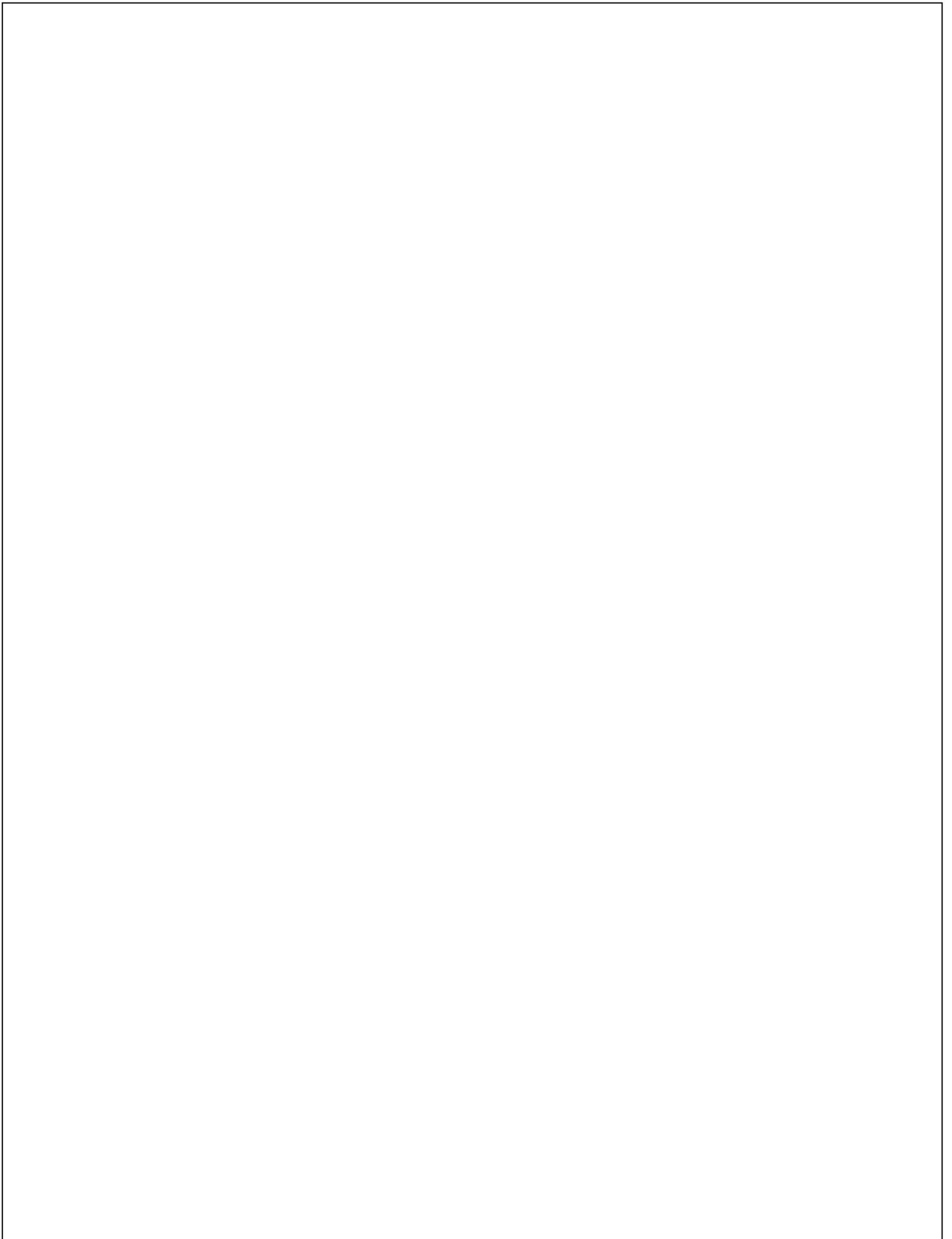




**EARN**  
**MARYLAND**

2015 Annual Report to the  
Maryland General Assembly



December 31, 2015

The Honorable Larry Hogan, Governor  
The Honorable Thomas M. Middleton, Chair, Senate Finance Committee  
The Honorable Dereck E. Davis, Chair, House Economic Matters Committee

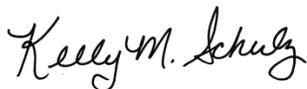
Dear Governor Hogan and Chairman Middleton and Davis:

I am pleased to present to you the 2015 annual report for the Employment Advancement Right Now (EARN) Maryland program. As you know, this nationally-recognized program is administered by the Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation. The program is an innovative workforce initiative that has transformed not only traditional workforce training models, but also the lives of thousands of Maryland's jobseekers.

EARN Maryland is successful because it leverages quality relationships with Maryland's business community. I am pleased to report that nearly 500 business and industry partners are committed to EARN Maryland, and have been involved in the design and implementation of the current 40 training programs. EARN Maryland is addressing business and workforce needs, while truly strengthening the business climate across the State. This is done by providing employment training for jobseekers and by strengthening credentials of those who want to advance in their careers. I am pleased to report that as of October of this year, 78% of unemployed and underemployed participants, many of whom have multiple barriers to employment, obtained employment as a result of EARN Maryland, and 93% of incumbent workers obtained a new credential, certification or skill as a result of their participation.

Though early on its implementation, the impact EARN Maryland has had on business and Maryland's workforce cannot be ignored. The Department is proud to support this program, and looks forward to sharing its successes for many years to come.

Best Regards,



Kelly M. Schulz  
Secretary

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## Maryland's Nationally Recognized Workforce Initiative

EARN Maryland is a state-funded, competitive workforce and economic development grant program that is industry-led and regional in focus. It is flexible and innovative, designed to ensure that Maryland's businesses have the talent they need to compete and grow while providing targeted education and skills training to Maryland jobseekers. The program includes both career advancement strategies for incumbent workers and support for individuals with specific barriers to employment.

EARN Maryland is designed to:

- Address business workforce needs by focusing on industry sector strategies that seek long-term solutions to sustained skills gaps and personnel shortages;
- Address the needs of workers by creating formal career paths to good jobs, and sustaining or growing middle class jobs;
- Encourage mobility for Maryland's jobseekers with barriers to employment through targeted job readiness training; and,
- Foster better coordination between the public, private, and non-profit sectors and the workforce, economic development, and education partners around the State.

The Program addresses two broad training categories:

- 1) **Job Skills Training** – Job Skills Training is vocational training that results in an identifiable skill or credential. An identifiable skill is the obtainment of proficiency, as defined by industry standards, in a specific work related skill that is likely to lead to future job advancement and improvement in an individual's earning potential.
- 2) **Job Readiness Training** – Job Readiness Training assists and supports low- and no-skilled workers in overcoming individual barriers to employment by developing the skills necessary to maintain employment. This may include development of professional skills, such as communication and problem-solving, time management, occupational skills development, GED® preparation, literacy advancement, and financial stability services, including financial coaching, credit counseling, transportation and child care.

EARN Maryland has been acclaimed as a national best practice for workforce development because it is an industry-led effort. Through the first 18 months of implementation, the EARN Maryland program has been recognized as a leader in sector based partnership initiatives. In June, EARN Maryland was highlighted at the National Fund for Workforce Solutions' Annual Meeting. Two months later, EARN Maryland was prominently featured at a conference for two National Governors Association affiliate groups.

The National Skills Coalition also released a Sector Partnership Policy Toolkit, in which EARN Maryland was described as a best practice for states looking to implement similar initiatives. The toolkit is included as **Appendix A** to this report.

While traditional workforce programs often look to training entities or higher education to determine training needs and develop curriculum, EARN Maryland's innovative model tasks employers and industry partners with designing the program. These critical partners identify workforce needs, develop curriculum, participate in trainings, and in the case of entry-level candidates, interview successful graduates. Deep involvement in the process breeds confidence from employers that program participants are proficient in relevant skills that will allow them to be contributing employees who will help improve their business. The early success of EARN Maryland is due in large part to this paradigm shift.

Employer and industry partners have identified incumbent worker training as a cost-prohibitive but indispensable means for strengthening the business climate in Maryland. A robust, highly trained workforce is critical to expansion, retention and improved outcomes for businesses across the State.

As EARN Maryland is an industry-led program, and because funding devoted to this subset of the workforce is extremely limited, EARN Strategic Industry Partnerships are responding to this need by delivering vital training opportunities to incumbent workers. Through October 2015, 1,723 incumbent workers received training. Of those, 1,597, or 93% have attained a new credential, certification, or skill as identified by their employer. As a direct result, employer partners report improved productivity, cost savings, wages, and job retention.

EARN Maryland is reaching another important subset of the workforce: the unemployed and underemployed. Employer partners identified the need for the development of a pipeline of entry level workers ready and able to work. Strategic Industry Partnerships are providing job readiness and skills training to prepare unemployed and underemployed Marylanders for meaningful careers. As of October 2015, 827 EARN Maryland participants completed entry level training programs. Of those, 644, or 78%, obtained employment. Many of these participants are considered to be "hard-to-serve" because they have various barriers to employment.

The Department is pleased with the level of success EARN Maryland has had in reaching incumbent workers and placing unemployed and underemployed trainees into meaningful careers. EARN Maryland has brought together organizations which have worked independently for many years and tasked them with developing collaborative workforce training models. Training programs are designed with industry in mind, and include innovative ideas that challenged the traditional way that workforce training is carried out. Despite some initial challenges, all EARN Maryland partnerships have experienced some level of success. As challenges were overcome, the effectiveness of training programs increased. The Department expects that outcomes will continue to improve and placement numbers will rise.

"The training made available to Quality Biological via EARN was top notch in every aspect and we have requested additional training in Quality Management Systems through the EARN initiative. The employees who attended this training use it daily, and as an organization it has become the foundation for our internal training for new employees. We have seen measurable results which have led to reduced errors and improved work efficiencies within our production team. We strongly recommend the EARN program, because it works."

**-Basile Whitaker, President,  
Quality Biological  
Gaithersburg, Maryland**

## History of the EARN program

### 2013 Roll-Out

The initial phase of EARN Maryland's implementation, from early spring through late summer of 2013, focused on carefully-crafted messaging and targeted staff outreach. This ensured that potential grant applicants understood the law's requirements and the new approach the EARN Maryland program represents.

Under the law, grant funding is awarded through a competitive process and grant applications must consist of detailed, data-driven Workforce Training Plans. The Workforce Training Plan is to be developed and implemented based upon input from the Strategic Industry Partnership, which is comprised of employers and industry representatives, workforce and economic development entities,



Graduates from the Job Opportunities Task Force JumpStart program

education and training partners, nonprofits and other local stakeholders.

Implementation efforts in this initial phase also included information-gathering on best practices from our counterparts in other states with successful industry-led workforce and economic development initiatives similar to EARN Maryland.

### Planning Grants

In 2013, the Planning Grant phase formally began with the release of the EARN Maryland Solicitation for Planning Grant Proposals. Though capped at a modest amount (\$25,000 each), these grants were essential to the formation of the most competitive potential partnerships and subsequent development of the most effective Strategic Industry Partnership Workforce Training Plans.

Of the 68 Planning Grant Proposals received, the Department funded 29 representing all regions of the State in the following industries: Construction and Green; Cybersecurity/IT; Healthcare, Health IT and Biotech; Manufacturing; and Retail/Logistics.

### 28 Implementation Grants Awarded

On March 31, 2014, the Department received 39 Proposals in response to the Implementation Grant Solicitation, including proposals from each of the funded

“The biotech industry is highly competitive and rapidly advancing. Entry level positions are difficult to come by, yet very much in demand. Through the EARN Grant, Baltimore BioWorks, in conjunction with its partners BioTechnical Institute of Maryland and Baltimore City Community College, have been able to successfully create and develop, then modify and expand a training curriculum that has been applied now to over two dozen persons. None of these people had prior biotech backgrounds, all of them are now capable of entry level jobs, many of whom have landed jobs paying \$15 - \$20 per hour. Now that the training program has been created and vetted, we can continue this type “triangular training” – something that would never have occurred without EARN – for many years and literally hundreds of people in the future.”

**-John Powers, Vice President,  
Baltimore BioWorks**

Planning Grant Partnerships. After a thorough review process, 28 Implementation Grants were awarded to Strategic Industry Partnerships in a cross-section of industries representing every region of the state, including BioTechnology, Construction, Cybersecurity/IT, Healthcare, Retail/Hospitality, Manufacturing and Transportation and Logistics.

These 28 Partnerships are each led by at least 5 industry partners and together represent an impressive convening of regional partners including 15 Community Colleges, 16 County and Municipal Offices of Economic Development and most of the State's 12 Workforce Investment Boards.

### ***12 Additional Implementation Grants Awarded***

In an attempt to build on the early successes of the EARN Maryland Implementation Grants, the Department released another EARN Maryland Solicitation for Implementation Grant Proposals on October 22, 2014.



A participant in the Jane Addams Resource Corporation's [JARC] Careers in Manufacturing Program with Senators Joan Carter-Conway, Gail Bates and Johnny Ray Salling

On November 24, 2014, the Department received 18 Proposals. After a thorough review process, 12 Implementation Grants were awarded to Strategic Industry Partnerships in a cross-section of industries representing every region of the state including Manufacturing, Construction, Healthcare, Cybersecurity/IT, and Automotive Repair.

These 12 Partnerships include over 75 industry partners, 8 County and Municipal Offices of Economic Development, and 6 Institutions of Higher Education.

### ***Additional Funding for Original Grantees***

The grantees funded in June 2014 experienced immense early success. With a desire to build this success, the Department allowed these grantees to submit a Letter of Intent, applying for available funds to expand their partnership and project. Twenty-four (24) grantees submitted a Letter of Intent, and based upon program performance, 21 received additional funding.

### ***Maryland's Statewide Training Needs***

The EARN Maryland Solicitation for Implementation Grant Proposals require Strategic Industry Partnerships to prepare a Workforce Training Plan addressing skills shortages identified by industry partners and outlining recruitment, training and placement strategies. Based upon skill shortages identified by industry partners, EARN Maryland Strategic Industry Partnerships provide Job Readiness and Job Skills Training to three subsets of the workforce:

- 1) **Preparatory** – Preparatory training serves individuals who are not ready to enter the workforce, but would benefit from training and education. For instance, many employers state that even entry level positions require some level of experience. Thus, some partnerships are providing shadowing and internship opportunities for students who are still completing educational requirements.
  
- 2) **Unemployed/Underemployed** – Unemployed refers to an individual without a job and who is available for work. Underemployed refers to an individual who is working part-time but desires full-time employment, or who is working in employment not commensurate with the individual’s demonstrated level of education and/or skill achievement.
  
- 3) **Incumbent Worker** – An individual who is already employed in the target industry, and who seeks to obtain additional training or credential.

Nearly half of the 57 Implementation Grant Proposals received by the Department targeted three key industries.



Maryland Labor Secretary Kelly M. Schulz presenting a Governor’s Citation to representatives from Manufacturing Workforce Partnership of Frederick County in honor of Workforce Development Month

The **Manufacturing** industry attracted the highest number with eleven (11) proposals. Maryland manufacturers report an industry-wide shortage of skilled workers and struggle to fill entry level positions. Moreover, it is anticipated that between 30-50% of the workforce will retire in the next five years. As such, there is great demand to create a pipeline of qualified candidates to fill these positions. Employers also report that increasing the skills of incumbent workers is cost prohibitive, but leads to an increase in productivity, cost savings, wages, and jobs retained. Each of the eleven manufacturing proposals detailed strikingly similar needs for entry level and incumbent training.

“The EARN grant made it possible for us to expand our successful Baltimore program and replicate in Prince George’s County. The results have been very good thus far. People are getting placed in very good jobs. It is still early, but we are hopeful to get close to 100 percent placement!”

**–Mike Henderson, President,  
Assoc. Builders and Contractors –  
Baltimore Metro Chapter**

**Healthcare** was represented in ten (10) proposals. The large number of proposals detailing a need for training in healthcare can be attributed to the changing landscape of the industry due to the implementation of the Affordable Care Act. Millions of newly insured patients will have access to care, thus increasing the demand for skilled healthcare workers. The law includes new mandates that require additional training for incumbent workers and places an emphasis on

quality of care. Each of the proposals in which healthcare is identified as the target industry reference the Affordable Care Act as the main basis for the increased demand for training.

**Construction** was identified as the target industry in seven (7) proposals. According to the Opportunity Collaborative’s “Regional Talent Development Pipeline Study,” careers in the construction industry are expected to steadily grow through 2020. Maryland has many infrastructure and construction projects scheduled over the next few years, which will require skilled workers. Additionally, industry representatives expressed a need to increase the competitiveness of contractors, which can be achieved by increasing the skillsets of incumbent workers.

Other industries represented include Cybersecurity/Information Technology (IT), Transportation and Logistics, Green Energy and Hospitality.

### **Soft Skills Training**



Representatives from various EARN partnerships share with the National Governor’s Assoc. and workforce professionals throughout the nation

An emerging theme within almost all of the Workforce Training Plans, regardless of industry, region or subset of the workforce, is the need to further develop and teach soft skills. Soft skills, also known as essential skills, are an important component of job-readiness training.

Examples of soft skills include, but are not limited to, skills related to professionalism, problem-solving, timeliness, interpersonal communication, and customer service. Many employers state that soft skills are equally as important as the hard skills, or technical skills, that are

necessary to be proficient in a career. Strategic Industry Partnerships are implementing soft-skills training in the classroom, as well as modeling on-the-job work experiences throughout the training program.

### **Engaging Employers**

Because EARN Maryland is an industry-led program, it is critical that partnerships maintain positive working relationships with their employer partners. This is being accomplished in a variety of ways, the most effective of which is through responsiveness to industry demand. Employer partners acknowledge that industry needs can change quickly. The intentional flexibility of EARN Maryland allows partnerships to meet the evolving training needs of industry.

Another way that EARN Maryland partnerships maintain positive relationships with employers is through the caliber of candidates who are sent for interviews. In order for employers to remain engaged in the partnership, it is important that they are satisfied with the candidates that they interview and hire. Many participants being served through EARN have multiple barriers to employment. These barriers include, but are not limited to criminal records, low levels of literacy, substantial cultural barriers, and disabilities. Partnerships attempt to address these barriers and match a participant with an employer based on their skills. Partnerships continue to work with participants who are not ready to enter the workforce through case management and other training opportunities, and the Department recognizes the delicate balance when reviewing partnership progress.

While it is essential that partnerships maintain a positive relationship with current employer partners, in order to grow the program and its success, new employers must be engaged. As such, the Department has encouraged each partnership to continue outreach to new employers. Since program inception, the number of employer partners involved in EARN Maryland has increased 63%, with 400 employer partners, in addition to the numerous industry organizations who participate. Employers from across the state are approaching the Department and specific EARN partnerships to find out how to get involved. This interest is a testament to the industry-led model and the caliber of training participants who complete the program.

Employer and industry partners recognize that training Maryland's workforce is not the program's sole benefit. As described below in the words of employer and industry partners, EARN is improving company outcomes, removing silos that exist between industry and workforce, and affecting systems change throughout Maryland.

“Like most Maryland employers, our workforce needs are constantly changing as technology shifts occur and customer needs change. The EARN program has given us a seat at the table as employee training programs are formulated, evolved, and tailored to the needs of the employer. This fundamental shift in the State's workforce development approach has greatly improved the alignment between State workforce investments and employer needs.”

**-Mark Rice, President, Maritime Applied Physics Corporation**



Participant from the Automotive Technicians for Change program Presenting to members of the House Economic Matters Committee

### Serving the “Hardest to Serve”

Of the EARN Maryland partnerships who are providing entry-level training, most are targeting specific under-served populations, including returning citizens, veterans, low-skilled workers, the long-term unemployed, and disabled job seekers. Many of these participants have significant barriers to overcome, including criminal backgrounds, homelessness, lack of transportation, addiction, childcare needs, and disadvantaged backgrounds. The following is a small sampling of some of

the success stories shared by the partnerships, demonstrating EARN Maryland's commitment to serving all of Maryland's jobseekers.

Antoine has been incarcerated multiple times over the past few years. Aside from working side jobs and getting paid under the table, he had been unemployed since 2010. At age 40, he was ready to make a change and transition from odd jobs to a career. At JumpStart, he received additional math assistance, OSHA 10, First Aid, and Flagger Certifications. Upon completion of the program, he interviewed and was hired with Hirsch Electric earning \$10.00 an hour. He received a set of starter tools from JOTF and started apprenticeship school in the Fall of 2015. **-Project JumpStart**

Malik, a twenty-two-year-old from Baltimore City, was incarcerated for 6 months. Two weeks after being released, he enrolled in the boot camp. Using the bus tokens provided by Maryland Manufacturing Extension Partnership, he was able to secure transportation to and from training. Malik was hired by Pompeian, where he has been employed for ten months. He is making \$14.00 an hour with full benefits, and is saving a portion of his paycheck to purchase a vehicle. **-Maryland Manufacturing Boot Camp**

Following his incarceration, Jaron was having trouble finding a job. Through EARN funded training at JARC, Jaron earned an industry recognized credential through the American Welding Society and learned the technical skills needed to succeed. He also learned important soft skills, which gave him the confidence to market himself to an employer. Jaron is currently working with the Pile Drivers Union making over \$18.00 dollars an hour. He is currently stable and able to support himself and his family with union benefits. **- Careers in Manufacturing Program**

Sonya is a 35-year-old mother of five children. She was receiving social service benefits at the time she enrolled in the Center for Urban Families' STRIVE job-readiness and essential skills training. Upon completion, she was accepted into the Johns Hopkins Training Internship. Unfortunately, around that time she became homeless. CFUF assisted Sonya in finding shelter at the Rose Street Community Center, and ensured that her family was not split up. Despite her personal hardships, Sonya completed the internship and was offered employment. She is currently working full-time, earning \$14.25 an hour plus full benefits. Sonya has secured housing and will soon take advantage of the Patient Care Technician training that EARN offers. **-Baltimore Healthcare Partnership**

After spending five years in prison, Christopher was ready to make a change. He spent much of his life working on cars at his grandfather's shop, so enrollment in the program was a good fit. He quickly became a leader in the class, and after a few short months received an offer of employment from Antwerpen. Christopher hopes to become a Master Mechanic, and has committed to returning to Vehicles for Change to tell his story to new interns. **- Automotive Technicians for Change**



Graduates from an EARN Partnership proudly displaying their certificates of completion

Darris found JumpStart through the Baltimore City Department of Social Services. Having lost his job in May of 2013, and with a felony conviction on his record, Darris was facing significant barriers in obtaining employment. JumpStart would provide what he needed to mitigate his barriers and reach his full potential. He received math remediation courses and passed the Associated Builders and Contractors Apprenticeship Entrance Exam. He excelled with the hands-on projects after receiving intensive skills training. Upon program completion, Darris interviewed with an electrician who is an employer partner of JumpStart. He received an EARN-funded set of starter tools and is earning \$11.00 an hour with full benefits. He received a financial scholarship for a car from Vehicles for Change, so he now has reliable transportation to the job sites. **-Project JumpStart**

### Meet Tonya...

"In February 2015, Tonya, a single mother of four, was evicted from her home, and found herself homeless.

Through volunteer work at a women's shelter, Tonya heard about Maryland New Directions. She enrolled in the program and obtained employment soon after the completion of her training.

The program director at MND worked with Tonya's employer to grant her a leave of absence. MND provided Tonya the support she needed to get back on her feet.

Tonya went back to work in October of 2015 and is performing well.

Tonya reflected on her experience in the program, "This isn't just a training program. They help you from beginning to end. I am a product of the investment and I have not given up. Not only do I have a job, I have a career."

Ella is a 35-year-old single mother with three children. When she enrolled in the STRIVE program, she was homeless. However, she was determined to transition off of welfare and find a career, rather than a dead-end job. Ella was accepted into the Johns Hopkins Internship Program. While participating in the program, CFUF provided Ella with counseling and shelter information. She successfully completed her internship and was offered full-time employment with Johns Hopkins. She is currently making \$11.14 an hour and has transitioned to independent housing with her three children. **-Baltimore Healthcare Partnership**

Due to the requirements the Department sets forth regarding the composition of EARN's Strategic Industry Partnerships, most include a non-profit organization who is able to provide case management and supportive services. These services are critical in assisting EARN Maryland participants, especially the "hardest to serve." This is another example of how EARN Maryland is breaking down divisions that traditionally exist between institutions involved in workforce training.

### Tracking Success, Accountability and Participants

The 40 EARN Maryland Partnerships awarded Implementation Grant funding are required to comply with specific reporting requirements in order to ensure accountability. These measures were detailed in the Solicitation for Implementation Grant Proposals, released on January 30, 2014 and October 22, 2014. These measures are meant to track the metrics set forth in the Labor and Employment Article § 11-709(b)(4) of the Maryland Annotated Code.

The Solicitation contained the following guidance pertinent to the enabling statute's above-mentioned requirements:

Partnership goals, training outcomes, financial expenditures, including leveraged resources, will be assessed quarterly throughout the life of the grant. Grantee progress will be measured against outcomes and goals defined by the Grantee in this Implementation Grant Proposal and agreed upon in any subsequent grant agreement prior to the disbursement of funds.

All Grantees will be required to track and report the following:

- Training Participant Outcomes
- Industry “Return on Investment” metrics
- Pursuant to the enabling statute, demographic data on individuals participating in any training:
  - Sex
  - Race
  - Income
  - National Origin
  - County of Residence
  - Educational Attainment
- Training Participant employment and wage status, including:
  - Employment status upon both entry and exit from EARN-funded training
  - Hourly wage rate upon both entry and exit from EARN-funded training

In response to the statutorily required metrics outlined above, EARN Maryland staff, in conjunction with Salisbury University, developed participant outcome reporting templates. These templates provide EARN Maryland grantees with a universal document to be used to report all required data. A unique participant identification number is assigned to all training participants through the life of the grant, and there are two outcome templates: an ENTRY template and an EXIT template.

The ENTRY template is submitted quarterly and should include required data on any participant that begins EARN-funded training in the relevant reporting period. Thus, if a participant began training in the quarter spanning January 1 through March 31, the participant’s data would be included on the ENTRY report due April 15.

“EARN has proven to be successful as we have tripled the number of apprentices that have entered into apprenticeship and maintained employment within the industry they trained in. The opportunity would have floundered if it wasn’t for the EARN Maryland program and the continued support of the EARN staff.”

**-Brian Courtien**  
**Director of Apprenticeship and Training**  
**Finishing Trades Institute of Maryland,**  
**Virginia, DC and Vicinities**

Initial program guidance required the EXIT template be submitted for all participants who complete or leave EARN-funded training in the relevant reporting period. For instance, if a participant completes training on March 28, their exit outcome data would be included on the EXIT template due April 15. This requirement did not take in to account the amount of time required to secure employment following the completion of training. The interview process, which potentially includes multiple interviews or a background check, varies in its length of time. Additionally, training participants may need to pass an exam to earn a credential or certification in order to obtain employment in a certain field. This requires preparation time and may include a lag in receiving the results and/or the credential/certification.

In an effort to receive accurate exit outcome data, EARN Maryland staff modified this requirement. The EXIT template is now due two reporting cycles following the completion of training. For instance, if a participant completes training on March 28, the EXIT template with their data is due July 15, rather than April 15. This adjustment has allowed EARN Maryland grantees to report data that portrays a true representation of the effectiveness of training.

Program staff has provided partnership-specific support and technical assistance to all EARN Maryland grantees. This support includes, but is not limited to, site visits and regular meetings with Lead Applicants, partners, and staff responsible for implementing the Strategic Industry Partnership's Workforce Training Plan. EARN Maryland staff work with partnerships to highlight accomplishments of training programs, and to implement technical assistance plans for outcomes that are not being met. Program staff facilitate opportunities for partnerships to communicate with members of their industry cluster to share information and discuss common themes or challenges.



Martin Schwartz from Vehicles for Change presents the keys to program's 5,000<sup>th</sup> vehicle given away to individuals in need.

Fiscal oversight consists of submission of quarterly fiscal and budget reports that are reviewed by at least three staff at the Department. Grantees must keep proof of expenditures, which are examined at periodic on-site fiscal monitoring visits.

A final report is to be submitted to the Department within 45 days of project completion. This report contains a narrative summary describing the effectiveness of funded training, to include related partnership activities, quantitative outcomes, and a comparison of projected outcomes to actual program impact. Any completed studies, surveys, reports or other work products should be included. A final Expenditure Report certified by the highest fiscal officer will be submitted, which includes all projected and actual expenditures.

DLLR reserves the right to revoke Implementation Grant funding from the recipient entity of any Grant and require the return of unspent funds if the goals and timelines consistent with the approved Implementation Grant are not met.

### ***Third Party Evaluation***

Pursuant to the accountability provisions in the Labor and Employment Article, § 11–705, of the Maryland Annotated Code, the Department explored additional measures to track return on investment for industry partners and for the State. The EARN Maryland program partnered with the

Business Economic and Community Outreach Network (BEACON) at the Perdue School of Business at Salisbury University.

The broad areas for evaluation include assessment of the value to trainees, the value to employers, the quality and effectiveness of the partnership and systems change among, and within the industry and partner institutions. BEACON began its work with the 28 EARN Maryland grantees awarded in June 2014, and has expanded the scope of work to include the 12 grantees awarded in April 2015.



Assistant Secretary for MD Dept. of Labor's Division of Workforce Development And Adult Learning James Rzepkowski and Deputy Assistant Secretary Brandon Butler participating in a site visit of the Healthcare Workers: Rx for Employability at the Washington Adventist Hospital in Tacoma Park, Maryland

### *Program and Project Evaluation Dashboards*

BEACON developed a series of EARN Maryland program evaluation and accountability tools and processes to be used throughout the implementation of the grant projects. BEACON has utilized its proprietary "3E" (Effectiveness, Efficiency and Evidence) methodology to develop a series of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the overall EARN Maryland program, as well as custom KPIs for each project. The KPIs were used to develop dashboards – one for the overall program, and one for each of the projects – to visualize the "Evidence" for the "Effectiveness" and "Efficiency" of the program and each of the projects.

### *Technical Assistance*

BEACON staff traveled around the State, meeting with representatives from each of the 28 original grantees, to discuss program evaluation. The same will be done with the 12 remaining grantees in 2016.

On August 30, the Department hosted an all-day meeting which convened the 40 EARN Maryland grantees. The grantees who were awarded funding in April attended a morning session where they received technical assistance from EARN Maryland staff regarding the reporting process. BEACON provided an overview of their work and outcome tracking. The grantees awarded funding in June of 2014 joined the group for the afternoon session, allowing EARN Maryland staff to provide programmatic updates.

BEACON presented an update on program evaluation. Grantees discussed best practices and lessons learned through the program's first year, and were able to connect with other partnerships. The BEACON team has also submitted a comprehensive report to the Department, including all interview, case study, reporting, evaluation and accountability documents and tools. Statutorily-required metrics of demographic and program results from June 2014 through June 2015 can be found in the BEACON Annual Report.

## **EARN Maryland Strategic Industry Partnerships**

The 40 partnerships awarded EARN Maryland funding are listed below, accompanied by a programmatic update. Although the primary jurisdiction in which each partnership is located is listed for each partnership, it is important to note that EARN Maryland partnerships are intended to be regional, both in their make-up and in their reach.

### ***Manufacturing***

#### **Maryland Manufacturing Extension Partnership**

**Region:** Statewide

**Description:** The Maryland MEP is reaching entry level and incumbent workers across Maryland. Manufacturers describe a need to find ready and willing entry level workers. To meet this need, MMEP is traveling statewide, delivering customizable boot camps aimed at teaching basic manufacturing, employability and life skills. Targeting ex-offenders and the long-term unemployed, 80% of boot camp graduates are offered employment. Maryland manufacturers also describe a need to upskill the current workforce, but find this is often cost-prohibitive. With EARN Maryland funding, 214 employees from 11 different manufacturing companies have received employer-identified training. In order to demonstrate commitment from employers, MD MEP requested that training funds be matched. Maryland manufacturers have contributed \$55,000 in matching funds to date. Employer partners state that the return-on-investment from this incumbent training includes an increase in productivity, cost savings, and wages.

**Participant Success Story:** Maurice had been incarcerated four times before enrolling in the Manufacturing Bootcamp. He excelled during the class and impressed employers during the on-the-job experience. He was hired by Berry Plastics upon completion of the program. He is working as a machine operator and is described by his supervisor as an employee who is “well-liked, has a good attitude, and follows directions.” Maurice has been taking preparatory classes and hopes to earn his Maryland High School Diploma by passing the GED® Test, which he plans to take in January of 2016.

#### **Manufacturing Workforce Partnership of Frederick County**

**Region:** Frederick County

**Description:** Building on the longstanding accomplishments of the Frederick County Manufacturers Roundtable, MWPFC is working with incumbent workers in Front Line Leadership, which provides supervisory level training, problem solving, and coaching meant to cultivate a more motivated, capable, and loyal workforce. Additionally, MWPFC is partnering with the Maryland Manufacturing Extension Partnership, also an EARN grantee, to provide job readiness and basic manufacturing training to entry-level trainees.

#### **Maryland Advanced Manufacturing and Plastics Partnership**

**Region:** Baltimore City

**Description:** The Maryland Advanced Manufacturing and Plastics Partnership, led by Berry Plastics, is partnering with the Community College of Baltimore County to deliver technical training for

manufacturing technicians. This partnership targets incumbent workers, and will provide training in Basic Electricity, Hydraulics/Pneumatics, Basic Mechanics, Advanced Electricity, Electrical Motor Controls, and Advance Hydraulics/Pneumatics. Incumbents who complete the training will be eligible for wage advancement, and employer partners expect a return-on-investment, to include an increase in productivity, cost savings, wages, and jobs retained. Berry Plastics also partners with the Maryland Manufacturing Extension Partnership, hiring five graduates of the EARN-funded Manufacturing Bootcamp. These employees are able and encouraged to participate in this training initiative, thus increasing their skillset and advancing their careers.

**Participant Success Story:** Brandon, a retired veteran, enrolled in the Manufacturing Boot Camp in February of 2015. After excelling in the program, he was hired as a mechanic at Berry Plastics earning a starting wage of \$17.83 an hour. He is currently enrolled in the Industrial Technology Training Program at Berry. Upon completion, he will be eligible for wage advancement. He has already received a raise due to his hard work and dedication, and is currently earning \$18.03 an hour.

### **Washington County Manufacturing Partnership**

**Region:** Washington County

**Description:** Led by Volvo Group Truck Operations, this partnership is seeking to meet the needs of the manufacturing industry in Western Maryland. In the next three to five years, 50% of skilled manufacturers in this region are scheduled to retire. This partnership is charged with creating a pipeline to fill these positions. To do so, Volvo is offering boot camps meant to teach participants manufacturing, employability and life skills. This partnership is also offering incumbent training, which the employer partners believe will make their companies more efficient and effective, and will lead to an increase in productivity, cost savings, wages, and jobs retained. Incumbent training includes Advanced Electrical Equipment, Production Troubleshooting, Hydraulics and Fluid Mechanics, and Predictive Maintenance.

### **Maryland Offshore Wind Strategic Industry Partnership**

**Region:** Baltimore and Eastern Shore

**Description:** Employer partners identified welding as the largest, most immediate need within their industry. With an initial focus on the Baltimore region, 10 of 14 participants were placed into employment, some making wages as high as \$18.00 an hour. In 2016, this partnership will shift its efforts to the Eastern Shore, where welding is in high demand. The program will provide 13 weeks of instruction coupled with on-the-job experience. Successful completers will earn the American Welding Society (AWS) certification.

**Participant Success Story:** Brian and Tim are brothers who found themselves in a cycle of working minimum wage, dead-end jobs. They both desired to find a career and found a passion in welding. After receiving EARN-funded training, both were offered full-time employment with Cianbro, an EARN partner, as welding apprentices. Brian and Tim have been employed for six months and are making \$18.00 an hour, plus full benefits. Adding to their skill set, both are taking advantage of Cianbro's Welding Institute, which will make them eligible for wage increases in the near future.

### **Careers in Manufacturing**

**Region:** Baltimore

**Description:** The Jane Addams Resource Corporation launched the Careers in Manufacturing Program in April 2015, seeking to replicate its successful Chicago program. Since its inception, 41 participants have been enrolled into the program, of which 37% have felony convictions. To date, 100% of completers enrolled in the welding track have been placed into full-time positions, with an average starting wage of \$18.72 an hour plus benefits. Three CNC completers have been placed into full-time employment earning an average wage of \$15 an hour. To ensure its graduates are prepared for manufacturing careers and are connected with employers, JARC Baltimore launched an Industry Advisory Council, and plans to continue to build industry relationships to increase the pool of potential employers, including with unions such as Pile Drivers, Ironworkers, Millwrights and Operating Engineers.

**Participant Success Story:** Donta was determined to begin a career in welding. He knew it would not be easy, but he remained determined. He studied diligently to increase his math and reading comprehension scores in the Fundamentals of Manufacturing Program. Donta did not have any prior experience in the welding trade, so naturally there were many challenging technical skills he needed to learn. He worked hard, and in September 2015, he was placed as a full-time welder in the United Brotherhood of Carpenters - Pile Drivers Union earning \$18.75 an hour plus benefits. Donta said, "I was only making minimum wage at my last place of employment. Now I'm making triple the amount at twenty-one-years-old."

While at the Jane Addams Resource Corporation, Kenny toured several manufacturing companies and quickly realized he was fit for the career he was seeking. He is currently employed at Ellicott Dredges earning \$16 an hour as a full-time employee. He is also volunteering at the Boys and Girls Club, and plans to do whatever he can to give back to the community. Kenny attributes his success to the JARC staff, who provided encouragement and support through personal issues and advanced technical training applications. Kenny has learned that hard work and determination pay off.

Joshua came to the United States from Jamaica in search of a new beginning and career. With limited income, he was determined to be successful in welding. With much determination and the support of his classmates, he was soon able to write, interpret, and program basic codes needed to cut machine parts. Even before receiving his nationally recognized industry credential, Joshua was placed part-time at NRL & Associates making \$14.00 an hour as a CNC Operator.

### **Susquehanna Manufacturing Coalition**

**Region:** Susquehanna

**Description:** Due to the flexibility of EARN funding, the Susquehanna Manufacturing Coalition is able to work closely with its fifteen employer partners to ensure that the group is delivering current and relevant trainings. Through EARN funding, incumbent workers receive training in LEAN, Vibration/Design, New Machine Repair, and Boiler Operations. Additionally, this partnership is providing training to entry level workers in areas such as Manufacturing Technician, HVAC and Fork Lift.

### **PrintSIP**

**Region:** Central Maryland

**Description:** Led by the Printing and Graphics Association of Maryland, PrintSIP is seeking to meet the needs of one of the largest industries in Maryland. This Partnership targets incumbent workers,

graduates of secondary programs and ex-offenders with occupational skills training for new digital technology as well as existing in-demand technology. Leveraging space and equipment at the Center of Applied Technology North, students are able to view demonstrations and receive hands-on training. Students spend time touring the sites of employer partners, and successful completers have the opportunity to interview with employer partners.

### **Rapid Advanced Manufacturing Partnership**

**Region:** Statewide

**Description:** This partnership is still developing curriculum based on employer demand. Four different modules have been tentatively proposed, including both entry-level and incumbent training. The first module includes a training for Under Armour in R&D (Research and Design Manufacturing). The second module includes six companies interested in hosting interns. A pre-apprenticeship program is being developed for module three. Finally, the partnership is exploring a 6 month leadership training program.

### ***Healthcare***

#### **Baltimore Healthcare Partnership**

**Region:** Baltimore

**Description:** Led by the Baltimore Alliance for Careers in Healthcare (BACH), all 7 major hospitals in Baltimore City participate in this partnership. Through the Baltimore Healthcare Partnership, community partners have been able to remove silos, creating and strengthening relationships with employers. Of those who completed training, 75% have been placed into employment with the remaining 25% awaiting certification from the Maryland Board of Nursing. The partnership has developed career maps and is moving towards a career pathway model to ensure that participants are aware of advancement options. BACH was recognized by the National Fund for Workforce Solutions in June of 2015 for its work, and was described as a national partnership model.

**Participant Success Story:** Cierrah is a twenty-year-old Sandtown resident who was working part-time at Sam's Club when she started training at the Caroline Center. After completing the program, she secured employment with Genesis Healthcare earning \$11.30 an hour. In January, Cierrah enrolled in the EARN-funded Patient Care Technician program offered at Baltimore City Community College. She is scheduled to graduate in August, and will be eligible for a wage increase and greater responsibility.

Timothy, who is married with a young child, lacked a High School Diploma and had been unemployed for over a year when he arrived at the Center for Urban Families. He demonstrated interest in the healthcare field. He completed STRIVE Essential Skills training and was accepted into the Johns Hopkins IMPACT Training Internship. During this time, he also registered for a GED® course through CFUF and obtained his Maryland High School Diploma. Prior to completing his internship, he was offered full-time employment at Johns Hopkins. He accepted and is earning \$10.80 an hour plus full benefits. Timothy is now in a better position to support his family.

Nicholle was working as a GNA earning \$12.95 an hour. However, she wanted to receive additional training so that she could make a more sustainable wage to provide for her family. She enrolled in the Patient Care Technician training and successfully completed in September of 2015. She received an

offer of employment from Good Samaritan Hospital, at a rate of \$15.00 an hour with full benefits. After one year of service, Nicholle will be eligible for tuition reimbursement, so that she may be able to access additional training to continue to improve upon her skills and experience.

### **Health IT SIP**

**Region:** Baltimore Region

**Description:** Led by the Community College of Baltimore County, this partnership has successfully launched 4 cohorts in Project Management and Instructional Design Training for incumbent workers recruited from Johns Hopkins, the University of Maryland, Upper Chesapeake, and LifeBridge healthcare systems. Fifty-four Health IT professionals have increased their skill sets to become more effective employees and stronger contributors in their demanding day-to-day work environments.

**Participant Success Story:** “Due to attending this class which proved my dedication and intent to obtain my PMP, I have received a salary increase and promotion...the knowledge that I gained in the class has...assisted our Department to adhere to industry standards...I found the CCBC Health IT Project Management class quite beneficial for my Department, my career growth and my personal growth.”

### **Healthcare Partnership of Prince George’s and Charles Counties**

**Region:** Prince George’s and Charles Counties

**Description:** With ten employer partners participating, this partnership is providing training for several high-demand occupations including Certified Nursing Assistants, Geriatric Nursing Assistants, Licensed Professional Nurses, and Patient Care Technicians. The holistic training includes technical skills, essential skills, on-the-job training, career coaching, and mentoring. With the recent addition of Righttime Medical Care and Greater Baden Medical Services, the partnership is expanding and leveraging additional funding to train a greater number of Prince George’s and Charles County residents.

**Participant Success Story:** Rosemary had always dreamed of being a CNA. During the class, her mother passed away. Because of the support and flexibility of the partnership, Rosemary was able to complete the course. She is now employed at Patuxent River.

### **Southern Maryland Healthcare Industry Alliance**

**Region:** Southern Maryland

**Description:** The Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland (TCCSM), who leads the Southern Maryland Healthcare Industry Alliance, has a great deal of experience with grant work. However, the group attributes their early successes with EARN Maryland to the planning grant phase of the program, a feature they had not utilized with other grants. The partners identified data-supported, high demand occupations that consistently remained unfilled, and the need to bolster soft-skills training. The College of Southern Maryland is an important partner in this effort, and has contributed additional leveraged funding totaling \$50,000. One of the greatest successes of this partnership has been the training of incumbent workers in essential skills, which is a component of the Affordable Care Act. Over 100 incumbent workers have been trained in interpersonal communications, customer service and conflict management, which employers agree led to retained employment.

## **Healthcare Workers: Rx for Employability**

**Region:** Montgomery County

**Description:** This partnership, led by the Montgomery Business Development Corporation, is reaching entry level and incumbent workers in the healthcare industry. Due to a new federal law, medical coders were required to complete retraining by October 1, 2015 in order to comply with the Affordable Care Act. Through this training, Rx for Employability has implemented the required training bridge from Medical Coder 9 to Medical Coder 10 for 476 incumbent medical coders, allowing them to retain employment. This partnership is also reaching underemployed Marylanders. Partnering with Adventist Hospital, 20 underemployed incumbents have participated in Sterile Tech Processor Training. This training is comprised of 8 weeks of classroom time and 500 clinical hours. All 20 participants have received job offers and are at different points of completing clinical hours. Due to the flexibility of EARN funding, this partnership has added an IT component. Twenty unemployed candidates will be trained for COMP TIA A+ with employers ready to interview candidates upon completion.

**Participant Success Story:** Six months prior to enrolling in the program, Harold was homeless and struggling to provide for his family. His supervisor at Adventist recommended that he enroll in the program, where he excelled from the beginning. Harold was diligent, studying during his two hour commute. He is now certified and working as a Sterile Tech Processor at Adventist Hospital. As a result of the training, Harold received a \$7.00 an hour wage increase, and is now earning \$17.50 an hour, which represents a 60% wage increase overall.

## **Ready to Care: An Eastern Shore Partnership to Train Healthcare Workers**

**Region:** Eastern Shore

**Description:** In conjunction with over twenty employer partners and three community colleges, the Eastern Shore Area Health Education Center is leading the charge to train healthcare workers on the Upper and Lower Shore. This partnership will train 30 Certified Nursing Assistants or Geriatric Nursing Assistants by March of 2016. Employer partners have agreed to interview successful candidates upon completion of training. Sixty incumbent workers will complete an eleven-hour course in Behavioral Health, which includes fundamentals of behavioral health, Introduction to Recovery, Resilience, Wellness and Recovery Action Planning, Motivational Interviewing and Illness Management Recovery. Successful completers receive a Mental Health First Aid Certification.

## **Healthcare Mentorship Baltimore**

**Region:** Baltimore

**Description:** New Pathways, in partnership with the Maryland Center for Adult Training, is providing Certified Nursing Assistant and Geriatric Nursing Assistant training. Providing a mix of technical and soft skills, this partnership has placed 100% of graduates, earning an average wage of \$11 an hour. This partnership is focused on career pathways, and will invite graduates back after 6 months of experience as a CNA or GNA to complete Patient Care Technician training. New Pathways will receive funding from Baltimore City's Mayor's Office of Employment Development to serve residents of distressed communities.

**Participant Success Story:** Ashley, a 21 year old single mother, was raised in foster care. Struggling to find full-time employment, Ashley had a part time job making minimum wage. She enrolled in the program and learned important interviewing skills and workplace etiquette. Due to the skills she learned in the program, Ashley was offered two employment opportunities. She is currently working full-time earning \$11.25 an hour.

### **Specialized Nursing Bridge Program**

**Region:** Montgomery County

**Description:** This partnership is implementing an innovative and comprehensive solution to a significant nursing workforce gap through the creation of an extensive nursing residency program. This is a twelve month program for newly hired Registered Nurses. The intent of this program is to reduce the turnover rate in this profession. Participants are part of a cohort that includes other new nurses. Training includes structured learning and individualized precept time, with a focus on quality outcomes. Before the participant begins on their specialty unit, they spend up to 3 months in a “med/surg unit” where they practice time management skills, learn how to use the Electronic Medical Record (EMR), administer medications and treatments, etc. Feedback from the Preceptors, Nurse Residents, and Clinical Leaders is provided during monthly cohort meetings.

### **Welcome Back Behavioral Partnership**

**Region:** Montgomery County

**Description:** The Welcome Back Center Pilot Program for Behavioral Health is creating a pipeline of experienced, bilingual behavioral health workers to meet Maryland’s need for a diverse health workforce. In the first six months, the pilot enrolled 27 internationally trained psychologists and other behavioral health professionals. These participants are receiving individual coaching and guidance to assist them with the United States licensure and certification process and to help them access the training they need to obtain necessary credentials and find employment in their field. The program was highlighted in Montgomery County Media’s Non-Profit of the Week feature for their efforts to address a shortage of behavioral health professionals able to provide behavioral health services to Montgomery County’s diverse population.

**Participant Success Story:** “I arrived to Maryland in 2013 with the hope of continuing my professional career as a psychologist. Shortly after my arrival to the United States, I noticed the healthcare system was very different from the healthcare system in Bolivia. I realized that it would be difficult to return to work in my profession. I did not have good English skills, nor did I know how to validate my educational credentials. On top of this, I had little free time as I was working full-time to support my family. I was accepted into the Welcome Back Center Pilot Program for Behavioral Health. I am very grateful for this opportunity because it gives me the chance to continue doing what I love. This program is giving me the opportunity to enhance my English skills and providing me with helpful information and a means to validate my credentials. I now have a report demonstrating my United States equivalency of a Bachelor’s degree in Psychology and I am in the process of validating my Master’s degree. These are important preliminary steps towards my goal of entering the Behavioral Health field in Maryland. Today, I feel more confident that I will be able to use my knowledge and expertise to contribute to the community where I live.”

## **Construction**

### **Project JumpStart**

**Region:** Baltimore City

**Description:** The Job Opportunities Task Force (JOTF) is using EARN Maryland funding to maximize program capacity in Baltimore and leverage additional funding to nearly double the amount of residents served. Project JumpStart served 26 Baltimore City residents through June 2015. Of the 26, 21 or 80% have been placed into employment with an average wage of \$11.50 an hour. Seven of the graduates have begun a formal apprenticeship and four received car awards from Vehicles for Change. In 2016, JOTF will receive funding from the One Baltimore For Jobs Initiative to serve residents of Baltimore City's distressed communities.

**Participant Success Story:** At twenty-years-old, Devin had a High School Diploma, but no direction. With a strong interest in construction he wanted to find a way to make it into the industry. During the day he worked at a fast food restaurant earning \$8.00 an hour. Devin was accepted into JumpStart where he never missed a class, despite having to be at work at 6:00 a.m. every day. His math skills were low so he was enrolled in the bridge math class. Devin received basic construction skills and certifications (OSHA 10, CPR, First Aid, Flagger), as well as Driver's Education. He was hired at Commercial Construction, where he began their management training program and is currently an assistant superintendent. He started at \$13.00 an hour and after only a few months, he is earning \$17.00 an hour, a 100% increase from his previous employment.

### **Suburban Maryland Construction Initiative**

**Region:** Southern Maryland

**Description:** Led by the Finishing Trade's Institute, this partnership is providing training to entry level and incumbent workers in an effort to boost competitiveness of contractors doing work in glazing, painting and finishing crafts. SMCI is providing job-readiness training in an effort to create a pipeline of workers to meet the demand created by the numerous infrastructure and construction projects expected to occur in this region over the next few years. By providing pre-apprenticeship training, SMCI is increasing the awareness and completion of apprenticeship programs. Due in part to EARN funding, FTI reports the number of apprentices that have entered into apprenticeships has tripled over the past year.

### **Project JumpStart**

**Region:** Prince George's County

**Description:** EARN funding has allowed this successful Baltimore City program to be replicated in Prince George's County. In April 2015, 18 participants graduated from the pilot program. To date, 13 of those graduates have been placed, and JOTF continues to work with the remaining 5. Four of the graduates have begun a formal apprenticeship and two received car awards from Vehicles for Change.

**Participant Success Story:** Before coming to JumpStart, Aaron had been out of work since November 2014. Having a felony on his record precluded him from many job opportunities. With a desire to work in construction but the inability to find steady employment, Aaron needed help

overcoming his employment barriers. Throughout the program, Aaron worked hard and helped others who were new to construction with their hands-on projects. He was a clear standout and interviewed with Kogok, who was looking to hire a sheet metal helper. He's been employed at Kogok since July 2015 and started the sheet metal apprenticeship in October. He submitted an application to Vehicles for Change, and hopes to secure reliable transportation in the near future."

### **BIM Technology for Incumbent Workers in the Construction Industry**

**Region:** Baltimore Region

**Description:** This training is being offered to incumbent workers in the construction industry. Building Information Modeling, which is an intelligent model-based process that provides insight to help plan, design, construct, and manage buildings and infrastructure, has been described by employers as "the way of the future in construction." Thus, this partnership is offering a 5 week, 30 hour class to provide project managers and engineers with a better understanding of the technology. Additionally, this partnership hosted a BIM forum, in which 72 incumbent workers earned the American Institute of Architects' continuing education units.

### **Architectural Metal and Glass Initiative**

**Region:** Southern Maryland

**Description:** This partnership is providing training to incumbent workers. Modules include Curtain Wall Installer (20 hours), Supervisor Training Program (20 hours), Total Stations (40 hours), and Building Green Awareness (4 hours). Employers have identified the upskilling of incumbent workers as cost-prohibitive, but identified the above described modules as important to increasing competitiveness.

### ***BioTechnology***

### **Baltimore BioTechnology Strategic Industry Partnership**

**Region:** Baltimore

**Description:** Bioscience in greater Baltimore is expected to add 6,000 new jobs to the region by 2020, many of which do not require a college degree. This partnership's model is the first of its kind and expands industry-designed vocational training for bio-technicians through a combination of classroom and hands-on instruction, and on-the-job work experience. Collaboration is key, as Baltimore BioWorks, Baltimore City Community College, and the BioTechnical Institute of Maryland are partnering to implement this training. The BioTechnical Institute of Maryland will leverage EARN funding with a grant awarded from the One Baltimore For Jobs Initiative to serve distressed communities.

**Participant Success Story:** Candice came to the BioTechnical Institute in a state of desperation. A single mother to a five-year-old boy, she found herself homeless. While at BTI she was able to find shelter with a relative. Despite the physical and emotional demands, Candice had perfect attendance through the 6-month training program and internship. She completed her hands-on training at BTI in the top 10% of her class. After completing her internship in histology at Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, she was hired as an animal care lab technician. Candice has also obtained her ALAT certification (Assistant Laboratory Animal Technician) since completing training, giving her additional

professional credentialing. BTI connected Candice to Vehicles for Change, who awarded her a low-cost car. Her path from homelessness to hope is a tribute to her hard work, her optimism and to programs like BTI.

## **BioTrain**

**Region:** Montgomery County

**Description:** BIOTrain's most significant accomplishments to date are couched in substantive industry relationships that engage industry partners on their terms. Montgomery College's training includes initiatives requested by and formulated in cooperation with industry partners. Subject matter experts from industry are included in the delivery of worksite training. BIOTrain workshops are attractive to jobseekers from a wide array of backgrounds in part because many of the skills gained in the workshops are not technical in nature. In addition to skill acquisition, program participants benefit from networking interactions with industry professionals. Unemployed and underemployed students are referred to Montgomery Works to access services that are critical for successful job searches. BIOTrain has also forged partnerships with Biobuzz, MdBio, and BioMaryland to consolidate information and resources to better serve the community.

**Participant Success Story:** Dwayne entered the program on his journey to return to full-time work. He is now employed with Intralytix, Inc. He attributes his success to the intensive classroom and hands-on training, as well as the job preparation counseling and dedication of the staff. He has expressed an interest in coming back to tell his story and help support the mission.

## ***Cybersecurity/Information Technology***

### **IT Center for Excellence: Preparing Rural Western Maryland for the Future**

**Region:** Western Maryland

**Description:** Responding to the needs of its twelve employer partners, this partnership is training preparatory, entry level and incumbent workers. Employers in the IT industry state that one of the largest hiring challenges is that many candidates have no experience. To address this concern, this partnership is providing paid internship opportunities to students at Allegany College and Frostburg State University. Employers also identify essential soft skills as an area where candidates are lacking. Thus, the partnership developed an industry-specific essential skills training module. The partnership is also offering ITIL Foundations Training, Project Management Fundamentals, CISSP Training, and CompTIA+ Network Training. 100% of students who took the ITIL Foundations Training Course earned their credential. In an effort to continue to meet employer needs, the partnership is developing a Certified Ethical Hacker Training, to be delivered in 2016.

**Participant Success Story:** Alex is a student at Allegany College of Maryland. He landed 3 internships in all- Willetts Systems, IBM, and the Western Maryland Health System. Following completion of his internship with WMHS, he was offered him a part-time position. He took advantage of the articulation agreement with Frostburg State University and is currently a Junior majoring in Computer Science. He is making \$12.10/hour at WMHS, which plans to offer him a full-time, permanent position in the next few weeks.

## **Cyberworks**

**Region:** Central Maryland

**Description:** Led by the Anne Arundel Workforce Development Corporation, this partnership includes twelve employer partners from across the cyber and information technology industries. Blending defense and commercial interests to form the training plan, the regional consortium offers both technical and practical skills-training tailored to industry needs. Job readiness and career support are offered and on-the-job training unique to each industry partner provides valuable hands-on experience.

### **mHealth Focused Health IT SIP**

**Region:** Baltimore/Washington DC Region

**Description:** The Mobile Health industry has shown rapid growth over the past few years. A survey of the Maryland mHealth community revealed the strong belief that Maryland could be an attractive destination for mHealth related businesses; however a shortage of workers in this industry exists. Led by Howard Community College and the Maryland Health Technology Coalition, this partnership strives to provide training on Mobile Design, Healthcare Information Systems, Engineering Mobile Apps and Telehealth Strategies. This partnership is also seeking to reach the next generation of health IT workers by targeting high school students. Aboard MdBioLab, a custom-build mobile laboratory, instructors distributed information to over 4,500 students who visited the lab during the spring of 2015.

**Participant Success Story:** “Due to attending this class, I have received a salary increase and promotion. My new position is Program Manager for our Technical Project Managers. The knowledge that I gained in the class has greatly increased my understanding of Project Management styles and processes. This has assisted our Department in adhering to industry standards. This is very helpful since we contract Project Managers from abroad. By understanding and adhering to Project Management Professional standards, all incoming project managers understand our structure and processes. I found the partnership class quite beneficial for my Department, my career growth and my personal growth.”

### **Tech Frederick**

**Region:** Frederick County

**Description:** This partnership is offering a variety of training in IT. The Cross-Functional training is a 35 hour course that includes modules on customer service, leadership and communications, integrative negotiations, project management, creative problem solving, and performance management and accountability. The partnership is developing curriculum for tracks that include Modern Web Application Development, Front-end/Back-end Website Development, Systems Administration, Marketing Automation, and Sales Training.

### **Committee to Expand UAS Employment**

**Region:** Eastern Shore

**Description:** This partnership is training entry-level technicians in the Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) industry. The training, which lasts five weeks, consists of classroom and field training. Three weeks of classroom training includes pre-flight, post-flight, checklists, basic inspections, line

replacement, ground control and basic flight operations. Following completion of classroom training, participants spend two weeks in field training to apply what they have learned in the classroom. They will also receive additional training in preparation, preflight operations and tear down operations. At the end of field training, participants are given their competency log, which outlines their training, so that they are able to present this to a prospective employer. Wor-Wic Community College, who is teaching the class, will provide graduates with a certificate for completion.

### *Transportation/Logistics*

#### **Mid Maryland (MOVE) Transportation and Logistics**

**Region:** Mid Maryland

**Description:** Montgomery College and Hagerstown Community College are partnering to address employer needs in response to the rapid growth in the transit and transportation trucking industry. With fourteen employer partners participating, the partnership is providing training in Commercial Truck Driver Licensing (CDL-A and CDL-B), along with critical soft skills training. Through this partnership, Montgomery College and Hagerstown Community College are now systematically connected with industry, and have aligned curricula, classroom teaching, and on-the-range instruction to meet employer needs.

**Participant Success Story:** Sandra came to the United States from Chile, seeking better opportunities and has resided here for more than 20 years. In those years she worked as a child care provider and janitor. After a divorce and becoming a single mother, she realized she wanted more – she wanted to build a career. After seeing Metro promoting the need for bus operators and hearing about the EARN training, she sought to find out more. She quickly rose to the challenge of the requirements she needed to complete to become a bus operator, including successfully completing a CDL course at Montgomery College. She passed her WMATA Bus Operator Training with flying colors and is now employed with Metro. Sandra is excited to be on the path to a lifelong career.

#### **Maritime Transportation and Logistics Partnership**

**Region:** Baltimore

**Description:** Led by Maryland New Directions (MND), this partnership is providing training to long-term unemployed residents of Baltimore City. Of the 114 individuals who completed training, 87 received their TWIC cards, 69 received forklift/OSHA-10 certifications, and 82 (72%) secured employment with an average wage of \$13.54 an hour. Due to the initial success of this program, MND has leveraged EARN funding to receive funding from the Walmart Foundation, PNC Bank, the Krieger Fund, the Blaustein Rosenberg Foundation, Wells Fargo, and CSX Transportation, Inc. With twelve employer partners, MND plans to launch an Industry Advisory Council in January of 2016, which will be comprised of industry professionals and employers who will continue to assist with the strategic growth of the program as well as connect MTL with new employer partners.

**Participant Success Story:** Mark completed training in March 2015. He had always wanted to work at the Port of Baltimore, but was unable to afford the Transportation Worker Identification Card (TWIC) and lacked the technical skills training that he needed to be successful. He completed the Maritime Transportation and Logistics program funded by EARN, and received his TWIC card. Mark also received fork-lift training. He started work with a temporary agency that has contracts with employers on the Port. He used the soft-skills he learned at MND to market himself, and after working

less than a month he was hired by the contract employer. He is now working full-time making \$16.00 an hour.

Before coming to Maryland New Directions, Tyrone had been unemployed since 2010. His criminal background made it difficult to find employment. Tyrone enrolled in MND's Maritime Training Program. He was surrounded by peers and mentors who encouraged him, and he was able to earn his Forklift Certification. Since completing the program, Tyrone has earned additional port credentials and his Port Identification Card. He is employed as a CDL Tractor Trailer driver, a job he obtained on the spot after a job lead from his coach at MND. Tyrone stated, "it has been a long road. After becoming employed, it felt great. I went through a lot. Guys went from not great situations, to better ones through this program, and the experience I had at MND was wonderful."

Sean was employed part-time at a vehicle processing center, and was having trouble finding a full-time job to support himself. At Maryland New Directions, Sean improved his job search and interviewing skills. MND helped Sean gain his Transportation Worker Identification Card. Sean worked two temporary jobs at the Port of Baltimore, but this allowed him access to other employers. Using his interviewing skills, Sean continued to follow up with a desired employer. He is currently working full-time with that employer, earning \$18 an hour, with the potential for overtime pay of up to \$23 an hour.

### **Susquehanna Transportation and Logistics**

**Region:** Susquehanna

**Description:** The Sage Group's "2012 Labor Market Analysis of the Susquehanna Workforce Investment Area" highlighted logistics as a top growth area in the region. The population densities of Western Maryland and the Upper and Lower shores are expected to grow through 2030, creating new patterns of demand in the industry. This partnership's sequential entry-level training modules on advanced techniques and procedures use technology and behind-the-wheel training to ready participants for CDL testing. Employer partners are impressed with the caliber of candidates who come from the program and state that the training is helping to alleviate the shortage of drivers.

**Participant Success Story:** Mustapha was working at Burriss Logistics as a warehouse worker. He had always dreamed of becoming a truck driver, so when he heard about Cecil's program, he applied. He excelled through the program and passed his certification exam with flying colors. He applied for and received a promotion from warehouse worker to truck driver. He posted this to Cecil's Facebook page shortly after graduating from the program. "My experience with Cecil College was excellent. I got my CDL Class A License, certificate and small system certification. The instructors were informative. This made my experience 100% safe, calm and relaxing. I passed on my first try. I would recommend this school to anyone."

Tim is a recent graduate of the program. Prior to enrolling, he had been unemployed since 2013. He worked hard throughout the program and is currently employed with A&S Kinard. He reached out to us to thank us for the training and all of the help to get him through the program. The change in his demeanor over the phone was evident. He was almost bubbly when talking about how much his life has changed for the better since he graduated.

### **Marine Trades Industry Partnership**

**Region:** Anne Arundel Region

**Description:** With an aging workforce, the marine trades industry faces an impending shortage of workers. This unique partnership awards successful completion of job readiness for entry-level workers with paid internships, providing vital on-the-job experience. The first cohort went through the program in the summer of 2015, and 83% received further employment. Employer partners stated the need to upskill the current workforce, which is often cost-prohibitive. In response, MTIP is providing incumbent training in the form of matching funds. The outlay of \$4,550 matching funds from EARN to date, has yielded an overall increase in wages of \$20,820, an average of just over \$2,000 per worker. The partnership has more than doubled in size, growing from 18 to 40 employer partners.

**Participant Success Story:** Zach was sure that he wanted to go in to the automotive industry when he came to the Annapolis Boat Show. The Marine Trades Association of Maryland introduced him to the Marine Trades and he enrolled in the internship program. He spent the summer at Bay Shore Marine in Annapolis. Upon completion of the program, Zach was offered full-time employment. Zach reports that he loves the challenge of the marine industry and loves working around the water.

David had been doing odd jobs since high school. He wanted a career, but needed help finding his passion. He enrolled in the Marine Trades Intern Program. He worked at Tidewater Yacht Service Center in Baltimore. Following his six-week internship, he was offered full-time employment and is now earning \$15 an hour. David has now found his passion, stating, "What is so great about the marine industry is that every day is different. The boat system is different every time, so you get to solve new problems every day."

### *Green Jobs*

#### **Baltimore Green Strategic Industry Partnership**

**Region:** Baltimore

**Description:** The Baltimore Green Strategic Industry Partnership (BGSIP) has provided entry-level occupational skills training to 37 unemployed workers with barriers to employment, placing 85% into full-time employment at average wages of \$14.50 per hour. BGSIP has also provided training to 17 incumbent workers, which qualifies them for advancement opportunities. The EARN-funded efforts of BGSIP partners and the BGSIP model have received recognition from local news sources, workforce leaders, stakeholders, and the White House.

**Participant Success Story:** Gus graduated from BGSIP's inaugural entry-level Module 1 Installer Occupational Skills training in September 2014. He began working as an Energy Retrofit Installer for Home Energy Loss Professionals (HELP), earning a starting wage of \$13.00 an hour. In August 2015, at the recommendation of his employer, Gus enrolled in the EARN-funded BPI Analyst and Envelope Certification course and passed the certification test. As a reflection of his growing level of responsibility at HELP over the past year, his wage has increased to \$17.50 per hour. Gus is currently applying his building science knowledge in the field, in preparation for another promotion.

Jerrell graduated from the program during the summer of 2012 and began working for Hawkeye Construction, a Baltimore weatherization company. In late 2014, at the recommendation of his employer, he enrolled in the BGSIP incumbent worker BPI Analyst and Envelope Certification course and passed the certification test. As a result of the training, he was promoted to Crew Leader at Hawkeye, and six months later, he was further promoted to Energy Auditor. During this time, he received three wage increases, a reflection of his growing responsibility at the company, as well as health insurance benefits and a 401k plan. He currently completes energy audits, diagnosing the root

causes of a home's energy loss. He then models the house's energy usage and develops work scopes that prioritize the most cost effective energy efficiency measures.

Chaz was employed with one of BGSIP's employer partners. He completed the Energy Analyst Training, earning Building Analyst and Envelope Professional certifications. These certifications made him eligible for a wage increase. Since completing training, he has been serving as an assistant to their experienced Quick Home Energy Check-up auditors in order to further develop his skills and apply what he learned in the classroom to different building types. He recently began independently completing Quick Home Energy Check-ups, and EcoMize is in the process of completing a performance evaluation to determine his raise from his current wage of \$15 an hour.

### **Water and Wastewater Career Development Partnership of Central Maryland**

**Region:** Central Maryland

**Description:** In order to retain employment, all Water and Wastewater Operators must be fully certified by the State by 2017. The success rate for the certification exam is 37%. In order to help incumbents retain employment, this partnership designed a curriculum to help improve the passing rate. The three modules are Work Keys (focused on math, reading and location information), a math review, and Exam Preparation, which provides helpful hints on taking the exam. The preparation time once completing the modules varies by individual, and each cohort is at a different step in the process.

**Participant Success Story:** Maurice accepted an opportunity as a Water Technician in Anne Arundel County with little experience in Water Treatment. He entered the EARN program in December of 2014 and received classes in treatment processes, basic math and exam preparation. In October 2015, he successfully passed his MD State Certification exam in Water Treatment. "I knew I could do it. I just needed a little help with the math."

### ***Hospitality***

### **Baltimore Regional Culinary/Hospitality Partnership**

**Region:** Baltimore

**Description:** Humanim and Moveable Feast partner to deliver Culinary Arts Training, which includes the kitchen and sanitation skills necessary to prepare participants for a career in the Culinary industry. Graduates also earn a National Professional Certification in Customer Service and a ServSafe Certification, which are highly valued by employers. Since inception, this partnership has almost doubled the number of employer partners, which can be attributed to the strong curriculum and the caliber of graduates. Through the first year, Humanim has placed 89% of graduates at an average wage of \$13.10 an hour.

**Participant Success Story:** Charles was born and raised in southeast Baltimore. He often helped cook meals for his family and learned to enjoy the chore. After high school, Charles worked numerous low-skill, low-wage jobs. He heard about the EARN Culinary Training through his aunt. Charles was accepted into the program and had stellar performance throughout. His knife skills were exceptional and he displayed strong leadership qualities in the BEST Customer Service Training – providing support and encouragement to his fellow trainees. Charles interviewed for a chef apprentice position at Chartwell Country Club. He has been on the job for six months and is still excelling – having been

named Employee of the Month. Charles said, "I am working long, hard hours but learning so much, so fast. This is my dream."

Brittany moved to Baltimore a little over a year ago looking for a change. She previously worked as a grocery store cashier making minimum wage, but she wanted a more sustainable career. Through the Humanim BEST customer service training, she heard about the EARN-funded culinary training at Moveable Feast. Brittany had always had a passion to provide food to others and saw this as an opportunity to realize her dream. Upon completion of the two-week internship at Atwater's, she was offered a position as a cook. Four months later, she is still employed and loves her job.

### **Building Employer-led Alliances for Careers in Hospitality (BEACHES)**

**Region:** Eastern Shore

**Description:** This partnership is comprised of employers, associations and economic development entities in the Eastern Shore hospitality and tourism industry, with a focus on Worcester County and Ocean City. Employer partners identified a need to train entry level and incumbent frontline workers for supervisory training, putting these workers on a career path towards full-time hospitality management. The partnership plans to implement a boot camp for prospective employees, meant to introduce the hospitality industry and instill a basic understanding of industry demands and skills needed to succeed. This is scheduled for early 2016 and will be followed by the Ocean City Job Fair in March 2016.

**Participant Success Story:** "This was a great course. It has made me want to continue my education and take advantage of other development opportunities. I have applied what I've learned in the class and my trip advisor rating has greatly improved."

### **Purple Line Skills Partnership**

**Region:** Prince George's County

**Description:** The intent of this partnership is to provide training to small business owners who are to be directly impacted by the development of the Purple Line. The project includes training and one-on-one counseling customized to meet the individual proprietor's needs. This combined approach is meant to ensure that business owners understand the benefits and challenges brought by the new light rail system, are well prepared for the construction period, and can thrive amidst new opportunities for client-based and market expansion. Seven businesses completed training, and four continue to work one-on-one with advisors following the EARN training.

### ***Automotive Repair***

### **Automotive Technicians for Change**

**Region:** Baltimore

**Description:** Led by Vehicles for Change, this program is training returning citizens to be automotive technicians. Due in part to EARN funding, Vehicles for Change was able to open the Full Circle Service Center, where trainees receive hands-on experience and training. The program employs an open-entry, open-exit model, so that trainees are able to be placed as soon as they are ready for employment. With over ten employer partners, this program has received funding from the Walmart

Foundation and will receive a grant from the One Baltimore For Jobs Initiative to serve residents of Baltimore City's distressed communities. Vehicles for Change is exploring the possibility of expanding the program to Prince George's County, Western Maryland, and the Eastern Shore.

**Participant Success Story:** As a returning citizen, Christopher had one career goal—in his own words — “a stable job and a stable living.” Unfortunately, that stable job had roadblocks along the way, but not enough to deter Christopher. From the beginning of his time with Full Circle Service Center, he was dedicated and committed to his second chance. He began volunteering before the program started. Once a mechanic who worked on heavy trucks, Christopher developed another skill through Full Circle's program — service writing. Once the doors of the garage opened, he trained with Full Circle's Service Manager. Before long, the need for a service writer became available at Vehicles for Change and now he is a currently a full-time employee with benefits.

Valerie graduated from a diesel mechanics program in 2010, but had a great deal of trouble getting her foot in the door in the automotive field. As a female with a criminal record, many employers were reluctant to give her a chance. At Full Circle, Valerie had a rare opportunity to get hands-on experience and thrive. Shortly before reaching the six-month mark for her internship, she interviewed with an Antwerpen dealership and received an offer of employment. This would be a long commute for Valerie, especially without a car. Vehicles for Change awarded Valerie a car just before starting her new job. Valerie is now on the road to success as a mechanic and one day hopes to teach others about cars as well.

## Utilizing Data

EARN Maryland's workforce training plans are intended to be data-driven to ensure that industry's most immediate workforce needs are met and that its trainees are well-positioned for meaningful employment.

The requirements contained within the Solicitation for Implementation Grant Proposals mirror the enabling statute's contingent funding requirements of evidence of workforce shortages and a demonstrated need for worker training. The Solicitation requires that the Workforce Training Plan developed with Implementation Grant funds be both data-driven and experience-driven. This means that the Plan prepared by the Strategic Industry must assess and address:

- Data-based evidence of shortages in skilled employment within the target industry over a sustained period of time or as projected, based upon planned large-scale Programs underway (e.g. large construction or transit projects) or large-scale industry changes (e.g. health care) and description of specific high-demand occupations or sets of occupations at different skill and salary levels within the identified target industry; and
- Real experiences from target industry employers regarding actual and projected gaps in skills training and job readiness. In their upfront planning process, grantees should focus on ways to obtain input from a broad base of employers in their target industry and region in order to define common workforce needs. They should consider using focus groups, surveys, and other outreach tools.

The 28 initially awarded partnerships identified the training and skills needs in their Implementation Grant Proposals, based upon a variety of previous or existing workforce studies, plans, or research. A listing of the data sources utilized is provided in **Appendix B** of this report.

## **Conclusion**

As is evident throughout the pages of this report, EARN Maryland has not only received national recognition for innovative delivery of workforce training, but is also changing the lives of Marylanders on a daily basis. The Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation is proud to support the program and looks forward to sharing more success stories with the General Assembly for years to come.

## Appendix A

The following is an excerpt from the National Skills Coalition's *Skills in the States: Sector Partnership Policy Toolkit*. It is being reproduced with permission by the author and the National Skills Coalition.



Brooke DeRenzi and Bryan Wilson  
October 2015

  
**NATIONAL SKILLS COALITION**  
Every worker. Every industry. A strong economy.

## MARYLAND

In 2013, the Maryland State Legislature passed Senate Bill (SB) 278 establishing Employment Advancement Right Now (EARN) Maryland, a state-funded, competitive workforce and economic development grant program. The EARN Maryland program uses program initiatives, funding, and technical assistance to provide support to regional sector partnerships.

Maryland SB 278 identifies sector partnerships as a key element of the state's workforce development strategy, stating that industry-led partnerships created through EARN are to "advance the skills of the state's workforce, grow the state's economy, and increase sustainable employment for working families." The law creates a framework for providing grants to regional sector partnerships. It charges the Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation (DLLR) with administering EARN, in consultation with the Department of Business and Economic Development and the Governor's Workforce Investment Board.

As specified by DLLR's request for proposals (RFP) for EARN implementation grants, local partnerships must include at least five employers from the target industry and at least two other entities, which may include nonprofits, community-based organizations, postsecondary institutions, local workforce boards, local governments and human service agencies, regional or local economic development entities, labor unions, K-12 programs, industry associations, philanthropic organizations, or other training providers. DLLR does not prescribe a particular type of organization to act as the convener, but rather allows partnerships to make this determination based on the capabilities and capacities of partnering organizations. DLLR's RFP, however, does underscore the need for the convening organization to be a credible broker among partners and act as the fiscal agent for the partnership. Partnerships are also able to propose target industries and geographic areas served, but must provide data substantiating such choices in proposals. By allowing

### SECTOR PARTNERSHIP SUPPORTED BY STATE POLICY

#### Project JumpStart

Project JumpStart leads two regional construction sector partnerships in Maryland that use pre-apprenticeship training to prepare participants for entry-level construction work. The program offers hard skills training in basic construction, electrical, carpentry and plumbing, certifications in OSHA 10, First Aid and CPR, and support services, such as case management and driver's education, if applicable. JumpStart received an EARN planning grant to identify plans for assessing and expanding its existing Baltimore partnership and establishing a new partnership in Prince George's County, MD. JumpStart also received implementation grants to support its pre-apprenticeship training in both local areas.

The nonprofit Job Opportunities Task Force (JOTF) serves as the convener for JumpStart's two sector partnerships, managing grants and relationships between partners to implement the pre-apprenticeship program. JumpStart uses two employer advisory committees to identify hiring and skill needs in the construction industry in two counties — Baltimore and Prince George's. In addition to regularly engaging these employer advisors, JumpStart works with a broader network of employers to place program graduates in jobs. As partnership convener, JOTF also brokers training and support services among multiple provider partners. Regional chapters of the Associated Builders and Contractors provide skills training in both partnerships while multiple community-based organizations conduct recruitment, assessment, and case management.

The EARN planning grant helped JOTF analyze hiring and skill needs in the construction industry, identify industry-recognized certifications, and review the pre-apprenticeship program's curriculum relative to employer's needs. With support from an EARN implementation grant, the Baltimore JumpStart partnership grew its program, enrolling 26 new participants in training from July 2014 through June 2015. All 26 participants completed the program, and 21 graduates found jobs earning an average wage of \$11.50/hour. In Prince George's County, 18 students graduated from the program, and Project JumpStart expects to place at least 75 percent of the cohort.

partnerships to define target industries and geographic areas, DLLR provides them with the flexibility they need to be responsive to the particular needs of a regional labor market that may span local political or geographic boundaries.

Starting in 2013, the state of Maryland has appropriated \$4.5 million annually to the EARN program. This funding level has been sustained across two gubernatorial administrations. DLLR implemented EARN through competitively-awarded planning and implementation grants. First, DLLR issued planning grants (at an average of \$22,000) to 29 emerging partnerships to support planning activities, such as a detailed analysis of workforce needs, identification of additional partners, and development of workforce training plans to close skill gaps. Next, DLLR issued implementation grants (at an average of \$180,000) to fund planned training activities, including job readiness and skills training for unemployed, underemployed, and incumbent workers. Since the program's start, DLLR has issued a total of 40 implementation grants to partnerships that target ten industries.

By beginning with planning grants, partner organizations were given an opportunity to convene regularly around a set of common workforce needs in a particular industry. In doing so, partnerships were able to identify other organizations that should be at the table and develop a workforce training plan.

Twenty-five of the 29 partnerships that received planning grants also received implementation grants. As the program gains momentum across the state, DLLR is encouraging organizations interested in EARN to connect with current partnerships to expand the partnerships' membership and efforts.

DLLR additionally provides technical assistance to partnerships. A grant advisor works with each partnership individually, providing technical assistance to ensure that all project deliverables are met. DLLR hosts an annual meeting to provide professional development and peer-to-peer learning opportunities for partnerships. DLLR also facilitates opportunities for partnerships to communicate with members of their industry cluster to share information and discuss common themes or challenges.

With implementation under way, the state is beginning to assess EARN partnerships. SB 278 sets requirements for the Department to report annually the number of individuals who are served by EARN partnerships, their demographic characteristics, and the number of participants who earned a credential or "identifiable skill," were placed into employment, or received a promotion. DLLR is in the process of creating a report on these outcomes for the first round of EARN implementation grants. DLLR also works with partnerships to set custom metrics on issues of specific interest to each partnership.

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The following is a listing of data sources used by EARN Maryland partnerships in the identification of training and skill needs:

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