN awards during fiscal 2018 through 2023. Some Lead Applicants were fiscal agents for more than one SIP. For example, Baltimore Cyber Range was Lead Applicant for three SIPs and 16 EARN grants during fiscal 2018 through 2023.

Exhibit 9
Lead Applicants (Grantees) with a Total of at Least $1 Million in EARN Grants
Fiscal 2018-2023



EARN: Employment Advancement Right Now
IT: information technology

Source: Maryland Department of Labor; Department of Legislative Services

Exhibit 10 lists the SIPs with grants awarded and completed during fiscal 2018 through 2022 that reported the most participants (at least 200 training participants). This exhibit is provided to illustrate the maximum size of projects in terms of participants. Appendix C provides a complete list of SIPs and grants, including the awarded amounts and the number of participants.

Exhibit 10
SIPs with EARN Grants Awarded and Completed With 200 or More Participants*
Fiscal 2018-2023
Alphabetical by SIP

SIP	Lead Applicant (Grantee)	Grant Number	Participants*	Completers*	Completion Rate
Architectural Metal and Glass Initiative (AMGI)	Finishing Trades Institute of MD, VA, DC (FTI)	IG0415-13-4	200	200	100%
Baltimore Health Care Partnership	Baltimore Alliance for Careers in Health Care (BACH)	IG1018-1 IG0120-5	211 224	155 192	73% 86%
Baltimore Tech Fundamentals	NPower Inc.	IG0118-8 IG0420-4	214 249	170 244	79% 98%
BIOTrain	Montgomery College	IG1015-5-2 IG0620-1	442 345	442 345	100% 100%
Building Employer-led Alliances for Careers in Hospitality – Eastern Shore (BEACHES)	Wor-Wic Community College	IG0514-6	200	155	78%

SIP	Lead Applicant (Grantee)	Grant Number	Participants*	Completers*	Completion Rate
Curtis Bay Industrial Training Partnership	W.R. Grace & Co.	IG0717-7	237	230	97%
Maryland Manufacturing Boot Camp	Maryland Manufacturing Extension Partnership, Inc.	IG0514-21-4	348	348	100%
Partnership for Tech Talent	Per Scholas	IG0618-3 IG0420-3	250 212	249 172	100% 81%
Rapid Advanced Manufacturing Skills Partnership	Maryland Manufacturing Extension Partnership, Inc.	IG0719-11	293	291	99%
Suburban Maryland Construction Initiative (SMCI)	Finishing Trades Institute of MD, VA, DC (FTI)	IG0621-9	234	234	100%
Tech Frederick	Tech Frederick	IG0120-12 IG0421-10	355 270	355 270	100% 100%
Washington County Manufacturing Partnership	Maryland Manufacturing Extension Partnership, Inc.	IG0618-1	374	374	100%

EARN: Employment Advancement Right Now
SIP: Strategic Industry Partnership

*Grants listed only include those that spent their total award and submitted Final Report data on all trainees who entered and exited, as reported by Grantees in their Final Reports to the Maryland Department of Labor.

Source: Maryland Department of Labor; Department of Legislative Services

Legislative History of the EARN Grant Program

Initial Enactment

EARN was first authorized by MGA through enactment of SB 278 (Chapter 1 of 2013). The legislation set up the framework for EARN to offer competitive grants for SIPs to develop workforce training programs that provide industry-valued skills training to individuals that lead to a credential or identifiable skill and job-readiness training and skills training that lead to a certification or credential.

The act requires MDL to report on the EARN program to MGA and the Governor by December 31 of each year. Among other things, the report must identify training needs statewide, including industries in urgent need of qualified workers. SB 278 (Chapter 1) became effective June 1, 2013. MDL has provided most annual reports to MGA ~~through 2022~~as required, but the annual report due December 31, 2023, had not yet been submitted at the time this evaluation was written.

Subsequent Amendments

During the 2019 session, MGA passed SB 516 (Chapter 757 of 2019), which (among other provisions) established a Clean Energy Workforce Account (CEWA) within EARN, funded from the Strategic Energy Investment Fund (SEIF). The Maryland Energy Administration (MEA) manages the SEIF. MDL manages EARN. The Act established CEWA within the EARN program and directed MEA to transfer some SEIF dollars to the CEWA for MDL to disburse as EARN grants. The Act, which became effective October 1, 2019, requires that grantees have project labor agreements in place.

A Governor's initiative in fiscal 2018 funded some EARN grants to train people for jobs in the renewable energy sector were funded from the SEIF. Chapter 757 provided that transfers from the SEIF for EARN grants be used for pre-apprenticeship, youth apprenticeship, and registered apprenticeship programs that prepare workers for careers in the clean energy industry, with certain restrictions including a requirement that grantees have project labor agreements in place. For fiscal 2021 and 2022, while EARN did award grants for clean energy jobs training, no grants in those years used the SEIF because no applicants met the statutory requirement to have a project labor agreement in place.

Current Performance Measures for the EARN Grant Program

MDL monitors, assesses, and reports on the performance of the EARN grant program through several mechanisms, as listed in **Exhibit 11**. All current measures of EARN performance are derived from the Outcome Reports submitted by EARN grantees to MDL.

Exhibit 11
MDL Monitoring and Reporting on EARN Grant Program Performance

Document	Author and Process
1. Quarterly and Final Reports from EARN Grantees	EARN grantees provide MDL with quarterly Outcome (Entry and Exit), Expenditure, and Narrative Reports, plus Final Reports after project completion.
2. Annual Evaluations of the EARN Grant Program	Starting in 2014, BEACON at Salisbury University has evaluated EARN annually under a contract with MDL using data from grantee reports.
3. EARN Annual Reports to MGA	MDL provides EARN annual reports to MGA, as required by State law (§ 11-709 of the Labor and Employment Article), based on the grantee reports and the BEACON evaluations.
4. MFR Annual Performance Reports	The Department of Budget and Management publishes the MFR reports, with EARN performance measures derived from the grantee reports.

BEACON: Business, Economic, and Community Outreach Network
EARN: Employment Advancement Right Now
MDL: Maryland Department of Labor
MFR: Managing for Results
MGA: Maryland General Assembly

Source: Department of Legislative Services

This section describes these current mechanisms and performance measures.

1. Outcome Reports from EARN Grantees

EARN grantees submit four types of quarterly reports to MDL:

- Expenditure (Financial) Report;
- Narrative Report;
- Outcome Report with trainee entry data ("Outcome/Entry"); and

- Outcome Report with trainee exit data ("Outcome/Exit").

Grantees also provide Final Reports, including final financial, narrative, and outcome data, within a specified period after project completion. MDL has stated that it retains administrative copies of these reports for three years.

Grantees assign each trainee an anonymized Participant Identification Number for use in their Outcome Reports to MDL. MDL encourages but does not require grantees to collect Social Security numbers (SSN) from trainees. Grantee reports to MDL exclude any personally identifying information (PII), including SSNs.

Entry Reports on Trainees

The Grantees' Outcome/Entry Reports capture demographic data on trainees at enrollment, as required by State law, including:

- date of birth;
- county of residence;
- race;
- sex;
- national origin;
- level of education;
- veteran status;
- employment status (at point of enrollment);
- previous wage at most recent job;
- average work hours at current or most recent job; and
- health benefits status at current or most recent job.

Exit Reports on Trainees

The Grantees' Outcome/Exit Reports provide outcome data following training completion, including:

- new credentials, certifications, or skills earned during EARN training;
- for unemployed/underemployed trainees: employment status; wage; hours; and benefits; and
- for incumbent workers: title or wage promotions resulting from EARN training.

Over the term of an EARN project, individual participants are often trained in cohorts, and one multi-year grant project may have multiple trainee cohorts. Grantees must work with their employer partners to verify trainee employment outcomes.

2. Annual Evaluations of EARN by BEACON at Salisbury University

Since 2014, MDL has contracted with BEACON at the Franklin P. Perdue School of Business at SU in Maryland for annual evaluations of EARN. BEACON receives copies of all grantee reports and compiles data into a dashboard for MDL. BEACON reports programwide outcomes by fiscal year, including key metrics such as actual training outcomes, training completion rates, numbers of trainings, and number of individuals trained. BEACON reports also analyze programwide outcomes by region and by industry. All BEACON annual evaluations are available from MDL.

BEACON's EARN evaluations have used the following data sources:

- "Core Metrics" from grantee reports (Narrative, Financial, Entry/Exit Outcomes);
- Qualitative Information: narrative and success stories submitted by grantees; and
- Employer Satisfaction Survey results.

MDL does not require BEACON to verify the grantee-reported earnings outcomes of trainees.

BEACON's annual EARN evaluations report program outcomes within each evaluation year, from July 1 to June 30, which only partially represent a program's impact. For example, BEACON's most recent evaluation, published in February 2024, reported outcomes for participants who completed training during the EARN 2022-2023 Grant Year (July 1, 2022, through June 30, 2023), as shown in **Exhibit 12**.

Exhibit 12
BEACON Evaluation of Outcomes for Trainees Who Completed During Fiscal 2023

	PARTICIPANTS WITH ENTRY AND EXIT DATA – EXCLUDING INCUMBENTS	PARTICIPANTS WITH ENTRY AND EXIT DATA – INCUMBENTS ONLY
NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS	2,094	1,530
NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS THAT COMPLETED THE EARN FUNDED PROGRAM	1,705	1,459
COMPLETION RATE	81%	95%
PARTICIPANT WAS EMPLOYED AT THE CLOSE OF THE REPORTING PERIOD	1,402	1,452
PARTICIPANT ENTERED A NEW EMPLOYMENT POSITION	1,141	316

Source: Maryland Department of Labor

According to BEACON, "While grants vary, most extend across multiple years, making annual outcomes only partially represent a grant's overall impact. Apart from quarterly reports shaping evaluations, grantees submit a comprehensive final report after the grant period, capturing all outcomes including post-program employment statuses. The final outcome data is categorized by the fiscal year of grant allocation." BEACON and MDL told OPEGA that they are in the process of expanding their annual reporting to also show the cumulative outcomes of grant projects.

In its annual evaluations, BEACON also estimates a return on investment (ROI) for EARN, as requested by MDL. For example, BEACON estimated in its most recent report that the EARN program ROI showed $17.16 in economic impact value for each $1 invested by MDL during the 2022-2023 (fiscal 2023) grant cycle. These estimates are discussed in more detail starting on page 26.

3. Annual Reports from the Maryland Department of Labor to the General Assembly

State law requires MDL to report annually (by Dec. 31) to the legislature on the EARN grant program. Statute requires that the report include the following information:

- statewide training needs;

- success and accountability measures;
- description of each EARN-funded SIP;
- number of participants by demographic factors;
- number of trainees obtaining credentials, skills, employment, or promotions; and
- an assessment of how Grantees used existing data on needs for training and skills.

Exhibit 13 highlights some of the EARN outcome metrics reported by MDL in its annual reports to MGA.

Exhibit 13
EARN Program Outcome Metrics as Reported in EARN Annual Reports
Fiscal 2018-2023

	2018 Actual	2019 Actual	2020 Actual	2021 Actual	2022 Actual	2023 Actual*
Individual Participants	3,920	4,435	4,535	4,761	4,638	N/A*
Credential or Certification**	2,062	2,169	1,906	1,979	2,301	
Identifiable Skill	2,691	2,869	2,696	2,843	3,089	
A New Employment Position	648	1,587	802	1,384	1,212	
A Title Promotion	171	315	253	253	387	
A Wage Promotion	700	1,143	1,128	1,213	1,278	

EARN: Employment Advancement Right Now

* N/A is "not available." The EARN Annual Report for fiscal 2023 was not yet available at the time of this report.

**The number of participants who earned a certification, wage increase, title promotion, new employment position, etc. represent those who exited training within that fiscal year.

Source: Maryland Department of Labor; Department of Legislative Services

Most EARN grant projects last two years, but MDL reports to MGA annually for a single fiscal year. EARN annual reports have not shown cumulative outcomes for completed multi-year

EARN projects. This makes it hard for readers of EARN annual reports to compare outcomes for specific projects over their full term (some of which span three fiscal years or more). As with the BEACON evaluations noted previously, MDL told OPEGA that it is in the process of expanding its EARN annual reports to also show the cumulative outcomes of projects.

4. Managing for Results Performance Measures

As shown in **Exhibit 14**, the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) publishes annual Managing for Results (MFR) reports with two performance measures not included in the EARN annual reports, as follows:

- percentage of training completers placed into employment; and
- percentage of incumbent worker participants acquiring a new credential, certification, or skill as a result of participation in EARN training.

MDL provides the data for these MFR performance measures. OPEGA could not independently verify the percentages reported in the MFR.

Exhibit 14
MFR Performance Measures for EARN Program
Fiscal 2018-2023

	2018 Actual	2019 Actual	2020 Actual	2021 Actual	2022 Actual	2023 Actual
Percentage of EARN participants who completed training placed into employment	83%	81%	83%	81%	80%	81%
Percentage of EARN incumbent participants that acquired a new credential, certification, or skill as a result of participation in EARN training	97%	97%	97%	99%	99%	96%

EARN: Employment Advancement Right Now
MFR: Managing for Results

Note: Data for MFRs is supplied by EARN Grantees who report outcomes to Maryland Department of Labor administrators.

Source: Department of Budget and Management; Department of Legislative Services

Observations and Recommendations

Observation: Lack of data makes it hard to verify grantee reported trainee outcomes, to assess employer outcomes, or to determine if the trainee outcomes persist over time.

In general, evaluating the impact of a program and determining whether observed outcomes can be causally attributed to the program requires certain key data and records. **Exhibit 15** describes the elements needed for an impact evaluation.

Exhibit 15
Elements Required for Impact Evaluations

Documentation	Are relevant documents available and accessible?
Previous Evaluations	Have previous evaluations been carried out? Were those evaluations methodologically sound?
Existing Data Sources	What data is already available? Can existing data be disaggregated by participant characteristics?
Causal Attribution	Is it possible to compare program participants against a control group? Are other interventions taking place in the same context that could make causal attribution challenging?
Capacity of Monitoring and Evaluation Systems	Do existing monitoring and evaluation systems for the program deliver relevant and high-quality data?

Source: Adapted from *Evaluability Assessment for Impact Evaluation: Guidance, Checklists and Decision Support* (The Methods Lab, August 2015); Department of Legislative Services. See Appendix G for a longer discussion of evaluability assessments.

Exhibit 16 summarizes how the elements required for an impact evaluation apply to EARN. For example, due to the limited evaluability of EARN, OPEGA cannot verify the grantee-reported wage and employment outcomes for individual training participants, nor

determine if those reported trainee outcomes have persisted over time. The section that follows discusses these limitations and offers options to improve the future evaluability of EARN.

Exhibit 16
Review of the Evaluability of the EARN Program

Evaluability Element	EARN Grant Program Practices	Implications for Evaluability
Documentation	• The Maryland Department of Labor (MDL) retains its administrative records for three years. • Grantees retain records for three years after project completion.	• Current records retention policies preclude longer term evaluations. • Retaining records for longer periods would allow an assessment of whether short-term outcomes persist.
Previous Evaluations	• The Business, Economic, and Community Outreach Network (BEACON) at Salisbury University conducts annual evaluations (2016 through 2023) of EARN, including an estimate of EARN return on investment (ROI).	• Annual evaluations have not calculated cumulative outcomes for specific EARN projects or Grantees. • ROI methodology needs more detail to be replicable.
Existing Data Sources	• Grantees do not send participant social security numbers or other unique identifiers to MDL or BEACON that can be matched to external sources. • Grantee reports do not identify which participants had barriers to employment.	• The Office of Program Evaluation and Government Accountability (OPEGA) cannot validate the Grantee-reported outcomes using external data. • OPEGA cannot disaggregate the participants with barriers to employment, and such barriers plausibly affect outcomes.

Evaluability Element	EARN Grant Program Practices	Implications for Evaluability
Causal Attribution	• Documentation on EARN projects does not systematically show how each grantee selected their participant trainees.	• Potential selection bias: the method of selecting participants could directly affect outcomes (even if training never occurred).
	• Documentation on participants sent to MDL does not allow cross referencing whether the individuals also participated in other workforce development programs.	• Outcomes for EARN training participants may be affected by their participation in other workforce development programs, but this factor cannot be measured.
Capacity of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Systems	• EARN participants (employers and trainees) are not registered in a central database.	• EARN may be delivering relevant and high-quality data, but its existing M&E systems preclude independently validating that data.
	• EARN training participant data is not collected in the same way as Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) participant data.	• EARN training participant data cannot be directly compared with WIOA participant data, which would offer a relative benchmark for assessing outcomes.
	• Data on EARN employer participants is not collected in a way that allows using Unemployment Insurance (UI) wage records to assess workforce outcomes for those participating employers.	• Researchers cannot use UI wage records to compare the workforce outcomes for EARN employer participants with similar employers who did not participate in EARN.

EARN: Employment Advancement Right Now

Source: Department of Legislative Services

Observation: MDL retains administrative records on EARN for three years, which precludes evaluating many aspects of the EARN program over a longer term.

Two records retention policies are relevant to records related to EARN, as follows.

- MDL stated to OPEGA that for administrative records (including Final Reports from EARN Grantees), the agency retains its records for about three years. Its approved Records Retention and Disposal Schedule filed with Maryland Archives predates the establishment of EARN and does not specifically mention EARN administrative records.

- For EARN Grantees, MDL's policy is that Grantees retain their records for three years from MDL's date of approval of their Final Report, as stated in the EARN grant agreements and the EARN Grantee Guidance document.

A shorter records retention policy limits the possibility for longer term evaluation of key records, especially where the program funds multi-year projects. A policy of keeping MDL administrative records for three years would mean that, as of January 2024, MDL administrative records prior to January 2021 are inaccessible.

Recommendation: MDL should consider retaining administrative records long enough to allow for long-term impact evaluations.

1. ***For EARN Grantees' Records:*** MDL could consider asking grantees to retain grant records for at least four years (or longer) after grant closeout.

2. ***For MDL's EARN Administrative Records:*** MDL could consider filing an updated Records Retention and Disposal Schedule with Maryland State Archives that provides for retaining certain agency administrative records for a longer period, for the express purpose of enabling future program evaluations.

   As an example, MDL's current retention schedule for the Maryland Apprenticeship and Training Program could be adapted for EARN. MDL could file with Maryland State Archives the following suggested Records Retention and Disposal Schedule for the administrative records of the EARN grant program:

Option: Sample Records Retention and Disposal Schedule for EARN Program
Item Description – Grant Applications and Letters of Intent (LOI) to Continue Current Grants: • ***Retention:*** Retain successful grant applications and LOIs for seven years after the completion of the grant project or submission of the Final Report, whichever is later. Retain unsuccessful grant applications and LOIs for three years after the notification of denial.

- ***Justification:*** Successful grant applications and LOIs provide key information about the proposed project, budget, and objectives, which are needed to understand the context and scope of the funded project. Retaining the documents for seven years allows for adequate time for audits, evaluations, and potential legal or administrative reviews. Unsuccessful applications and LOIs are retained for a shorter period, as they may be useful for reference or future grant-seeking efforts but do not hold the same long-term value as successful applications.

- ***Disposition:*** Store at the agency or at the Maryland Records Center and then destroy after the retention period expires, maintaining a record of the destruction process.

Item Description – Award Notices and Grant Agreements:

- ***Retention:*** Retain award notices and grant agreements for seven years after completion of the grant project, then destroy.

- ***Justification:*** Award notices serve as official records of the grant funding decision and provide key information such as the award amount, project period, and any special terms or conditions. These records document the agency's funding decisions and priorities over time and give context for the information contained in the final reports.

- ***Disposition:*** Store at the agency or at the Maryland Records Center for seven years after completion of the grant project, then destroy.

Item Description – Final Reports:

- ***Retention:*** Retain Final Reports permanently.

- ***Justification:*** Final Reports provide a comprehensive summary of each grant project, including its outcomes, impact, and lessons learned. These documents hold historical value, as they document the results and effectiveness of the agency's funding decisions. Permanent retention ensures that these records are available for future reference, research, and evaluation.

- ***Disposition:*** Transfer to the Maryland State Archives for permanent preservation.

Item Description – Evaluations of the Grant Program and the Related Data Sets:

- ***Retention:*** Retain evaluations and data sets permanently.

- ***Justification:*** Much of the implementation, oversight, and ongoing evaluation of the grants awarded under this program is conducted by agency contractors and paid for with public funds. The records and datasets created hold historical value, as they document how and why the program changed over time.

- ***Disposition:*** Transfer to the Maryland State Archives for permanent preservation.

Observation: OPEGA cannot validate the estimated economic impact of EARN in BEACON evaluations with the information provided in those evaluations.

MDL contracts with BEACON at SU for annual evaluations of EARN. As part of these evaluations, BEACON has estimated for MDL the economic impact of the EARN program grants, also referred to by BEACON in recent years as the ROI. These estimates are summarized in **Exhibit 17**.

Exhibit 17
BEACON Estimates of the Economic Impact of Each $1 Expended on EARN Program Grants by MDL
Fiscal 2018–2023

2018	$18.50
2019	18.43
2020	17.32
2021	16.78
2022	17.34
2023	17.16

BEACON: Business, Economic, and Community Outreach Network
EARN: Employment Advancement Right Now
MDL: Maryland Department of Labor

Source: Maryland Department of Labor; Department of Legislative Services.

BEACON's approach to its ROI estimate appears to be a defensible methodology, and its estimates can give MGA some assurance that the public funds are not wasted. Without further detail, however, OPEGA cannot test or otherwise evaluate these estimated economic impacts.

Recommendation: MDL should consider requesting that in future evaluations of EARN, BEACON provide additional detail on its ROI estimate.

If MDL wants to use ROI estimates as a basis to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of EARN workforce training, then MDL should consider asking for the following in future BEACON evaluations that estimate EARN's ROI.

- Develop a mechanism for verifying the Grantee-reported wage and employment outcomes for trainees (such as by matching them against Unemployment Insurance (UI) wage records) since these outcomes are essential to the rest of the economic impacts in BEACON's estimated ROI.

- Provide more details on the methodology and assumptions used to estimate direct, indirect, and induced impacts, sufficient to allow another entity to repeat that ROI methodology for other workforce training programs.

- Incorporate a counterfactual scenario. That is, also estimate, "What would have happened if the EARN program had not existed?" For example, some trainees might have achieved positive outcomes even without EARN-funded training, and not accounting for this could lead to overestimating the impact of EARN.

- If BEACON's ROI estimates entail a projection of participant earnings beyond the actual earnings reported in grantee Outcome Reports, specify the period over which earnings are being projected and whether they are being discounted.

- Conduct a sensitivity analysis to test how sensitive the estimated ROI is to changes in key assumptions or variables used in the methodology. For example, how sensitive is the ROI estimate to the amount of leveraged funding provided by EARN grantees?

Observation: Wage and employment outcomes for EARN trainees cannot be verified in the same way as WIOA participants because EARN Grantee Outcome Reports lack the data to match trainees with UI wage records or other supplemental wage records.

As listed previously in Exhibit 11, MDL monitors, assesses, and reports on the performance of the EARN grant program through several mechanisms, all of which are derived from the Outcome Reports submitted by EARN grantees to MDL.

OPEGA observed some key differences between the data and metrics that the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) requires its WIOA grantees to report about core program participants versus the data and metrics Maryland collects from EARN grantees about training participants. Of note, EARN is a State program and, therefore, Maryland is not obligated to apply federal WIOA guidance to EARN. The point of making this comparison is to observe how these

differences affect what can be evaluated about EARN participant outcomes as compared to WIOA participant outcomes.

Key differences in required performance metrics are as follows:

- DOL requires WIOA grantees (including states) to report the following specific metrics for participants of the core WIOA programs:
  - de-employment rate second quarter after exit;
  - employment rate fourth quarter after exit; and
  - median earnings second quarter after exit.
- Maryland requires EARN grantees to report only the immediate post-training wage and employment outcomes for trainees and not whether the outcomes persisted in the year following exit.

Key differences between DOL data collection and verification practices for WIOA programs and MDL practices for EARN are as follows.

- DOL (WIOA):
  (1) requires grantees to ask participants for their SSNs while also specifically stating that service cannot be denied if the participant does not provide one; and
  (2) requires grantees to match the participant SSNs against quarterly UI wage records for the purpose of determining employment status and earnings outcomes for participants and then report those performance outcomes to DOL. (When SSNs are unavailable, the state should use supplemental wage information for this purpose.)
- Maryland (EARN):
  (1) encourages, but does not require, grantees to ask training participants for their SSNs;
  (2) does not ask grantees to include the trainee SSNs on their Outcome Reports, even if trainee SSNs were collected by the grantee; and
  (3) does not verify Grantee-reported trainee outcomes against UI wage records or supplemental wage records.

Because the EARN Grantee Outcome Reports lack trainee SSNs, OPEGA cannot (1) verify the Grantee-reported trainee outcomes against UI wage records or (2) use UI wage records to determine whether the reported outcomes persisted a year after training.

Observation: As EARN data is now collected, it is hard to assess how trainee outcomes may differ for the portion of trainees with a barrier to employment.

For purposes of the EARN program, MDL does not define what constitutes a barrier to employment and does not require grantees to report which trainees had barriers to employment. This limits the evaluability of EARN.

In general, examples of barriers to employment can include (but are not limited to):

- a criminal record;
- a failed drug test;
- low literacy and/or numeracy;
- lack of GED/high school degree;
- poverty;
- lack of transportation to a job site;
- lack of childcare during working hours;
- being long-term unemployed; and
- lack of "soft" job skills.

Some evaluations of workforce development programs attempt to collect data from a variety of sources to validate the program results. Generally, evaluations draw upon three categories of data to triangulate their analysis – data collected by evaluators, data collected by program implementors, and third-party data. **Exhibit 18** lists the third-party data sources cited by multiple studies of workforce development programs.

Exhibit 18
Independent Sources of Outcome Data

Data Type	Examples
Public Assistance Records	Aid to Families with Dependent Children Benefits TANF Benefits Food Stamps/SNAP Payments
IRS Tax Data	Employed During Tax Year? (Yes/No) Annual Earning Social Security Disability Benefits
National Directory of New Hires	Quarterly and Annual Earnings Employment Status UI Payments
National Student Clearinghouse	Educational Attainment
Social Security Earnings Records	Annual Earnings Employed During Tax Year? (Yes/No) Social Security Benefits, Annual
UI and Wage Records	Quarterly and Annual Earnings Employed During Reporting Period? (Yes/No) UI Payments

IRS: Internal Revenue Service
SNAP: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
TANF: Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
UI: Unemployment Insurance

Source: Department of Legislative Services

In all cases, however, matching participants to the independent data sources listed in Exhibit 18 would require grantees to collect and report enough PII on the participant to match them with the independent data records.

Recommendation: MDL should consider asking EARN grantees to collect and report more information on trainees to enable matching reported trainee outcomes against quarterly UI wage records.

Asking EARN grantees to report more information to MDL on EARN trainees has pros and cons, as follows.

Pros

- Collecting SSNs could enable verifying the grantee-reported wage and employment outcomes of EARN trainees against UI wage records, as is already done for many federally funded workforce development programs.

- MDL could assess whether the initial grantee-reported wage and employment outcomes for trainees are persisting a year or more after exit.

Cons

- Reporting trainees' SSNs (or other PII) increases the risk that private data may be leaked or hacked.

- Increasing the reporting burden for grantees could dissuade some potential applicants from applying in the first place.

- MDL has previously noted that asking grantees to track outcomes for *longer periods* than under current practice could require hiring more staff and related costs, as MDL stated in its response to the 2020 *Joint Chairmen's Report*.[3]

Observation: EARN trainee outcomes may be influenced by factors other than the training itself, but current EARN data reporting and retention prevents OPEGA from assessing these factors.

Additional factors that can affect trainee outcomes include (1) how trainees are prescreened and selected and (2) whether trainees also participated in other workforce development programs that contributed to their outcomes.

(1) Prescreening of Trainees

EARN grantees select the individuals for training participation and, by design, these grantee selection processes may vary widely. EARN encourages grantees to use innovative approaches. Trainee selection might range from an individual interview to assess motivation, to mandatory in-person attendance at a group information session, to requiring trainees to fill out an application, to testing trainees for minimum literacy/numeracy skills, to drug tests, among other things.

Research has found that the most effective employment training programs include upfront screening of applicants about basic skills and motivation. Prescreening training applicants is not wrong – but if grantees select only highly motivated individuals or those with strong soft skills, such individuals might have gotten better jobs without the subsequent EARN training. This possibility matters if EARN outcomes are attributed only to the training without acknowledging the potential factor of upfront selection bias.

Evaluating how prescreening affects outcomes requires knowing how grantees screened their potential trainees. As EARN program data is now reported and retained, OPEGA cannot assess the extent to which EARN trainee outcomes can be attributed to training itself versus the grantees' trainee selection processes.

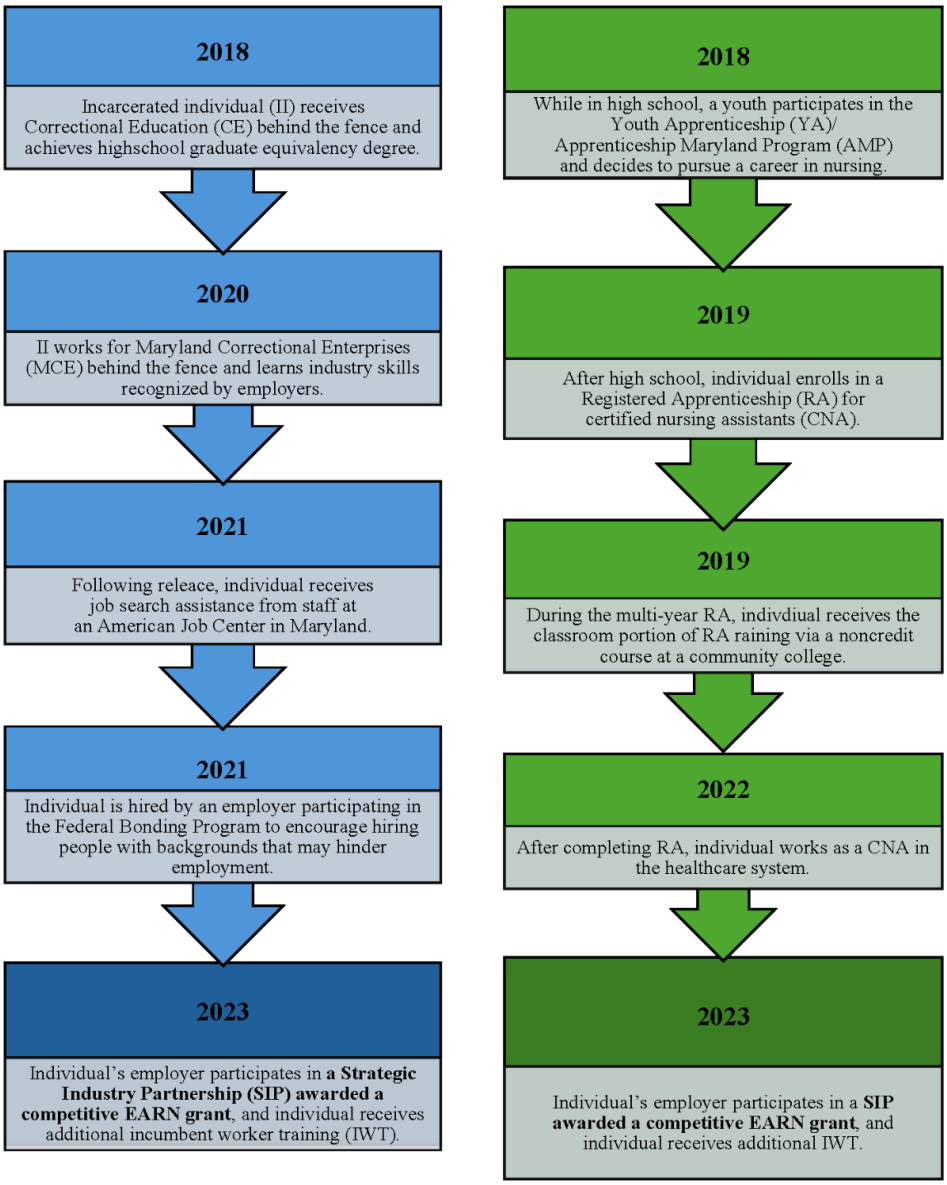
Recommendation: MDL should consider asking grantees to more systematically report their trainee selection process.

(2) EARN Trainees May Also Be Participants in Other Workforce Development Programs with Cumulative Impact, but This Is Not Recorded or Trackable

Another factor affecting EARN evaluability is that EARN participants may be involved in multiple workforce development programs simultaneously or over time. As OPEGA inventoried in the Evaluation of Workforce Development: Part 1, the EARN program is part of a larger workforce development system in Maryland. **Exhibit 19** illustrates how an individual might participate in several different workforce development programs over time.

Such participation can have a cumulative, positive effect on an individual's employment and wage outcomes, but current EARN data collection and reporting cannot show whether trainees also participated in other programs. This possibility matters if EARN outcomes are attributed only to the training without acknowledging the potential synergistic and cumulative effects from the individual's participation in other programs in the workforce development system as well.

Exhibit 19
Scenarios of Individuals Participating in Multiple Workforce Development Programs Over Time



EARN: Employment Advancement Right Now

Source: Department of Legislative Services

Observation: EARN participants are not recorded in a central database.

EARN relies largely on paper and PDF versions of documents, which must be manually entered into spreadsheets. Neither the EARN participant trainees nor the employer partners are registered in a central database.

Recommendation: MDL should consider adding EARN participation in the Maryland Workforce Exchange (MWE).

One option for a central database is to use the existing MWE to record participation by individuals and employers in EARN training projects. An advantage to using MWE is that it is already being used to record participation in core WIOA programs. A common database could facilitate future evaluations of the outcomes from different workforce development programs.

Including EARN training participation in MWE would allow better observation of how workforce development programs may be working cumulatively or in tandem to improve outcomes for participants.

Observation: Participation in EARN training is not reported to the Maryland Longitudinal Data System (MLDS).

MLDS is Maryland's central repository for comprehensive data from all levels of education and the State's workforce. MLDS collects and organizes individual-level data. In general, workforce domain data is provided to MLDS by MDL, but EARN participation is not reported to MLDS.

Recommendation: MDL should consider reporting noncredit EARN training to MLDS.

As a pilot, the MLDS Center has recently started collecting data on students taking noncredit courses at certain community colleges. Per MDL, this work was funded under a federal Workforce Data Quality Initiative (WDQI) grant awarded to MDL. The MLDS Center reported in June 2021 that, "Unit record data on students taking non-credit courses are being piloted by 7 of the 16 [community] colleges for preliminary evaluation. MHEC seeks feedback from the MLDS Center on the usability of these pilot data, such as the matching ability to other data sources in different sectors. The current timeline is to finalize the collection for the 2022-2023 collection year. At that time, the pilot data would be removed from the MLDS."

MDL should consider the option of also piloting the reporting of noncredit EARN training completion to MLDS to facilitate a comparison of the effectiveness of workforce training via EARN, the community colleges, and other entities in Maryland's workforce development system.

Observation: EARN industry categories do not necessarily align with other standardized industry categorization systems.

The industry categories used by the EARN program are specific to EARN and do not necessarily align with the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) or other standardized industry categorization systems used by the federal statistical agencies and MDL's workforce and labor market data.

Recommendation: EARN should consider aligning its industry categorizations with those used by the federal statistical agencies and MDL's workforce and labor market data.

Using a standardized industry categorization such as NAICS would facilitate making comparisons across workforce training programs. It also would facilitate applicants and administrators using the workforce and economic data produced by federal statistical agencies such as the Bureau of Labor Statistics when assessing workforce training needs by industry.

Appendix A.
Response from the Maryland Department of Labor

Maryland
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Portia Wu, Secretary
1100 N. Eutaw Street, Room 600
Baltimore, MD 21201

October 5, 2024

Sent Via Email to: michael.powell@mlis.state.md.us

Michael C. Powell, Director
Office of Program Evaluation & Government Accountability
Lowe House Office Building
6 Bladen St.
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Office of Program Evaluation & Government Accountability - Evaluation the Maryland Employment Advancement Right Now Program - Maryland Department of Labor Responses to Recommendations

Dear Mr. Powell,

The Maryland Department of Labor (MDL) would like to thank the Department of Legislative Services (DLS) Office of Program Evaluation and Government Accountability (OPEGA) for their *Evaluation of the Maryland Employment Advancement Right Now (EARN) Program* report and for the opportunity to respond to recommendations. Over the past several months, MDL staff have worked closely with DLS OPEGA colleagues to provide information on the EARN Maryland program. We appreciate the thorough and professional review of this critical program and the opportunity to provide feedback.

Below, please find MDL's formal response to the DLS recommendations. We look forward to working closely with DLS and the Maryland General Assembly to collaboratively grow EARN Maryland in the coming years. Please direct any follow-up questions to Andrew Fulginiti, Legislative Director (andrew.fulginiti@maryland.gov).

Sincerely,

Portia Wu
Secretary

CC: Jason Perkins-Cohen, Deputy Secretary
Erin Roth, Assistant Secretary, Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning
Victoria Hall, Principal Evaluator, OPEGA

Attachment - Agency Response

—

Recommendation #1: *MDL should consider retaining administrative records long enough to allow for long-term impact evaluations.*

MDL agrees that there is value in evaluating the long-term impacts of EARN. As such, though it is not statutorily required, MDL has partnered with a third-party to provide an independent evaluation of the program on an annual basis since inception. The report is submitted to the Secretary of MDL and contains a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the program. For FY23, BEACON at Salisbury University found that for every $1 of state funding invested into EARN, $17.16 in economic impact is created.

As noted in the report, MDL retains administrative files for three years after the completion of the grant. This aligns with similar MDL grant programs which retain records for three to five years, depending on the funding source. The EARN program recently transitioned to electronic record-keeping which will allow for a longer period of record retention. MDL will determine the appropriate period of time for retaining electronic records and will update policies and procedures accordingly.

Recommendation #2: *MDL should consider requesting that in future evaluations of EARN, BEACON provide additional detail on its ROI estimate.*

MDL agrees with this recommendation and will request additional information related to Return on Investment (ROI) calculations be included in future evaluations of EARN. This may include the data used to estimate wage changes, the time scope of the earnings utilized, and the estimated direct/indirect and induced impacts. In addition, MDL may request additional information be shared directly with the agency, but recognizes certain sensitivities regarding the proprietary nature of the methodology. In the future, MDL intends to add this expectation to the scope of work for the evaluation.

Recommendation #3: *MDL should consider asking EARN grantees to collect and report more information on trainees to enable matching reported trainee outcomes against quarterly UI wage records.*

MDL has considered this concept in the past and will continue to explore its feasibility and efficacy. As is noted in the report, there are both benefits and challenges to collecting this level of participant information. The Department agrees that collecting Social Security Numbers (SSN) would allow MDL to better understand the long-term impact of EARN training on the State's economy; however, this addition may create unintended barriers to participation for reputable EARN programs and could be unnecessarily costly. In order to consider requiring this level of participant reporting, two critical steps would need to occur.

First, MDL would need to update grant solicitation and award documents to reflect this new PII requirement and the Department believes this *may* deter some program participation. While this is by no means an insurmountable challenge, MDL needs time to thoughtfully consider the impact that adding this requirement would have on operations, including the potential financial cost for adjusted administration.

Second, MDL would need to set up a secure system to receive and store this data; however, the EARN program does not have the data infrastructure to support the collection and protection of sensitive information to the extent necessary to protect this level of PII.

Currently, EARN grantees assign a unique participant identification number to each enrolled participant. MDL tracks outcomes pertinent to each participant without receiving any personally identifiable information (PII), thus protecting the security of the grantee and individuals. The current process allows

for ease of data transfer between MDL, grantees, and the third-party external evaluator who receives all outcome reporting.

MDL is committed to further exploring this recommendation and its feasibility in a fiscally-constrained time, but emphasizes that this modification would come at a cost. Additionally, the Department will consider alternative solutions which would allow for longer-term evaluation, such as utilizing the existing Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) data and performance infrastructure.

Recommendation #4: *MDL should consider asking grantees to more systematically report their trainee selection process.*

As is noted in the report, grantees have the flexibility to design recruitment, screening, and intake processes to best meet the needs of prospective participants and employers. By design, these processes vary by grantee. To maximize the likelihood of participant success in training and eventually in securing employment in the target industry, grantees *must* work with employer and industry partners to understand job requirements and align screening and selection to mirror these. MDL agrees that it is important to understand the recruitment, assessment, and screening process for all grantees. As such, prospective applicants are required to outline the following in their application for funds:

- Target groups identified for training and an explanation of why the chosen population is appropriate for the target occupations selected;
- Which organizations within the Strategic Industry Partnership (SIP) are responsible for recruitment;
- The methods utilized for recruitment;
- The assessment, screening, and selection process;
- Criteria for determining a candidates' readiness and fit for the program and occupation; and
- How employers will be involved in the design and implementation of the assessment and selection process.

MDL believes grantees sufficiently adhere to this requirement and will continue to monitor these processes to ensure they align with industry demand and are adequately addressing the goals of EARN.

Recommendation #5: *MDL should consider adding EARN participation in the Maryland Workforce Exchange (MWE).*

As noted above, MDL will consider utilizing the existing WIOA infrastructure to benefit EARN; however, *requiring* grantees, participants, and employers to utilize the Maryland Workforce Exchange (MWE) in order to participate in EARN may be viewed as a deterrent and would also come with a financial cost.

MDL has developed reporting schemas and procedures that allow for collection and analysis of all data, as required by the enabling statute. As a State-funded initiative, EARN was designed to be intentionally flexible, a stark contrast from federal programs which often come with extensive reporting requirements that could be perceived as deterring participation from employers and jobseekers. Specifically, employers praise the ease and flexibility of engaging with EARN. Additionally, it is important to note that generally 40-45% of participants served through EARN on an annual basis are incumbent workers. Enrollment into the MWE holds less value for individuals not actively searching for new employment. That said, there is value in participants who are unemployed and/or seeking new employment enrolling in MWE. Many EARN grantees incorporate an overview of MWE into their curriculum so that participants are aware of this vital resource.

While MDL does see value in a central database and will consider utilizing other WIOA infrastructure components for EARN, MWE is not the best data repository option. MDL will continue to explore opportunities, including working with the Maryland General Assembly and/or securing additional discretionary financial resources, to establish a centralized database for EARN that goes beyond the existing infrastructure.

Recommendation #6: *MDL should consider reporting noncredit EARN training to MLDS.*

As noted in the report, MDL continues to partner with the Maryland Longitudinal Data System on evaluation work. Through funds awarded by the United States Department of Labor's Workforce Data Quality Initiative (WDQI), MDL is partnering with the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) to understand outcomes for students taking non-credit courses at certain community colleges.

MDL is interested in exploring potential funding sources, including future iterations of the federal WDQI grant, to undertake a similar evaluation for EARN, but, similar to other helpful ideas above, resources to effectively meet this recommendation are not currently available**.** Reporting noncredit EARN training to MLDS would allow MDL to compare the effectiveness of training programs based on varying factors, such as length of training, industry, and region (It should be noted that pursuing this type of evaluation is dependent upon adopting the collection of SSNs [Recommendation #3].).

Currently, each of EARN's nearly 80 SIPs track data differently and a standardization would have to occur in order for the Department to implement this concept. MDL allows grantees to set data tracking in ways that work for their organization, other grants they receive, etc., so long as they are tracking and able to seamlessly report all statutorily-required data. This flexibility has been critical given the wide array of organizations that receive EARN funding, from community colleges with significant infrastructure to smaller non-profit organizations that may lack resources to invest in sophisticated reporting systems.

While MDL would like to implement parts of this recommendation, additional financial resources to support staffing and data infrastructure would be required to establish data "norms," oversee grantee reporting standards, and to interface with MLDS.

Recommendation #7: *MDL should consider aligning its industry categorization with those used by the federal statistical agencies and MDL's workforce and labor market data.*

MDL agrees with this recommendation and will incorporate identification of North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) codes into future applications, to the extent possible. Utilizing NAICS codes supports EARN's mission of being data-driven and will allow for a more seamless verification of data on workforce shortages within sectors.

However, it is important to note there are nuances that make full adoption difficult. For instance, there is currently no NAICS code for cybersecurity; as noted in the 2024 *Cybersecurity Workforce Definitions Report* produced for the Cybersecurity Workforce Data Initiative with the National Science Foundation, cybersecurity is not tied to a single sector or industry definition. Additionally, NAICS codes are updated every five years, meaning many new industries, even established ones like cybersecurity, are not captured. EARN was designed to be nimble to meet industry's most pressing and emerging needs. If Maryland wants to lead on growing and supporting emerging industries, the ability to move quickly and not be bound by NAICS codes is of critical importance. Similarly, industries and occupations tend to overlap multiple sectors. For instance, offshore wind touches multiple sectors including utilities, construction, warehousing and transportation, and manufacturing. MDL will work to incorporate NAICS

codes and standard industry definitions, but intends to retain some flexibility to ensure funds are well targeted for emerging industries and not unintentionally funding industries that are not in-demand around the State.

Appendix B. Evaluation Request Letter

DEPARTMENT OF LEGISLATIVE SERVICES
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
MARYLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Victoria L. Gruber
Executive Director

April 10, 2023

Michael Powell, Director
Director, Office of Performance Evaluation and Government Accountability
Department of Legislative Services
90 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Mr. Powell:

Please see the attached House Bill 1136 of the 2023 session sponsored by House Ways and Means Chair Delegate Vanessa Atterbeary. The legislation would provide for a program evaluation of the State's workforce development programs to be completed by June 1, 2024.

Per the authority of the Executive Director under § 2-1234 of the State Government Article, I am directing that the Office of Program Evaluation and Government Accountability conduct a performance evaluation of the efficiency and effectiveness of the State's workforce development programs. I would request that the performance evaluation be conducted consistent with the provisions of House Bill 1136 including the June 1, 2024 completion date.

Thank you for your attention to this matter, and please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Victoria L. Gruber
Executive Director

VLG/mpd

cc: Senate President Bill Ferguson
House Speaker Adrienne A. Jones
Delegate Vanessa E. Atterbeary
Senator Clarence K. Lam
Delegate Jared Solomon
Mr. Jeremy Baker
Ms. Sally Robb

Appendix C. EARN Grants Awarded during Fiscal 2018-2023 (Alphabetical by Grantee/Lead Applicant)

EARN Grantee (Lead Applicant)	Strategic Industry Partnership (SIP)	Grant Number	FY of Award*	Award Amount	EARN Industry**	Participants***	Completers***	Completion Rate***
Lead Applicant: Is1199SEIU (United Health Care Workers East)	SIP: Capital Region Health Care Training Partnership	IG0722-1	2023	$149,695	Health Care			
Lead Applicant: Adventist HealthCare (AHC)	SIP: Specialized Nursing Bridge Program	IG0718-4	2019	150,000	Health Care	82	69	84%
		IG0620-3	2020	150,000	Health Care	167	71	43%
		IG0423-2	2023	201,440	Health Care			
Lead Applicant: Allegany College of Maryland (ACM)	SIP: Western Maryland IT Center of Excellence	IG0717-2	2018	249,654	Cybersecurity/IT	132	132	100%
		IG0119-11	2019	566,000	Cybersecurity/IT	196	195	99%
		IG0721-5	2022	566,000	Cybersecurity/IT			

EARN Grantee (Lead Applicant)	Strategic Industry Partnership (SIP)	Grant Number	FY of Award*	Award Amount	EARN Industry**	Participants***	Completers***	Completion Rate***
Lead Applicant: Anne Arundel Workforce Development Corp. (AAWDC)	SIP: Creating a Pipeline of Green Jobs	IG1019-5	2020	$150,333	Construction	26	22	85%
	SIP: CyberWorks	IG0717-1	2018	100,000	Cybersecurity/IT	20	20	100%
		IG0619-2	2019	203,140	Cybersecurity/IT	37	33	89%
		IG0620-6	2020	240,000	Cybersecurity/IT	56	51	91%
		IG0621-13	2021	288,000	Cybersecurity/IT	49	41	84%
		IG1022-3	2023	298,595	Cybersecurity/IT			
	SIP: Jobs in Transportation: Road to Success (Anne Arundel Co. Transp. Industry Collaborative)	IG1018-13	2019	150,000	Transportation and Logistics	21	21	100%
		IG0420-2	2020	150,000	Transportation and Logistics	27	24	89%
		IG0722-4	2023	150,000	Transportation and Logistics			
Lead Applicant: Asian American Center of Frederick (AACF)	SIP: Community Health Worker (CHW) Training Partnership	IG1018-14	2019	100,000	Health Care	46	38	83%
		IG0120-6	2020	100,000	Health Care	45	41	91%
		IG0421-1	2021	100,000	Health Care	59	53	90%
		IG0422-2	2022	100,000	Health Care	70	61	87%
		IG0423-1	2023	100,000	Health Care			
Lead Applicant: Associated Black Charities (ABC) (Now: IT Works Learning Ctr)	SIP: Health Care Partnership of Prince George's and Charles Counties	IG0418-3	2018	154,092	Health Care	43	25	58%

EARN Grantee (Lead Applicant)	Strategic Industry Partnership (SIP)	Grant Number	FY of Award*	Award Amount	EARN Industry**	Participants***	Completers***	Completion Rate***
Lead Applicant: Auto Dealer Education Institute (ADEI)/ WANADA	SIP: Prince George's Auto Technician Training	IG0623-1	2023	$168,000	Automotive Repair			
		IG0722-6	2023	137,500	Automotive Repair			
Lead Applicant: Baltimore Alliance for Careers in Health Care (BACH)	SIP: Baltimore Health Care Partnership	IG0514-13-4	2018	200,000	Health Care	197	159	81%
		IG1018-1	2019	200,000	Health Care	211	155	73%
		IG0120-5	2020	200,000	Health Care	224	192	86%
		IG0421-2	2021	200,000	Health Care	174	134	77%
		IG0622-3	2022	200,000	Health Care	167	124	74%
Lead Applicant: Baltimore BioWorks, Inc. (BBWI)	SIP: Baltimore BioTech	IG0514-19-4	2018	240,000	Biotechnology	83	83	100%
		IG0119-10	2019	100,000	Biotechnology	25	25	100%
		IG0719-8	2020	200,000	Biotechnology	55	55	100%
		IG0720-2	2021	150,000	Biotechnology	44	44	100%
		IG0721-4	2022	150,000	Biotechnology	43	43	100%
		IG0622-2	2022	150,000	Biotechnology	44	44	100%

EARN Grantee (Lead Applicant)	Strategic Industry Partnership (SIP)	Grant Number	FY of Award*	Award Amount	EARN Industry**	Participants***	Completers***	Completion Rate***
Lead Applicant: Baltimore Cyber Range (BCR Cyber, BCR LLC)	SIP: Advanced Cybersecurity Training (ACT)	IG0419-5	2019	$246,151	Cybersecurity/IT	123	123	100%
		IG1018-4	2019	243,419	Cybersecurity/IT	92	92	100%
		IG0120-10	2020	246,151	Cybersecurity/IT	114	114	100%
		IG0620-4	2020	246,151	Cybersecurity/IT	105	105	100%
		IG0421-8	2021	300,000	Cybersecurity/IT	130	130	100%
		IG0622-7	2022	300,000	Cybersecurity/IT	130	121	93%
		IG1022-6	2023	499,960	Cybersecurity/IT			
	SIP: Cybersecurity Operational Methods Education and Training (COMET)	IG0423-6	2023	300,000	Cybersecurity/IT			
		IG1022-10	2023	300,000	Cybersecurity/IT			
	SIP: Intrusion Countermeasures Education and Training (ICE-T)	IG0618-4	2018	400,000	Cybersecurity/IT	56	56	100%
		IG0118-5	2019	250,000	Cybersecurity/IT	40	40	100%
		IG0620-5	2020	249,750	Cybersecurity/IT	56	56	100%
		IG0719-14	2020	250,000	Cybersecurity/IT	56	56	100%
		IG0421-7	2021	300,000	Cybersecurity/IT	100	99	99%
		IG0422-4	2022	300,000	Cybersecurity/IT	95	88	93%
		IG0123-7	2023	399,652	Cybersecurity/IT			
Lead Applicant: Berry Global, Inc. (Berry Plastics)	SIP: Maryland Advanced Manufacturing and Plastics Partnership	IG0718-5	2019	150,000	Manufacturing	41	41	100%

EARN Grantee (Lead Applicant)	Strategic Industry Partnership (SIP)	Grant Number	FY of Award*	Award Amount	EARN Industry**	Participants***	Completers***	Completion Rate***
Lead Applicant: BioTechnical Institute of Maryland, Inc. (BTI)	SIP: Baltimore BioPrep	IG0618-2	2018	$154,092	Biotechnology	47	42	89%
		IG0719-9	2020	150,000	Biotechnology	45	25	56%
		IG0621-2	2021	150,000	Biotechnology	53	33	62%
		IG0720-3	2021	150,000	Biotechnology	27	19	70%
		IG1022-9	2023	160,000	Biotechnology			
Lead Applicant: Byte Back Inc.	SIP: Education Partnership for IT Careers	IG0118-7	2018	150,000	Cybersecurity/IT	63	29	46%
		IG0721-7	2022	100,000	Cybersecurity/IT	30	19	63%
		IG0123-8	2023	100,000	Cybersecurity/IT			
Lead Applicant: CannaWorkforce, Inc.	SIP: Medical Cannabis Workforce Strategic Industry Partnership	IG0123-1	2023	87,500	Health Care			
Lead Applicant: Cecil College	SIP: Susquehanna HVAC/R Partnership	IG0119-6	2019	76,500	Construction	36	33	92%
	SIP: Susquehanna Transportation and Logistics Partnership	IG051403-3	2018	100,000	Transportation and Logistics	33	32	97%
		IG0119-1	2019	100,000	Transportation and Logistics	34	33	97%
		IG0120-4	2020	100,000	Transportation and Logistics	26	24	92%
		IG0122-4	2022	120,000	Transportation and Logistics			

EARN Grantee (Lead Applicant)	Strategic Industry Partnership (SIP)	Grant Number	FY of Award*	Award Amount	EARN Industry**	Participants***	Completers***	Completion Rate***
Lead Applicant: Civic Works, Inc.	SIP: Energy Efficiency SIP (EESIP)	IG0514-18-4	2018	$250,000	Green	49	37	76%
		IG1018-2	2019	150,000	Green	52	52	100%
		IG1019-3	2020	150,000	Green	46	42	91%
		IG0621-5	2021	150,000	Green	40	39	98%
	SIP: Remediation and Construction Industry Partnership (RCIP)	IG0419-1	2019	176,249	Construction	68	68	100%
		IG0720-9	2021	150,000	Construction	62	53	85%
		IG0621-6	2021	150,000	Construction	56	48	86%
		IG0622-9	2022	200,000	Construction			
	SIP: Solar Installation Training Partnership (SITP)	IG1017-2	2018	140,000	Green	54	52	96%
		IG1018-5	2019	250,000	Green	68	68	100%
		IG0420-5	2020	300,000	Green	67	61	91%
		IG0122-2	2022	150,000	Green	82	76	93%
Lead Applicant: College of Southern Maryland (CSM)	SIP: Construction Workforce Partnership for Southern Maryland	IG0721-3	2022	100,000	Construction	19	19	100%
	SIP: Water and Wastewater Career Development Partnership (WWCDP)	IG0119-9	2019	150,000	Green	153	141	92%
		IG0120-7	2020	150,000	Green	190	134	71%
		IG0123-2	2023	150,000	Green			

EARN Grantee (Lead Applicant)	Strategic Industry Partnership (SIP)	Grant Number	FY of Award*	Award Amount	EARN Industry**	Participants***	Completers***	Completion Rate***
Lead Applicant: Community College of Baltimore County (CCBC)	SIP: Advancing Careers in IT (ACIT)	IG0119-12	2019	$148,650	Cybersecurity/IT	71	47	66%
	SIP: Advancing Careers in Population Health (PH)	IG0722-2	2023	148,722	Other/ Interdisciplinary			
	SIP: Automated Facilities and Logistics Tech. (AFLT)	IG0119-8	2019	150,000	Cybersecurity/IT			
	SIP: Cybersecurity Education and Certification Prog. (CECP)	IG0621-12	2021	92,000	Cybersecurity/IT	53	47	89%
		IG0623-2	2023	100,294	Cybersecurity/IT			
	SIP: Health Information Technology SIP (HIT)	IG0618-6	2018	89,457	Health IT	47	45	96%
		IG0120-11	2020	196,610	Health IT	89	84	94%
		IG0722-5	2023	180,530	Health IT			
Lead Applicant: Computing Technology Industry Assoc. (CompTIA)	SIP: Maryland Cyber Skills Alliance	IG1018-15	2019	120,000	Cybersecurity/IT	20	20	100%
		IG0719-3	2020	240,000	Cybersecurity/IT	40	40	100%
		IG0720-14	2021	240,000	Cybersecurity/IT	46	27	59%
		IG0421-9	2021	240,000	Cybersecurity/IT	42	30	71%
		IG0722-11	2023	240,000	Cybersecurity/IT			

EARN Grantee (Lead Applicant)	Strategic Industry Partnership (SIP)	Grant Number	FY of Award*	Award Amount	EARN Industry**	Participants***	Completers***	Completion Rate***
Lead Applicant: Cybersecurity Association of Maryland, Inc. (CAMI)	SIP: Cybersecurity Talent Catalyst Program	IG0722-8	2023	$140,586	Cybersecurity/IT			
Lead Applicant: Eastern Shore Area Health Education Center (ESAHEC)	SIP: Ready to Care	IG0514-7-3	2018	181,138	Health Care	49	43	88%
		IG0420-1	2020	146,495	Health Care	55	54	98%
		IG0722-12	2023	150,587	Health Care			
Lead Applicant: Electronic Technology Assoc.	SIP: Intrusion Countermeasures Education and Training (ICE-T)	IG0717-3	2018	250,000	Cybersecurity/IT	51	51	100%
Lead Applicant: Finishing Trades Institute of MD, VA, DC and Vicinities (FTI)	SIP: Architectural Metal and Glass Initiative (AMGI)	IG0415-13-4	2018	300,000	Construction	200	200	100%
		IG1019-2	2020	100,000	Construction	127	127	100%
		IG0621-8	2021	150,000	Construction	0	0	
		IG0720-11	2021	75,000	Construction	179	179	100%
	SIP: Suburban Maryland Construction Initiative (SMCI)	IG0514-4-4	2018	200,000	Construction	44	44	100%
		IG0719-10	2020	100,000	Construction	175	175	100%
		IG0621-9	2021	150,000	Construction	234	234	100%
		IG0720-10	2021	75,000	Construction	27	27	100%
		IG0123-3	2023	150,000	Construction			
Lead Applicant: Goodwill Industries of the Chesapeake, Inc.	SIP: Pharma Tech Connect	IG1018-11	2019	149,225	Health Care	16	10	63%
		IG0721-2	2022	147,224	Health Care			

EARN Grantee (Lead Applicant)	Strategic Industry Partnership (SIP)	Grant Number	FY of Award*	Award Amount	EARN Industry**	Participants***	Completers***	Completion Rate***
Lead Applicant: Hagerstown Community College	SIP: Green Solar Installation Training Examination (Green SITE)	IG0118-9	2018	$150,000	Construction	77	62	81%
		IG0119-5	2019	20,000	Construction	26	24	92%
	SIP: Western Maryland MOVE	IG0719-2	2020	149,000	Transportation and Logistics	129	115	89%
		IG0621-4	2021	150,000	Transportation and Logistics	143	139	97%
Lead Applicant: Health Tech Alley	SIP: Medical Office Technology Training	IG0722-9	2023	75,000	Health Care			
Lead Applicant: Howard Community College	SIP: m-Health Focused Health Tech SIP	IG1015-07	2018	146,743	Cybersecurity/IT	66	62	94%
		IG0618-5	2019	146,743	Manufacturing	85	82	96%
Lead Applicant: Howard EcoWorks	SIP: Green Infrastructure SIP	IG0722-15	2023	90,000	Green			

EARN Grantee (Lead Applicant)	Strategic Industry Partnership (SIP)	Grant Number	FY of Award*	Award Amount	EARN Industry**	Participants***	Completers***	Completion Rate***
Lead Applicant: Humanim, Inc.	SIP: Baltimore Regional Culinary/ Hospitality SIP	IG0418-1	2018	$150,000	Retail/Hospitality	31	26	84%
	SIP: Baltimore Regional Health Care/Higher Ed SIP	IG0718-3	2019	149,118	Other/ Interdisciplinary	31	25	81%
		IG0719-13	2020	149,118		18	18	100%
		IG0919-1	2020	29,127		6	6	100%
		IG0421-5	2021	149,118		25	22	88%
		IG1022-7	2023	168,433				
Lead Applicant: I'm Still Standing Community Devel. Corp. (ISSCC)	SIP: Baltimore Cyber Academy	IG0120-8	2020	271,968	Cybersecurity/IT	63	39	62%
		IG0921-1	2022	326,361	Cybersecurity/IT	73	49	67%
		IG0423-7	2023	360,000	Cybersecurity/IT			
	SIP: Veteran Cybersecurity Training	IG1018-17	2019	100,000	Cybersecurity/IT	20	15	75%
Lead Applicant: Independence Now	SIP: Highway to Health Care Career	IG1018-8	2019	65,660	Health Care	9	6	67%

EARN Grantee (Lead Applicant)	Strategic Industry Partnership (SIP)	Grant Number	FY of Award*	Award Amount	EARN Industry**	Participants***	Completers***	Completion Rate***
Lead Applicant: IT Works Learning Center, Inc. (formerly ABC)	SIP: Health Care Partnership of Prince George's and Charles Counties	IG0120-3	2020	$150,000	Health Care	50	40	80%
		IG0720-4	2021	150,000	Health Care	50	42	84%
	SIP: Maryland Health Care Partnership	IG0422-1	2022	225,000	Health Care	76	58	76%
		IG0721-8	2022	225,000	Health Care	79	67	85%
		IG0423-3	2023	300,000	Health Care			
		IG1022-1	2023	300,000	Health Care			
Lead Applicant: Jack and Nancy Dwyer (JND) Workforce Development Center, Inc.	SIP: Rescue 2040	IG0722-14	2023	150,000	Health Care			
Lead Applicant: Jane Addams Resource Corp. (JARC)	SIP: Careers in Manufacturing	IG0718-1	2019	350,000	Manufacturing	73	68	93%
		IG0719-6	2020	200,000	Manufacturing	48	25	52%
		IG1021-5	2022	300,000	Manufacturing			
Lead Applicant: Job Opportunities Task Force (JOTF) Inc.	SIP: Project Jump Start Construction Industry Partnership – Baltimore (BetterU)	IG0514-34-4	2018	150,000	Construction	57	54	95%
		IG0719-12	2020	150,000	Construction	44	33	75%
		IG0720-1	2021	150,000	Construction	0	0	

EARN Grantee (Lead Applicant)	Strategic Industry Partnership (SIP)	Grant Number	FY of Award*	Award Amount	EARN Industry**	Participants***	Completers***	Completion Rate***
Lead Applicant: Living Classrooms Foundation	SIP: Clean Energy Training Partnership	IG0717-5	2018	$500,000	Green	78	61	78%
	SIP: Construction Skills Training Program	IG1019-4	2020	75,000	Construction	16	13	81%
		IG0421-11	2021	150,000	Construction	30	23	77%
		IG0423-5	2023	186,973	Construction			
Lead Applicant: Marine Trades Association of Maryland	SIP: Marine Trades Industry Partnership	IG0514-12-3	2018	140,000	Construction	49	47	96%
		IG1019-1	2020	149,088	Construction	59	55	93%
		IG0621-7	2021	159,355	Construction	39	32	82%
		IG0123-5	2023	160,925	Construction			
Lead Applicant: Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR)	SIP: Work2Live WELL	IG0318-1	2018	282,218	Green	67	62	93%
		IG0119-2	2019	150,000	Green	13	12	92%
Lead Applicant: Maryland Food Bank, Inc. (MFB)	SIP: FoodWorks Culinary Training Program	IG1018-9	2019	150,000	Retail/Hospitality	89	67	75%
		IG0120-2	2020	150,000	Retail/Hospitality	74	37	50%
		IG0622-4	2022	111,193	Retail/Hospitality			
		IG0721-1	2022	100,000	Retail/Hospitality	49	42	86%

EARN Grantee (Lead Applicant)	Strategic Industry Partnership (SIP)	Grant Number	FY of Award*	Award Amount	EARN Industry**	Participants***	Completers***	Completion Rate***
Lead Applicant: Maryland New Directions, Inc. (MND)	SIP: Maritime Transportation and Logistics Training	IG0718-2	2019	$150,000	Transportation and Logistics	80	73	91%
		IG0719-7	2020	150,000	Transportation and Logistics	79	73	92%
		IG0421-4	2021	150,000	Transportation and Logistics	86	86	100%
		IG0422-3	2022	150,000	Transportation and Logistics	60	60	100%
		IG0423-4	2023	150,000	Transportation and Logistics			

EARN Grantee (Lead Applicant)	Strategic Industry Partnership (SIP)	Grant Number	FY of Award*	Award Amount	EARN Industry**	Participants***	Completers***	Completion Rate***
Lead Applicant: MD Manufacturing Extension Partnership, Inc. (MEP)	SIP: Cybersecurity for Manufacturers	IG0123-9	2023	$100,000	Cybersecurity/IT			
	SIP: MD Manufacturing Boot Camp	IG0514-21-4	2018	270,000	Manufacturing	348	348	100%
		IG0419-2	2019	180,000	Manufacturing	165	163	99%
		IG1022-2	2023	240,000	Manufacturing			
	SIP: MD Manufacturing Boot Camp and Incumbent Worker Training Prog.	IG1021-2	2022	200,000	Manufacturing			
	SIP: Rapid Advanced Manufacturing Skills Partnership	IG0719-11	2020	125,000	Manufacturing	293	291	99%
		IG0720-7	2021	100,000	Manufacturing	188	161	86%
		IG0122-1	2022	200,000	Manufacturing			
		IG0123-6	2023	140,000	Manufacturing			
	SIP: Washington County Manufacturing Partnership	IG0618-1	2018	150,000	Manufacturing	374	374	100%
		IG0720-8	2021	50,000	Manufacturing	47	45	96%
		IG1021-3	2022	100,000	Manufacturing			
Lead Applicant: MILVETS	SIP: MILVETS Cyber Incubator Partnership	IG0118-3	2018	100,000	Cybersecurity/IT	46	35	76%

EARN Grantee (Lead Applicant)	Strategic Industry Partnership (SIP)	Grant Number	FY of Award*	Award Amount	EARN Industry**	Participants***	Completers***	Completion Rate***
Lead Applicant: Montgomery College	SIP: BIOTrain	IG1015-5-2	2018	$120,000	Biotechnology	442	442	100%
		IG0620-1	2020	64,765	Biotechnology	345	345	100%
		IG0622-6	2022	120,000	Biotechnology			
	SIP: Mid-Maryland MOVE	IG0719-1	2020	95,778	Transportation and Logistics	28	28	100%
		IG0621-1	2021	99,091	Transportation and Logistics	0	0	
	SIP: Montgomery Alliance for Early Childhood Development (MAECE)	IG0119-7	2019	50,000	Education	18	18	100%
		IG0621-3	2021	52,675	Education	0	0	
		IG0720-6	2021	51,293	Education	0	0	
		IG0722-3	2023	65,759	Education			
Lead Applicant: National Center on Institutions and Alternatives (NCIA)	SIP: Herbert J. Hoelter (HJH) Vocational Training Center (VTC)	IG0419-3	2019	120,000	Transportation and Logistics	30	30	100%
		IG1018-7	2019	52,500	Transportation and Logistics	15	15	100%
		IG0120-13	2020	194,882	Transportation and Logistics	30	24	80%
		IG0421-12	2021	200,000	Transportation and Logistics	40	40	100%
		IG0720-15	2021	150,000	Transportation and Logistics	29	29	100%
		IG1022-8	2023	100,000	Transportation and Logistics			

EARN Grantee (Lead Applicant)	Strategic Industry Partnership (SIP)	Grant Number	FY of Award*	Award Amount	EARN Industry**	Participants***	Completers***	Completion Rate***
Lead Applicant: NPower Inc.	SIP: Baltimore Tech Fundamentals (NPower)	IG0118-8	2018	$150,000	Cybersecurity/ IT	214	170	79%
		IG0420-4	2020	200,000	Cybersecurity/ IT	249	244	98%
		IG0422-6	2022	200,000	Cybersecurity/ IT			
Lead Applicant: Paul's Place	SIP: Groundwork Kitchen Culinary Training Program	IG0722-16	2023	150,000	Retail/Hospitality			
Lead Applicant: Per Scholas	SIP: Partnership for Tech Talent	IG0618-3	2018	300,000	Cybersecurity/IT	250	249	100%
		IG0717-4	2018	450,000	Cybersecurity/IT	131	97	74%
		IG0419-6	2019	250,000	Cybersecurity/IT	103	72	70%
		IG0420-3	2020	300,000	Cybersecurity/IT	212	172	81%
		IG0421-13	2021	250,000	Cybersecurity/IT	112	94	84%
		IG0422-5	2022	330,000	Cybersecurity/IT			
		IG1022-4	2023	400,000	Cybersecurity/IT			
Lead Applicant: Power52 Foundation	SIP: Clean Energy Training Partnership	IG0118-10	2018	166,250	Green	27	22	81%
		IG0619-1	2019	242,000	Green	45	36	80%
		IG0718-7	2019	200,000	Green	41	35	85%
		IG0620-8	2020	264,766	Green	40	30	75%
		IG0421-3	2021	250,000	Green	39	29	74%
		IG0622-1	2022	250,000	Green			

EARN Grantee (Lead Applicant)	Strategic Industry Partnership (SIP)	Grant Number	FY of Award*	Award Amount	EARN Industry**	Participants***	Completers***	Completion Rate***
Lead Applicant: Pressley Ridge (formerly New Pathways)	SIP: Health Care Mentorship	IG0119-3	2019	$212,300	Health Care	43	37	86%
		IG0720-5	2021	150,000	Health Care	26	24	92%
		IG1021-1	2022	250,000	Health Care			
Lead Applicant: Prince George's Economic Development Corp.	SIP: Sustainable Energy Workforce Development Program	IG0118-11	2018	192,750	Green	45	45	100%
Lead Applicant: Printing and Graphics Association MidAtlantic (PGAMA)	SIP: PrintSIP	IG0119-4	2019	50,000	Manufacturing	48	36	75%
		IG0722-13	2023	49,998	Manufacturing			
Lead Applicant: SANS Institute (Escal Institute of Advanced Technologies, Inc.)	SIP: SANS Cyber Workforce Academy	IG0118-2	2018	500,000	Cybersecurity/IT	85	82	96%
		IG0619-3	2019	635,640	Cybersecurity/IT	99	93	94%
		IG0621-11	2021	635,640	Cybersecurity/IT	0	0	
		IG1023-7	2023	250,000	Cybersecurity/IT			
Lead Applicant: SEEC (Seeking Employment, Equality and Community for People with Developmental Disabilities)	SIP: MD Direct Support Professional (DSP) Training Consortium	IG0717-6	2018	149,200	Health Care	84	69	82%
		IG1018-3	2019	75,000	Health Care	51	50	98%
		IG0719-5	2020	150,000	Health Care	123	106	86%
		IG0421-6	2021	150,000	Health Care	154	150	97%
		IG0123-4	2023	150,000	Health Care			

EARN Grantee (Lead Applicant)	Strategic Industry Partnership (SIP)	Grant Number	FY of Award*	Award Amount	EARN Industry**	Participants***	Completers***	Completion Rate***
Lead Applicant: Sentinel Robotics Solutions (Tri County Council for Lower Eastern Shore of MD)	SIP: Committee to Expand UAS Employment	IG0418-2	2018	$100,000	Cybersecurity/IT	32	30	94%
Lead Applicant: SmoothStack	SIP: Smoothstack IT Apprenticeships	IG0722-7	2023	150,000	Cybersecurity/IT			
Lead Applicant: Susquehanna Workforce Network Inc. (SWN)	SIP: Susquehanna IT/Cyber Partnership	IG0120-9	2020	150,000	Cybersecurity/IT	27	25	93%
		IG0721-6	2022	150,000	Cybersecurity/IT			
	SIP: Susquehanna Manufacturing Coalition	IG1015-3-2	2018	100,000	Manufacturing	18	18	100%
		IG0120-1	2020	100,000	Manufacturing	26	22	85%
		IG0122-3	2022	150,000	Manufacturing			
Lead Applicant: Susquehanna Workforce Network Inc. (SWN)	SIP: Sustainable Energy Workforce Development Program	IG0118-1	2018	131,170	Green	24	21	88%
		IG0419-4	2019	150,000	Green	19	16	84%
Lead Applicant: Tech Frederick	SIP: Tech Frederick	IG0119-10	2019	149,000	Cybersecurity/IT	25	25	100%
		IG0120-12	2020	300,000	Cybersecurity/IT	355	355	100%
		IG0421-10	2021	355,446	Cybersecurity/IT	270	270	100%
		IG0622-8	2022	439,225	Cybersecurity/IT			

EARN Grantee (Lead Applicant)	Strategic Industry Partnership (SIP)	Grant Number	FY of Award*	Award Amount	EARN Industry**	Participants***	Completers***	Completion Rate***
Lead Applicant: The Virginia L. Grant Foundation, Inc. (VGF)	SIP: Global Resource for Academic and Career Excellence (GRACE)	IG1018-12	2019	$49,980	Construction	9	9	100%
		IG0720-12	2021	50,000	Construction	11	10	91%
Lead Applicant: Transmosis, Inc.	SIP: Maryland Cybersecurity Operations Center (SOC) Training Program	IG0620-7	2020	73,370	Cybersecurity/IT	13	11	85%
		IG0721-9	2022	87,500	Cybersecurity/IT			
Lead Applicant: University of Maryland Baltimore County (UMBC)	SIP: Certified Cyber Analyst Operator	IG1018-16	2019	150,000	Cybersecurity/IT	29	26	90%
		IG0621-10	2021	100,000	Cybersecurity/IT	40	36	90%
		IG0423-8	2023	163,469	Cybersecurity/IT			
		IG1022-5	2023	100,000	Cybersecurity/IT			
Lead Applicant: Vehicles for Change, Inc.	SIP: Automotive Technicians for Change	IG1017-1	2018	200,000	Automotive Repair	37	37	100%
		IG0219-1	2019	125,000	Automotive Repair	27	25	93%
		IG0719-4	2020	200,000	Automotive Repair	23	23	100%
	SIP: Automotive Technicians for Change - Baltimore	IG1021-4	2022	200,000	Automotive Repair			
	SIP: Automotive Technicians for Change - Eastern Shore	IG0622-5	2022	100,000	Automotive Repair			
	SIP: Center for Automotive Careers	IG0720-13	2021	150,000	Automotive Repair	0	0	

EARN Grantee (Lead Applicant)	Strategic Industry Partnership (SIP)	Grant Number	FY of Award*	Award Amount	EARN Industry**	Participants***	Completers***	Completion Rate***
Lead Applicant: W.R. Grace and Co.	SIP: Curtis Bay Industrial Training Partnership	IG0717-7	2018	$200,000	Manufacturing	237	230	97%
Lead Applicant: WorkSource Montgomery, Inc.	SIP: Code Partners	IG0118-4	2018	150,000	Cybersecurity/IT	82	69	84%
Lead Applicant: Wor-Wic Community College	SIP: Building Employer-led Alliances for Careers in Hospitality – Eastern Shore (BEACHES)	IG0514-6	2018	50,000	Retail/Hospitality	200	155	78%
	SIP: Eastern Shore Construction Alliance	IG0620-2	2020	28,945	Construction	13	10	77%
	SIP: Wor-Wic Welding (aka Offshore Wind)	IG1018-6	2019	300,000	Manufacturing	70	48	69%
		IG0420-6	2020	400,000	Manufacturing	42	39	93%
		IG0122-5	2022	241,115	Manufacturing			

EARN: Employment Advancement Right Now

* Indicates the State fiscal year during which the Maryland Department of Labor (MDL) awarded each numbered grant.
** The EARN Industry categorizations are unique to EARN and do not necessarily align with other standardized industry classifications (such as the North American Industry Classification System).
*** The total number of individuals who participated and completed in training is reported by Grantees (Lead Applicants) in Grantees' Final Reports to MDL. Some grants have not yet been completed and closed out. Totals are compiled and reported annually by MDL and Business, Economic, and Community Outreach Network (BEACON). However, Grantee-reported participation and completion (and other trainee employment outcomes) is not independently verified by MDL or BEACON and could not be independently verified by the Office of Program Evaluation and Government Accountability.

Source: Maryland Department of Labor; Department of Legislative Services. Additional outcomes as reported by Grantees are recorded by and available from BEACON and MDL in their annual reports on EARN.

Appendix D. Workforce Development Programs Offering Incumbent Worker Training in Maryland

As the Office of Program Evaluation and Government Accountability discussed in the Evaluation of Workforce Development, Part 1, several programs in Maryland, including Employment Advancement Right Now (EARN), offer opportunities for incumbent worker training (IWT). The State-funded grants to employers for IWT could be consolidated into one program.

	Partnership for Workforce Quality	**Maryland Employment Advancement Right Now**	**Maryland Business Works**	**IWT Funded via the 13 Local Workforce Development Boards**
Year Established	1989	2013	2016	2014 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Reauthorization
Program Summary	Partnership for Workforce Quality (PWQ) is a State-funded program assisting Maryland employers and employees through IWT and other employment services. Participating businesses develop and implement training to improve business competitiveness and worker productivity, upgrade worker skills to accommodate new technologies and production processes, and promote employment stability.	EARN is a State-funded, competitive workforce development grant program to help employers cultivate the skilled workforce they need to compete. EARN uses an industry-led, regional strategy to encourage mobility for hard-to-serve jobseekers through job readiness training and supports as well as upskilling of incumbent workers, as determined by industry. Some EARN grants fund IWT, some fund training for jobseekers, and some fund both.	Maryland Business Works (MBW) is a statewide IWT program available to support employer strategies for retention, expansion, and layoff aversion. MBW funds classroom-based training, in-house staff training, and Registered Apprenticeships (RA). Training must result in an industry-recognized credential, certificate of RA completion, or a certificate that results in a wage increase for the trainee.	Local workforce development boards (LWDB) may choose to use up to 20% of their combined Adult and Dislocated Worker program funds for IWT, under federal WIOA, Title I (Section 134). Such local IWT opportunities may have specific or unique names.

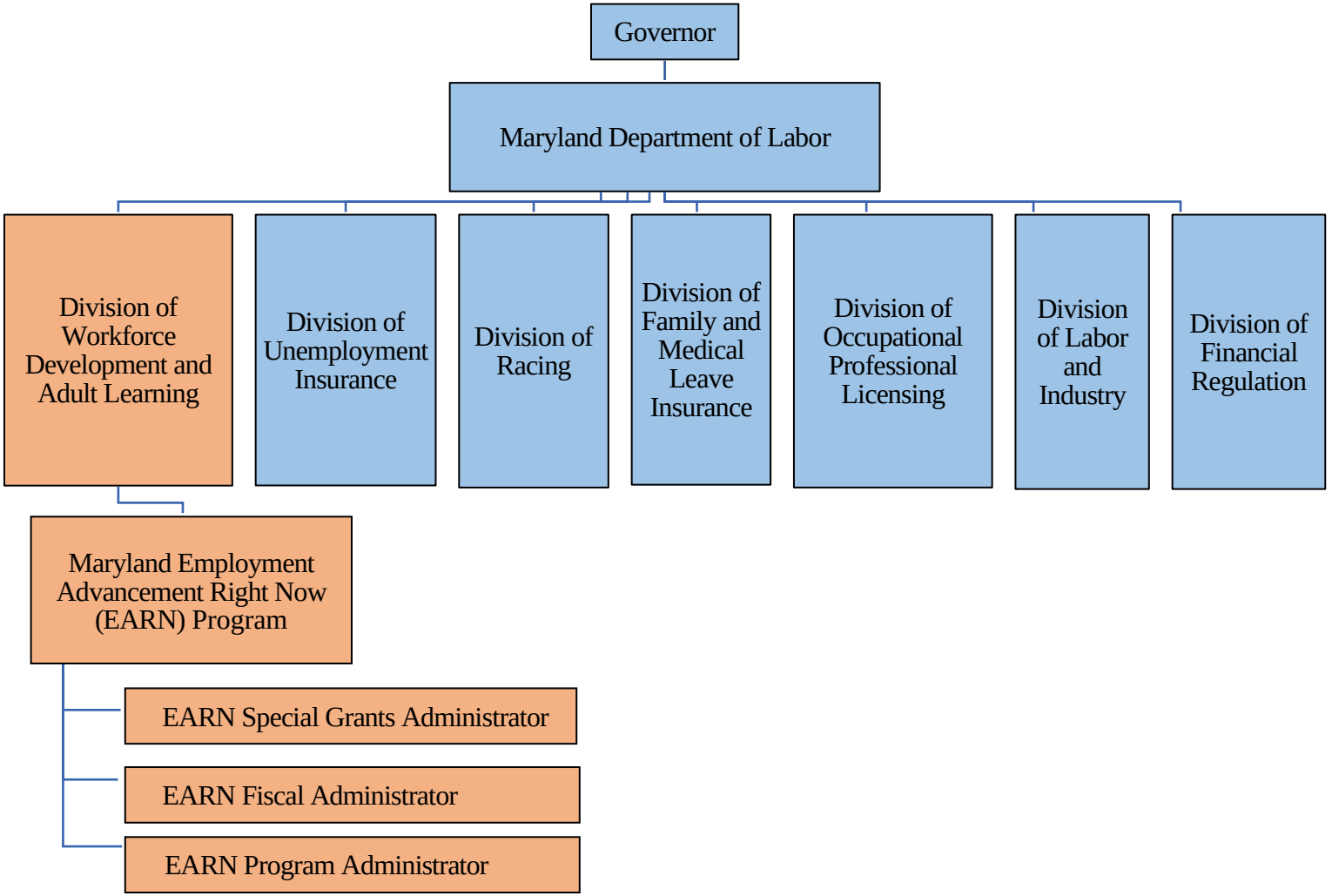
	Partnership for Workforce Quality	Maryland Employment Advancement Right Now	Maryland Business Works	IWT Funded via the 13 Local Workforce Development Boards
Eligible Businesses	PWQ serves employers seeking to train incumbent and/or new employees.* PWQ prioritizes (but is not limited to) employers in the manufacturing sector. At least 60% of PWQ employer grantees must have 150 employees or less.	EARN serves consortiums of five or more employers in strategic industry partnerships (SIP) focused on the workforce needs of an industry sector. SIPs across different industries include Cyber/Information Technology, Transportation/Logistics, Biotechnology, Green Technology, Health Care, Manufacturing, Construction, Automotive, Childcare, and Hospitality.	MBW targets single businesses (private and nonprofit) with 500 or less employees. Applications from businesses for MBW funds are received and awarded by the Maryland Department of Labor (MDL) on a rolling basis. MBW awards must be spent only on employees working at the applicant's Maryland facilities. Employers may fund RA training after year one.	Locally defined by local policy.
Eligible Employees	Not predefined by PWQ; employee eligibility defined by each employer.	Not predefined by EARN program; defined by each SIP and for each EARN grant.	Employees must meet the WIOA definition of incumbent worker: employed full time and have worked for the employer for at least six months. In addition, for MBW, the worker must be eligible for benefits and an annual salary less than $90,000.	Employees must meet the WIOA definition of incumbent worker: employed full time and have worked for the employer for at least six months.
Funding Source	General Funds (GF).	GF; and Special Funds (SF) transferred by the Maryland Energy Administration (MEA) from the Strategic Energy Investment Fund to the Clean Energy Workforce Account (CEWA) for disbursement as green energy grants under the EARN program.	Federal Funds (FF) Federal WIOA Title I allows Governors to set aside 15% of their full combined allotment (Title I – Youth, Adult, and Dislocated Worker programs) for their highest workforce development priorities. Maryland uses part of its WIOA "Governor's set aside" to fund MBW.	FF Federal WIOA Title I (Section 134(d)(4)) allows local boards to use up to 20% of the funds allocated to the local area for Adult and Dislocated Worker programs to pay the federal share of the cost of IWT. *(Note: This is separate from the "Governor's set aside".)*
Expenditures	Fiscal 2022 Actual GF: $1,000,000	Fiscal 2022 Actual GF: $7,081,426	Fiscal 2022 Actual FF: $230,744	Fiscal 2022 Actual FF: $65,828 in Total Across 4 LWDBs.

	Partnership for Workforce Quality	**Maryland Employment Advancement Right Now**	**Maryland Business Works**	**IWT Funded via the 13 Local Workforce Development Boards**
Workers Trained in Fiscal 2022	*Projected Only*: 800 Incumbents Trained	4,638 Individuals Trained, of which 1,782 (38%) Were Incumbents	217 Incumbents Trained	216 Incumbents Trained in Total Across 4 LWDBs
Expenditures	Fiscal 2023 Actual GF: $998,479	Fiscal 2023 Actual GF: $8,088,618	Fiscal 2023 Actual FF: $234,073	Fiscal 2023 Actual FF: $46,669 in Total Across 2 LWDBs.
Workers Trained in Fiscal 2023	*Projected Only*: 948 Individuals Trained (Incumbent Portion Unknown)*	5,266 Individuals Trained, of which 2,226 (42%) Were Incumbents	208 Incumbents Trained	98 Trained Across 3 LWDBs
Employer Match	Yes (dollar-for-dollar).	Yes, but type and amount varies widely by SIP and EARN grant.	Yes (dollar-for-dollar).	Yes: locally defined, subject to the minimums by employer size in WIOA Section 134(d)(4)(C)–(D).
DBM Budget Code and Subprogram	T00.F00.07.6701	P00.A01.01.AA37	P00 (No Subprogram Is Assigned)	P00 (No Subprogram Is Assigned)
Funding Disbursement	Funds are disbursed as grants to eligible Maryland companies for up to 50% of the direct costs of training.	Funds are disbursed to the lead applicant of each SIP awarded a competitive EARN grant.	Employers pay 100% of total training costs and then receive a 50% reimbursement from MDL upon successful completion of the training.	Locally defined by local policy.
Authorizing Statute	Maryland Economic Development Articles, § 3-403 and § 2.5-105(7).	Maryland Labor and Employment Article, § 11-701 et seq.	Federal WIOA of 2014, Title I, Section 128.	Federal WIOA of 2014, Title I, Section 134(d)(4).
	* Chapter 115/HB 1342 of 2021 expanded PWQ training to both incumbent and new employees.	Chapter 757/SB 516 of 2019 established CEWA.		
Implementing Agency	Maryland Department of Commerce (Commerce)	MDL, in Collaboration with MEA	MDL, in Consultation with Commerce	Maryland's 13 LWDBs, in Collaboration with MDL

Note: Federal program year 2022 is equivalent to State fiscal 2023 (July 1, 2022, through June 30, 2023).

Source: Maryland Department of Labor; Maryland Department of Commerce; Department of Legislative Services

Appendix E. Organizational Chart of the Maryland Department of Labor



Source: Maryland Manual On-Line, Maryland State Archives; Maryland Department of Labor; Department of Legislative Services.

Appendix F. Methodology

This evaluation pursued the following research questions, but not all questions could be answered due to data limitations:

1. Workforce Outcomes for Employers

a. What were the workforce outcomes for employers who participated in Employment Advancement Right Now (EARN)?

b. Did workforce outcomes for employers who participated in an EARN grant project differ from workforce outcomes among a sample of similar employers who did not participate in EARN?

The Office of Program Evaluation and Government Accountability (OPEGA) was unable to answer these questions because EARN collects limited information about participating employers. Without complete information on employer identification information and participation records, OPEGA could not accurately compare outcomes for participating and nonparticipating employers.

2. Workforce Outcomes for Individuals

a. What were the wage and employment outcomes for EARN trainees?

Business, Economic, and Community Outreach Network (BEACON) at Salisbury University annually evaluates the EARN program and reports on trainee wage and employment outcomes as reported by the grantees. OPEGA did not attempt to duplicate the work done by BEACON. As discussed in our report, it is not possible for any third party to verify the grantee-reported wage and employment outcomes for trainees by matching them against Unemployment Insurance wage records or other supplemental wage records without additional identifying information on trainees in the reports from grantees to the Maryland Department of Labor (MDL).

b. Did the employment and wage outcomes for EARN trainees that were reported by grantees persist over time?

OPEGA could not answer this question because of how the EARN program currently collects information about trainees. This report offers options for the EARN program to collect additional information in a way that will enable future evaluations to answer this question, including a discussion of the pros and cons of such additional data collection.

3. How much did the following factors influence EARN's workforce outcomes?

a. Screening process used by EARN Grantees to select their trainees.

b. Whether trainees had one or more barriers to employment.

c. Whether the employers and trainees participating in EARN also participated in other workforce development programs and services in Maryland.

OPEGA could not answer this question because of how the EARN program currently collects information about trainees. This report offers options for the EARN program to collect additional information in a way that will enable future evaluations to answer this question, including a discussion of the pros and cons of such additional data collection.

Evaluating workforce programs can help build evidence-based practices for the benefit of the larger workforce community. The limitations encountered in evaluating EARN may serve as a case study in opportunities to build upon State evaluation capacity and finding more ways to assess if the sectoral training approach used by EARN grantees should be scaled up, scaled back, extended into other workforce training contexts, or some combination based on the longer-term outcomes of unique EARN projects. For a longer discussion of evaluability, see (1) the U.S. Department of Labor provides an *Evaluation Toolkit: Key Elements for State Workforce Agencies* (September 2020) for assessing evaluation readiness and expanding evaluation capacity and (2) The Methods Lab *Evaluability Assessment for Impact Evaluation Guidance, Checklists and Decision Support*, by G. Peersman, I. Guijt & T. Pasanen (Methods Lab, August 2015).

OPEGA used the following quantitative and qualitative data sources for this evaluation:

- grant solicitations and Grantee Guidance documents from MDL;
- Available Applications, Letters of Intent, Outcome Reports, and Final Reports from EARN Grantees to MDL. Not all administrative records were available, due in part to current records retention practices;
- BEACON annual evaluations of EARN, including spreadsheets maintained by BEACON;
- EARN Annual Reports prepared by MDL;
- Managing for Results reports published by the Department of Budget and Management, including the spreadsheet detail used for the performance measures;
- Maryland Transparency Portal, a public web site that allows visitors to search and view summary information about the State's operating budget, State grants and loans, and State payments to vendors (https://mtp.maryland.gov/#!/dashboard);

- federal Training and Employment Guidance Letters;
- interviews with MDL administrators for EARN and the Division of Unemployment Insurance;
- interview with BEACON staff; and
- interview with Maryland Longitudinal Data System Center staff.

Appendix G. Program Evaluability Checklist

Evaluability Assessments

Evaluating a program can be time consuming and resource intensive. When done well, it can offer valuable insights into program performance and provide evidence to inform future decisions about the program. Realistically, however, not all programs are good candidates for formal evaluation. Three practical reasons why a program may not be ready for an evaluation are as follows.

1. ***The Program Model Is Not Well Defined:*** Programs aim to meet needs or solve problems by setting realistic and achievable goals, creating measurable objectives, and planning activities that support those objectives. A program should have a clear statement of the problem the intervention aims to address and the logical link between the activities and intended impacts. For example, a program may have a theory of change succinctly stating how the program expects to achieve the desired outcomes, including the expected relationship between inputs, activities, outputs, and outcomes. If the goals or objectives are unrealistic, or the activities and objectives are misaligned, attempting to evaluate program impact is likely to be fruitless.

2. ***The Program Is New, Has Recently Changed, or Will Soon Experience Major Changes:*** It takes time for program administrators and staff to launch a new program, establish policies and procedures, and implement activities. It takes even longer to observe whether a program is impacting the problem it seeks to address. Evaluating a new or transitional program is unlikely to yield many insights for program staff or policymakers.

3. ***The Program Is Collecting Insufficient Information:*** Programs that keep detailed records of their services and regularly collect information about key outcomes are well suited for evaluation. However, if a program does not or cannot gather the data needed for an evaluation, evaluators cannot provide accurate results.

Evaluators can assess the evaluability of a program before launching a full evaluation. Several State offices for program evaluation have developed their own tools to assess evaluability in advance of a full-scale evaluation. Informed by these examples and guidance from The Methods Lab collaborative, the Office of Program Evaluation and Government Accountability has adapted the Evaluability Checklist in **Exhibit 1**.

This checklist can also be used when establishing a new program for which later evaluation is intended to ensure it will be evaluable.

Exhibit 1

Checklist for Assessing the Evaluability of a Program

Checklist Question	**Is There a Barrier to Program Evaluation?**		
	No Barrier	*Minor Barrier*	*Major Barrier*
Theory of Change			
Does the program have a plausible logical link between its activities and its intended impact? Does it state a theory of change (or can it be derived) that lays out the expected relationship between inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, and impacts?	☐	☐	☐
Are the intended beneficiaries of the program clearly identified and correctly targeted?	☐	☐	☐
Is there information on who is excluded or might experience negative results from the program?	☐	☐	☐
Data Availability			
Are relevant documents available and accessible to evaluators?	☐	☐	☐
Have previous studies or evaluations been conducted? If so, are they relevant to the planned evaluation?	☐	☐	☐
Are there existing high-quality data sources? If so, are they accessible to evaluators?	☐	☐	☐
Can the current data collection systems deliver relevant and reliable data for use in the planned evaluation?	☐	☐	☐
What are some strategies for (or limitations to) determining causal attribution? Is there potential for using experimental, quasi-experimental, or nonexperimental designs?	☐	☐	☐

Checklist Question	**Is There a Barrier to Program Evaluation?**		
	No Barrier	*Minor Barrier*	*Major Barrier*
Timing			
Has the program been implemented in a way (*i.e.*, at sufficient duration, intensity, or scale) that would lead us to expect to see an impact?	☐	☐	☐
Are any major external events expected during the planned evaluation that may affect results?	☐	☐	☐
Could planned internal program changes interfere with the evaluation? Could an evaluation take advantage of those changes?	☐	☐	☐
Are there other interventions taking place that could complicate determining the extent to which the evaluated intervention is contributing to observed outcomes?	☐	☐	☐

Source: Department of Legislative Services; Adapted from: Evaluability Assessment for Impact Evaluation Guidance, Checklists and Decision Support, by G. Peersman, I. Guijt & T. Pasanen (Methods Lab, Aug. 2015, p. 12 et seq).

ENDNOTES –

[1] URL active as of 8/12/2024: https://mlsd.ent.sirsi.net/client/en_US/catalogs/search/detailnonmodal/ent:$002f$002fSD_ILS$002f0$002fSD_ILS:55835/one.

[2] URL active as of 8/12/2024: https://mlsd.ent.sirsi.net/client/en_US/OPEGA/search/detailnonmodal/ent:$002f$002fSD_ILS$002f0$002fSD_ILS:55835/one.

[3] In MDL's response to the 2020 Joint Chairmen's Report requesting information on Workforce Development Program Outcomes (2020_JCR_p148), MDL stated the following regarding EARN: "Feasibility of Tracking Outcomes for Longer Periods: This would likely require grantees to hire additional staff and would come at a cost to the State." (p. 21); retrievable from URL active as of 8/12/2024: https://mlsd.ent.sirsi.net/client/en_US/default/search/detailnonmodal/ent:$002f$002fSD_ILS$002f0$002fSD_ILS:53757/one.