



# EARN MARYLAND

Solicitation for Grant Proposals for  
Cybersecurity and Information  
Technology Industries





**DEPARTMENT OF LABOR, LICENSING & REGULATION**

**Solicitation for Grant Proposals**  
**for the Cybersecurity and Information Technology Industries**

*Issue Date: June 29, 2017*

**Employment Advancement Right Now**  
**EARN Maryland**

**NOTICE**

A Prospective Applicant that has received this document from the DLLR EARN Maryland Website or that has received this document from a source other than the DLLR EARN Maryland Website and that wishes to assure receipt of any changes or additional materials related to this Solicitation for Implementation Grant Proposals should go to [www.earn.maryland.gov](http://www.earn.maryland.gov) and subscribe to the EARN Maryland mailing list.

**Minority Business Enterprises Are Encouraged to Respond to this Solicitation.**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Governor Larry Hogan's FY 2018 budget included \$3 million in funding dedicated to the workforce needs of Maryland's cybersecurity and Information Technology industries. The purpose of these funds is to leverage the nationally-recognized EARN Maryland program to grow these critical industries. More than 1,700 unemployed or underemployed workers have received training through the EARN program, and this cyber-specific EARN grant will address skills gaps in growing industries like security engineering and software development to provide the qualified workforce needed to continue growing Maryland's vibrant cyber industry.

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 most hard-to-serve jobseekers 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.

In utilizing this proven workforce model, Maryland is attempting through this solicitation to foster the growth of Maryland's cybersecurity and Information Technology industries, while simultaneously bridging the skills gap between the skills Maryland's jobseekers have and the ones Maryland's employers need.

**STATE OF MARYLAND**

**Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation**

**KEY INFORMATION SUMMARY SHEET**

- Solicitation for Grant Proposals:** Employment Advancement Right Now  
EARN Maryland – Cyber and Information Technology
- Solicitation Issue Date:** Thursday, June 29 at 9 a.m.
- Solicitation Issuing Office:** Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation  
Office of the Secretary
- Grant Officer:** Mary Keller  
EARN Maryland Program Administrator  
1100 N. Eutaw Street, Room 108  
Baltimore, Maryland 21201  
**E-mail:** [mary.keller@maryland.gov](mailto:mary.keller@maryland.gov)
- Proposals are to be sent to:** Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation (DLLR)  
1100 North Eutaw Street, Room 108  
Baltimore, MD 21201  
Attention: Mary Keller
- Submission of Questions:** All questions pertaining to this Solicitation should be submitted via email to [mary.keller@maryland.gov](mailto:mary.keller@maryland.gov). All questions will be answered in a timely manner, and relevant questions will be posted to the EARN Maryland website at [www.earn.maryland.gov](http://www.earn.maryland.gov)
- Closing Date and Time:** **Tuesday, September 12, 2017 at 4:00 p.m.**
- Grant Duration:** November 1, 2017 – October 31, 2019

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**To view and download all required appendices, please visit [www.earn.maryland.gov](http://www.earn.maryland.gov).**

## SECTION 1 - GENERAL INFORMATION

### **1.1 Introduction**

- 1.1.1 The Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation (DLLR or the Department) is issuing this Solicitation for Grant Proposals from qualified organizations to implement Workforce Training Plans that meet employers' workforce needs, advance the skills of Maryland workers, grow the State's economy, and increase sustainable employment for working families.
- 1.1.2 This Solicitation for Implementation Grant Proposals specifically targets the Cybersecurity and Information Technology industries.

### **1.2 Abbreviations and Definitions**

For purposes of this Solicitation for Grant Proposals, the following abbreviations or terms have the meanings indicated below:

- a. **Certificate of Good Standing (also known as a "Certificate of Status" or "COGS")** – An official document from the State Department of Assessments and Taxation that indicates the status of the entity as of the date on the certificate. If an entity is in good standing, it means the entity is properly registered with the Department, all documents and fees required to be submitted to the Department have been received, and that no other State agency has notified the Department that the entity is delinquent in tax payments. Government entities and community colleges are not eligible to obtain a COGS.
- b. **Credential** – A recognized educational diploma, certificate or degree, occupational license, apprenticeship certificate, industry-recognized certification, or award for skills attainment and completion, issued by an approved training provider in the State or third-party credential provider.
- c. **Cybersecurity job** – any job related to the body of technologies, processes and practices designed to protect networks, computers, programs and data from attack, damage or unauthorized access.
- d. **DLLR or the "Department"** – Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation.
- e. **Employment Advancement Right Now (EARN) Maryland** – A nationally-recognized, state-funded, competitive workforce and economic development grant program and the funding source for this Solicitation.
- f. **Essential Skills** – Also known as soft skills, these are the skills one needs for learning, work and life. Examples of essential skills include, but are not limited to, skills related to professionalism, problem-solving, timeliness, interpersonal communication, and customer service.
- g. **Family Sustaining Wage** – Income that reflects Maryland Living Wage standards, but also takes into consideration household factors such as number of people in the home, number of wage earners, number and ages of children, and domicile location within the State, and involves employment that will be ongoing, not short term.
- h. **Fiscal Agent** – Individual within the Lead Applicant organization who is responsible for performing all financial management duties of the grant and accepts responsibility for the proper use of grant funds, managing and documenting grant expenditures (including disbursement to Subgrantees), and submitting financial reports for the grant.

- i. **Grant Officer** – The State representative who will manage the resulting grant awards. The Department may change the Grant Officer at any time by written notice to the Lead Applicant.
- j. **High-Demand Occupation** – An occupation that has a significant presence within the cybersecurity or information technology industry, is in demand by employers, and *pays or leads to* payment of a family-sustaining wage.
- k. **Identifiable Skill** – The attainment of proficiency in a specific work-related skill that is likely to lead to future job advancement and improvement in an individual’s earning potential.
- l. **Implementation Grant (IG)** – Funding to implement a Strategic Industry Partnership Workforce Training Plan.
- m. **Incumbent Worker** – For the purposes of the EARN Maryland Program, this is an individual already employed in the Target Industry.
- n. **Information Technology job** – any job related to the use of any computers, storage, networking and other physical devices, infrastructure and processes to create, process, store, secure and exchange all forms of electronic data.
- o. **Job Readiness Training** – Training for the purpose of assisting and supporting low- and no-skilled workers in overcoming individual barriers to employment and developing the skills required by industry necessary to maintain employment and to qualify for skills training opportunities. Job readiness training may include development of professional skills, such as communication and problem-solving, time management, occupational skills development, GED preparation, literacy advancement, financial stability services, including financial coaching, credit counseling, transportation and child care.
- p. **Job Skills Training** – Job skills training is defined as vocational training that results in an identifiable job skill or credential. An identifiable skill is the obtainment of proficiency in/of a specific work related skill that is likely to lead to future job advancement and improvement in an individual’s earning potential. Proficiency can be defined by industry standards or a target industry’s own statement of proficiency with justification.
- q. **Lead Applicant** – The entity designated by the Partnership to serve as the Fiscal Agent for the partnership for the purposes of the Implementation Grant. The Lead Applicant will also be responsible for managing the grant and all aspects of implementing the Workforce Training Plan.
- r. **Local Workforce Development Board** – A Local Workforce Development Board sets policy for the local workforce system in one of twelve Local Workforce Development Areas (“LWDAs”) certified by the Governor of the State of Maryland. The Board coordinates workforce activities to address employer needs, increase employment, retention and earnings of participants, and increase occupational skills attainment by participants, and, as a result, improve the quality of the workforce and enhance the productivity of the State.
- s. **Participant Management** – This is the recruitment to placement framework, including participant pipeline development, recruitment and screening, career coaching, case management, wrap around services, and job placement.
- t. **Project Activities** – Project Activities include 1) Grant Management, 2) Workforce Training Plan Implementation, 3) Participant Management, and 4) Partnership Management. (See Section 3.1.5.)
- u. **Project Schedule** – A programmatic and fiscal blueprint of all of the Lead Applicant’s Project Activities. It is a consolidated outline of all activities and projected expenditures. This Project Schedule allows DLLR to track the progress of implementation and anticipate quarterly expenditures for each Grantee.

- v. **Region** – Under EARN Maryland, the definition of “region” is flexible. It can be determined by industry labor markets that are already known or understood, rough concentrations of populations, commuter patterns or industry hubs. A region can cut across Local Workforce Development Areas (“LWDAs”) and geo-political boundaries (city, county, regional). Pursuant to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, the State designated regions for workforce development planning. Five regions have been designated. They are the
  - o **Central Region** consisting of Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Cecil, Harford, Anne Arundel, Carroll, and Howard Counties;
  - o **Western Region** consisting of Garrett, Allegany, and Washington Counties;
  - o **Eastern Shore Region** consisting of Queen Anne’s, Kent, Dorchester, Worcester, Somerset, Talbot, Wicomico, and Caroline Counties;
  - o **Southern Maryland Region** consisting of Calvert, Charles and St. Mary’s Counties;
  - o **Capitol Region** consisting of Frederick, Prince George’s and Montgomery Counties.

While not required, applicants are encouraged to utilize regional designs when necessary and appropriate.

- w. **Solicitation for Grant Proposals (Solicitation)** – This Solicitation for Implementation Grant Proposals under the EARN Maryland Program.
- x. **Strategic Industry Partnership or “Partnership”** – A collaboration that brings together a regional group that may include employers, nonprofits, community-based organizations, two and four year institutions of higher education, local workforce boards, local governments, regional or local economic development entities, local departments of social services, labor unions, K-12 Programs, industry associations, philanthropic organizations, other training providers and other relevant partners to identify common workforce needs for high-demand occupations within a target industry and develop and implement industry strategies to meet these common workforce needs and shortages.
- y. **Subgrantee** – Any person or entity that will receive EARN Maryland funding through the Lead Applicant, and is not a direct employee of the Lead Applicant, is a Subgrantee. Subgrantees must be Members of the Strategic Industry Partnership and are accountable to the Lead Applicant for use of the funds provided. Entities that receive EARN Maryland funding EXCLUSIVELY for the purposes of providing general supplies (i.e., pens, paper), travel and/or one-time facility rental are not Subgrantees.
- z. **Workforce Training Plan (WTP)** – Plan prepared by the Strategic Industry Partnership to address skills shortages identified by the industry partners and which outlines recruitment, training and placement strategies. The plan may also include job readiness training, other career preparation and/or industry identified essential workplace skills.

### **1.3 Number and Amount of Grant Awards**

- 1.3.1 There is no set limit on the number of Implementation Grants that will be funded.
- 1.3.2 DLLR’s determination of award amounts will depend on several factors including but not limited to: the number and strength of proposals received, the amount of funding deemed reasonable for individual plans and the funds available at the time of award.



- 1.3.3 Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit a grant request that does not exceed \$150,000. Grant requests in excess of that amount will be considered on a case-by-case basis, must be fully detailed and justified and may be reduced in the actual award.

#### **1.4 Grant Duration**

- 1.4.1 The grant period lasts for *up to* two years, from October 1, 2017 through September 30, 2019.
- 1.4.2 Applicants can request shorter grant periods. The Department strongly recommends that plans contain training that will commence within the first year of funding.
- 1.4.3 Grant funding is subject to the release of associated State appropriation by the Budget Committees.

#### **1.5 Grant Officer**

The sole point of contact in the State for purposes of this Solicitation for management of all grants awarded is the Grant Officer at the address listed below:

Mary C. Keller  
EARN Maryland Program Administrator  
1100 North Eutaw Street, Room 108  
Baltimore, Maryland 21201  
E-mail: [mary.keller@maryland.gov](mailto:mary.keller@maryland.gov)

The Department may change the Grant Officer at any time by written notice.

#### **1.6 Proposals Due (Closing) Date and Time**

Proposals, in the number and form set forth in Section 4, "Proposal Submission Format" must be received by the Grant Officer at the address listed on the Key Information Summary Sheet, **no later than 4 p.m.** local time on Tuesday, September 12, 2017 in order to be considered.

**Proposals may not be submitted by e-mail or facsimile.**

#### **1.7 Grant Award Basis**

Final approval for each grant awarded shall be determined by the Secretary of the Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation, based on the recommendations of the Review Committee and taking into account other factors, such as geographic distribution and industry diversity. (See Section 5, "Grant Evaluation and Selection.")

#### **1.8 Funding Authority**

Funds for this initiative have been allocated in the FY 2018 state budget and is being administered pursuant to the Maryland Annotated Code (2013), "Labor & Employment," §11-701 *et. seq.*

## **SECTION 2 – ELIGIBILITY**

### **2.1 Purpose and Goals of EARN Maryland**

- 2.1.1 The purpose of the EARN Maryland Program is to create industry-led partnerships to advance the skills of the State's workforce, grow the State's economy and increase sustainable employment for working families. It is a competitive workforce and economic development grant program that is both industry-led and regional in focus. It is flexible and innovative, designed to ensure that Maryland employers have the talent they need to compete and grow while providing targeted education and skills training to Maryland workers. This includes both career advancement strategies for incumbent workers and support for individuals with specific barriers to employment.
- 2.1.2 The EARN Maryland Program is specifically designed to fulfill the following goals:
- 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 most hard-to-serve jobseekers through targeted job readiness training; and
  - Foster better coordination among the public and private sectors and workforce, economic development, and education partners around the State.
- 2.1.3 To achieve these goals, EARN Maryland requires the formation of Strategic Industry Partnerships. These are regional collaborations of stakeholders led by industry (groups of employers in the same industry) that also may include any of the following kinds of organizations: nonprofits, community-based organizations, two and four year institutions of higher education, local workforce boards, local governments, regional or local economic development entities, local departments of social services, labor unions, K-12 Programs, industry associations, philanthropic organizations, other training providers and other relevant partners.

The purpose of these partnerships is to create and implement strategic plans that meet employers' workforce needs, advance the skills of Maryland workers, grow the State's economy, and increase sustainable employment for working families.

### **2.2 Purpose of Implementation Grants**

- 2.2.1 EARN Maryland funding for Implementation Grants will be awarded to support regional Strategic Industry Partnerships in implementing Workforce Training Plans designed to address industry workforce skills gaps and employ or advance workers in information technology and cybersecurity careers. These plans will:
- Identify target industry sectors directly related to information technology and cybersecurity;
  - Support Strategic Industry Partnerships in regional target industries to include multiple employers and a diverse array of other partners;
  - Be driven by industry leaders, identify critical skill gaps and other workforce needs and develop industry-led strategies to meet those workforce needs, particularly in high-demand occupations directly related to information technology and cybersecurity;
  - Provide industry-led, responsive and innovative training programs aimed at improving employment opportunities at all skill levels including, but not limited to, job readiness, barrier-removal or academic remediation strategies and/or career advancement for incumbent workers;
  - As needed, develop any other human resource or management strategies that are responsive to industry partnerships' critical occupations and skills shortages.

- 2.2.2 Implementation Grant Proposals should seek to create Workforce Training Plans that support most, if not all, of the following goals:
- Move no-skilled or low-skilled workers into better jobs through job readiness, barrier-removal or academic remediation strategies;
  - Include career advancement strategies, particularly for incumbent workers;
  - Remain sustainable in the absence of State funding;
  - Maximize collaboration through direct financial or in-kind contributions by members of the target industry; and
  - Include braiding of other public or philanthropic funding streams or in-kind support.

## **2.3 Eligible Applicants**

- 2.3.1 The Lead Applicant may be any of the following:
- Employer
  - Nonprofit organization
  - Two or four year institution of higher education
  - Local Workforce Board
  - Industry association
  - Labor union
  - Local government
  - Local or regional economic development entity
  - Other relevant partner entities at DLLR's discretion
- 2.3.2 The Lead Applicant shall be the Fiscal Agent for this Grant.
- 2.3.3 If the Lead Applicant is not Maryland-based or does not have a strong presence in Maryland, the proposal must justify this entity's choice for that role. In general, a Strategic Industry Partnership that includes out-of-state partners will have to show the benefit to Maryland students, workers and prospective workers as well as Maryland's employers and economy.
- 2.3.4 An eligible Strategic Industry Partnership must have at least 5 employers from the target industry and representatives from two diverse entities, listed in Section 1.2(v). All of these entities must be identified in the Strategic Industry Partnership Membership List at Appendix D.
- 2.3.5 An entity may be a member of more than one Strategic Industry Partnership.

## **2.4 Strategic Industry Partnership Workforce Training Plan Expenses – Eligible and Ineligible**

- 2.4.1 All expenses requested to be paid for with EARN Maryland grant funds must be expenses of the Strategic Industry Partnership Workforce Training Plan and its implementation. The need for, and reasonableness, of all costs must be fully justified and explained in the Budget Summary and Narrative Form (Appendix H).
- 2.4.2 Eligible expenses may include reasonable project management costs. All proposed project management expenses must be fully explained and justified in the Budget Summary and Narrative Form (Appendix H). DLLR may limit the percentage of grant funds that may be used for project management costs.
- 2.4.3 The following are costs that shall not be covered by EARN Maryland funds:
- Building construction and equipment with a useful life longer than the grant period.
  - Website development or maintenance. (Development of web content may be allowed in certain circumstances.)

- Indirect costs – costs that have been incurred, for common or joint objectives and cannot be readily identified with a particular final cost objective.
- Indirect fees – expenses that are calculated on a percentage basis (e.g., % administration cost, % occupancy cost, % overhead cost, % indirect cost).

2.4.4 Costs that are not allowable from EARN Maryland funds may be allocated as direct support or in kind donation of a Strategic Industry Partnership member.

## **2.5 Training Activities and Training Providers**

- 2.5.1 If a Workforce Training Plan submitted by Tuesday, September 12, 2017 includes proposed training that clearly requires approval or certification from any state or national entity, such as training that will result in a national certificate or college credit, proof of approval will be required by the proposal submission deadline of September 12, 2017.
- 2.5.2 In cases where such approvals are required and have not been obtained prior to the September 12, 2017 deadline, the Lead Applicant must provide documentation that the application for approval has been made and a schedule showing the process and dates for approval. (See Section 4.1.6.)
- 2.5.3 In the event that, subsequent to proposal submission, it is determined that approval is required by the Maryland Higher Education Commission or any other regulatory entity, DLLR will work with such Strategic Industry Partnerships and the regulatory entity on a case-by-case basis to address the approval process.
- 2.5.4 Lead Applicants that have determined that training is exempt from approval or certification must identify the basis for such exemption. (See Section 4.1.6.)
- 2.5.5 Job Readiness Training refers to training for low- and no-skilled workers and can constitute any type of training that helps prepare these individuals for occupations defined to be high priority in an industry because of existing or projected shortages. Essential Skills training is included in job readiness training. Support services such as childcare, transportation, or case management may be included in job readiness training if they alleviate or address a barrier for participants. All types of training – such as computer skills, language skills, math for manufacturing, basic educational improvement – are included as long as these skills are identified as important for the long-term success of the participants in preparing for a specific occupation.
- 2.5.6 Prior to disbursement of grant funds, DLLR reserves the right to request additional information about any Faculty or Training Provider.
- 2.5.7 Training providers that receive grant funds are Subgrantees and must comply with the requirements in Section 3.3.

## **2.6 Grant Rounds**

- 2.6.1 This is the fifth Solicitation for grant proposals under the EARN Maryland Program.
- 2.6.2 Four competitive rounds have been completed. These are the Fall 2013 Solicitation for Planning Grant Proposals, the Winter 2014 Solicitation for Implementation Grant Proposals, the Fall 2014 Solicitation for Implementation Grant Proposal and the Winter 2017 Solicitation for Implementation Grant Proposals.
- 2.6.3 **This document is the Summer 2017 Solicitation for Implementation Grant Proposals.**

- 2.6.4 This competitive round is open to all Strategic Industry Partnerships that were not awarded EARN Maryland Implementation Grant Funds in previous rounds. Organizations who received funding in past rounds may apply with a new Strategic Industry Partnership. The target industry must fit the definitions of cybersecurity and/or information technology provided in Section 1.2.
- 2.6.5 Strategic Industry Partnerships funded in previous rounds will have an opportunity to apply for additional EARN Maryland funding through a separate process.

## **2.7 Implementation Grant Timeline**

June 29, 2017	Implementation Grant Solicitation released
September 12, 2017	Deadline for Submission of Proposals in Response to this Solicitation
September-October 2017	DLLR review of Proposals
October 2017	Award of Implementation Grants
November 1, 2017 – October 31, 2019	Funding Period

## SECTION 3 – SCOPE OF WORK

### **3.1 Implementation Grant Requirements**

- 3.1.1 The development of the Strategic Industry Partnership Workforce Training Plan must be “industry-led.” This means true business focus and leadership in determining training needs and developing curriculum. Additionally, employer partners must demonstrate a willingness to participate in training, where applicable, and the placement of successful candidates. DLLR will require evidence that multiple employers were active participants in developing the Workforce Training Plan. For examples of industry-led partnerships currently funded through EARN, please visit <http://www.dllr.state.md.us/earn/earngrantpartners.shtml>.
- 3.1.2 Partnerships must designate a Lead Applicant that will serve as the Fiscal Agent for the Partnership for the purposes of the Implementation Grant. The Lead Applicant will also be responsible for managing the Grant and implementing the Workforce Training Plan.
- 3.1.3 An eligible Strategic Industry Partnership must have at least 5 employers from the target industry and representatives from two diverse entities, listed in Section 1.2(v). Partnerships are encouraged to include more than 5 employer partners.
- 3.1.4 The Workforce Training Plan must be both data-driven and experience-driven:
- 3.1.4.1 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 (e.g. large construction or transit projects) or large-scale industry changes (e.g. health care) and identification of specific high-demand occupations or sets of occupations at different skill and salary levels within the identified target industry.
- 3.1.4.2 Real experiences from target industry employers regarding actual and projected gaps in skills training and job readiness. In development of the plan, prospective 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. Some industries may have more internal data whereas other industries may rely more heavily on the experience of industry partners.
- 3.1.4.3 Both qualitative and quantitative measures are important. Strategic Industry Partnerships should take into account both qualitative data provided by the target industry through varied collection methods (interviews, surveys, focus groups, roundtable discussions, etc.) and quantitative labor market and industry-specific data. Consideration may be given to such issues as understanding high demand occupations in industry, projected job growth by occupation, analysis of gaps between supply and demand of employees, understanding the root causes of these gaps, and characterizing the needed skills to close any gaps.
- 3.1.5 Each Strategic Industry Partnership must develop a Project Management model that encompasses all Project Activities.
- 3.1.5.1 **Grant Management and Workforce Training Plan Implementation** includes direct grant management (preparing invoices, maintaining financial records, fiscal reporting, outcome reporting, etc.) and training plan implementation (curriculum tracking and development, trainer selection, all logistics related to training module implementation). **This person must be an employee or contractor of the Lead Applicant.**
- 3.1.5.2 **Participant Management** encompasses the recruitment to placement framework, including participant pipeline development, recruitment and screening of potential trainees, case management/wrap-around services and/or career coaching, and job placement or advancement strategies.

- 3.1.5.3 **Partnership Management** encompasses coordination and accountability among the partners, eliciting employer feedback regarding the success of training graduates and any training or screening redesign. The entity or individual performing this function should have credibility with industry and allow industry partners to set their own agenda. They will also have the trust of a diverse set of partners and the ability to balance diverse interests.
- 3.1.5.4 Managing the work of a Partnership will require work and some person or persons must be accountable for that work if a Partnership is to succeed. DLLR recognizes that every Strategic Industry Partnership is different. For some Partnerships, one individual may perform all of these functions; and in another, the Lead Applicant may divide responsibility.
- 3.1.6 All Strategic Industry Partnerships that receive Implementation Grant funding will be required to submit a governance and sustainability plan by the end of the first year of funding.
- 3.1.7 Parameters of a Target Industry
- 3.1.7.1 A Target Industry is a group of employers closely linked by a common product or service, workforce skills, similar technologies, supply chains or other economic ties. For the purposes of this Solicitation, the Target Industry must be directly related to cybersecurity and/or information technology. Please see Section 1.2 for a specific definition of what constitutes as an cybersecurity or information technology job under this Solicitation.
- 3.1.7.2 Under EARN Maryland, the definition of “region” is flexible. It can be determined by industry labor markets that are already known or understood, rough concentrations of populations, commuter patterns or industry hubs. It can be across Local Workforce Development Areas (“LWDAs”) and geo-political boundaries, and even incorporate multiple economic development areas (city, county, regional).
- 3.1.8 Parameters of a Strategic Industry Partnership
- 3.1.8.1 A Strategic Industry Partnership is a collaboration that brings together a regional group of some combination of employers, nonprofits, community-based organizations, two and four year institutions of higher education, local workforce boards, local governments, regional or local economic development entities, local departments of social services, labor unions, K-12 Programs, industry associations, philanthropic organizations, other training providers and other relevant partners.
- 3.1.8.2 Strategic Industry Partnerships may coalesce in any number of ways. For example, they may start with a group of employers in an existing target industry who are currently working together to alleviate shortages of skilled employees. Other partnerships may be the result of labor market data analysis by a regional workforce board or an education stakeholder group looking to identify target industries with workforce training needs; nonprofits and local departments of social services who band together to improve the lives of residents through skills training and seek employers with common training needs; or a regional economic development specialist who recognizes a common need in an industry within a region and begins the process of collaboration.
- 3.1.8.3 These partnerships are “strategic” because: they are carefully built to include all necessary partners before training is designed; they cut across traditional workforce, education and social services system silos; they consider the economic realities of a regional industry in assessing skills gaps and training needs; and they are broader than the development of customized training for one employer.
- 3.1.9 Leveraged Resources – Strategic Industry Partnerships **must** leverage additional resources for the implementation of the Workforce Training Plan.

3.1.9.1 DLLR will give preference in the evaluation process to Strategic Industry Partnerships that maximize the potential of the collaboration through **direct financial or in-kind contributions** by members of the target industry. Contributions from non-industry Strategic Industry Partnership members are also encouraged.

3.1.9.2 Leveraged resources may also include braided funding from other public, private or philanthropic sources.

3.1.10 EARN seeks to meet industry workforce needs. Therefore, training plans that target unemployed or underemployed workers are expected to have the explicit goal of training a workforce for existent, or soon-to-be-existent, positions. Successful plans lead directly to employment, credential or certification attainment, or advancement. To that end, it is important that a Strategic Industry Partnership's Workforce Training Plan include a means for employers to connect with, recruit, and/or interview training participants for job opportunities.

3.1.11 For Incumbent Workers, it is expected that industry will provide evidence of career advancement in the form of title promotion, wage increases or similar evidence.

### **3.2 Requirements of Strategic Industry Partnership Members**

3.2.1 Employer and industry partners of the Strategic Industry Partnership are encouraged to make specific commitments to support the partnership and implementation of the Workforce Training Plan. Commitments may include financial and in-kind contributions including, but not limited to, providing staff time, faculty or subject matter experts, facilities, data analysis, on-the-job-training, supplies, etc. Commitments may also include interviewing successful training participants and the placement of participants into jobs.

3.2.2 Other Strategic Industry Partnership members are also encouraged to make specific commitments to support the Partnership and implementation of the Workforce Training Plan.

3.2.3 All Strategic Industry Partnership Members, including the Lead Applicant, must submit Letters of Commitment that clearly state what they will contribute to the Project (in-kind and/or financial resources) and how they will participate in the implementation of the Workforce Training Plan and/or other Partnership activities.

3.2.4 The providers of job readiness and essential skills training must be a member of the Strategic Industry Partnership.

3.2.5 All Strategic Industry Partnership members should be aware of the goals, outcomes, and responsibilities set forth in their Proposal. Strategic Industry Partnerships are encouraged to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding setting forth the roles, financial commitment and expectations of each of the partners for better management of the grant and in order to set up a mechanism for addressing any conflicts that may arise, ownership of any items purchased or developed with grant funding, dissolution of the consortium and any other pertinent issues. Strategic Industry Partnerships selected for Implementation Grant Funding may be required to enter into such an MOU as part of their Grant Agreement.

3.2.6 Pursuant to the terms of the statute, intellectual property developed as a result of the grant award is to remain in the public domain to the extent practicable and consistent with the law. DLLR encourages that any processes that may be developed through an EARN Maryland-funded Strategic Industry Partnership would be transferable to other industry partners in general and specifically to other EARN Maryland grant recipients in order to further the goals of the EARN Maryland Program.



### **3.3 Requirements of Lead Applicants and any Subgrantees**

3.3.1 The Lead Applicant must provide the following:

- Certificate of Good Standing (where applicable);
- The most recent two years' Audited, Reviewed or Compiled Financial Statements. If the Lead Applicant is a community college or state agency, a web link to audited financials may be provided in lieu of a hard copy;
- Federal Tax ID Number.

3.3.2 A Subgrantee is any person or entity that will receive EARN Maryland funding through the Lead Applicant, and is not a direct employee of the Lead Applicant. Subgrantees must be members of the Strategic Industry Partnership and are accountable to the Lead Applicant for use of the funds provided. Entities that receive EARN Maryland funding EXCLUSIVELY for the purposes of providing general supplies (i.e., pens, paper), travel and/or one-time facility rental are not Subgrantees.

3.3.3 Lead Applicants must provide the following specific information and documentation to DLLR *for each Subgrantee*, using the form at Appendix D:

- Total EARN Maryland funding projected to be allocated to the Subgrantee;
- Statement of the role or function of the Subgrantee;
- Certificate of Good Standing (where applicable);
- Federal Tax ID Number.

*If the Lead Applicant or any Subgrantee are government entities or otherwise are not subject to obtaining a Certificate of Good Standing, please note that in the Proposal.*

3.3.4 Should the Lead Applicant select a Subgrantee after Awards have been made, a Project Modification must be submitted to DLLR for approval. Disbursement of funds may be delayed or adjusted if this approval process is not observed.

### **3.4 Grant Administration and Reporting**

3.4.1 Partnership goals, training outcomes, and 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.

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

- Industry “Return on Investment” metrics
- Demographic data on individuals participating in any training, including:
  - 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
- Training Participant Outcomes including certification, credential or identifiable skill attainment

- 3.4.3 A general format for reporting these outcomes can be found at <http://www.dllr.state.md.us/earn>. Partnerships must design their own internal data collection mechanisms and protocols.
- 3.4.3 At the time of award, the final budget will be negotiated between the Lead Applicant and EARN Maryland program staff. These negotiations will include a schedule of quarterly projected expenditures that complements implementation of the Workforce Training Plan and related Project Activities as outlined in a Project Schedule to be developed between the Lead Applicant and EARN Maryland program staff.
- 3.4.4 Grant funding will be disbursed according to the Project Schedule as negotiated. Any unused funds must be returned to DLLR with the final financial report.
- 3.4.5 EARN Maryland program staff will be closely engaged with all Strategic Industry Partnerships that receive EARN Maryland funding, providing plan-specific support and technical assistance. This support includes but is not limited to site visits and regular meetings between Lead Applicants, partners and staff responsible for implementing the Workforce Training Plan. Grant Advisors will work with Partnerships to highlight accomplishments of training programs and implement technical assistance plans for outcomes that are not reached.
- 3.4.6 Fiscal oversight will consist of submission of quarterly and fiscal year end expenditure reports, request for proof of expenditures, and periodic on-site fiscal monitoring of EARN Maryland funds expended by the Lead Applicant and its Subgrantees and any vendors.
- 3.4.7 A final report will consist of a narrative summary of the effectiveness of funded training, related Strategic Industry Partnership activities, a report on quantitative outcomes, and a final expenditure report. This report will compare projected outcomes to actual program impact and, where applicable, include a rationale for the failure to meet any projected goals. The final report will also include any completed studies, surveys, reports or other work products, if applicable.
- 3.4.8 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.
- 3.4.9 The receipt of an EARN Maryland grant is not meant as an endorsement of a recipient. Use of the receipt of an EARN Maryland grant for marketing or promotional purposes unrelated to recruitment of individuals to be served under the grant is prohibited and may result in the loss of current funding or refusal for future funding.
- 3.4.10 As a condition of grant funding, all Strategic Industry Partnership Members must be willing to participate in any third-party evaluation commissioned by DLLR. Participation may include providing data and/or participating in surveys and interviews.

## **SECTION 4 – PROPOSAL FORMAT**

### **4.1 Grant Submission Requirements**

Proposals *must* contain the following documents, with original signatures where indicated. Proposals that do not have all of these documents with original signatures where required will not be reviewed.

#### 4.1.1 Proposal Cover Page

- Submit one cover page
- Include all requested information
- See form at Appendix A

#### 4.1.2 Letter of Application

- A letter of application signed by an individual who is authorized to commit the applicants to the requirements stated in this Solicitation

#### 4.1.3 Table of Contents

#### 4.1.4 Executive Summary

- A clear and concise outline of the Proposal that should not exceed one page.

#### 4.1.5 Proposal Narrative

- A description of the need for an Implementation Grant, as well as a detailed description of required elements, as delineated in Appendix B.

#### 4.1.6 Proposal Narrative Supporting Documents

- Resume(s) of Project Manager and Key Personnel
- Data Source List (Appendix C)
- Workforce Training Module Overview (Appendix E)
- Workforce Training Module Template (Appendix F)
- Documentation of any necessary training approval and/or exemption from approval
- Resume(s) of any Faculty or Training Providers
- Participant Management Template (Appendix G)
- Budget Summary and Narrative Form (Appendix H)

#### 4.1.7 Information and Documentation Required of all Strategic Industry Partnership Members

- All Strategic Industry Partnership Members
  - Information required in Strategic Industry Partnership Membership List (Appendix D, Tab 1)
  - Letters of Commitment (See Sec. 3.2.3)
- Lead Applicant
  - Certificate of Good Standing (where applicable)
  - The most recent two years' Audited, Reviewed or Compiled Financial Statements
  - Federal Tax ID Number
- Subgrantees
  - Information required in Subgrantee Information List (Appendix D, Tab 2)
  - Certificate of Good Standing, where applicable
  - Federal Tax ID Number
- Any MOU's

#### 4.1.8 Assurances Form

- Submit one for entire Proposal

- See form provided at Appendix J

#### 4.1.9 Fiscal Agent Form

- Submit one Fiscal Agent Form
- See form provided at Appendix K

## **4.2 Grant Submission Format**

- 4.2.1 All pages of the Proposal Narrative must use one-inch margins and be numbered.
- 4.2.2 Proposal Narrative must use line spacing of at least 1.5 and 12-point font. Charts may use single spacing and a 10-point font.
- 4.2.3 One original with signature and **five (5) copies of the proposal should be submitted in hard copy**, Standard size (8½” x 11”) paper of regular weight should be used.
- 4.2.3.1 Hard copy submissions should include tabbed dividers for each numbered section in Sec. 4.1 above. Applicants are welcome to use sub-dividers within each section.
- 4.2.4 One electronic copy of the Proposal should be submitted on a USB flash drive. To the extent possible, please provide stand-alone electronic files for each numbered section in Sec. 4.1, with Appendices C-H saved in Excel (rather than PDF) format.
- 4.2.5 The prescribed Cover Page must be the first page of the proposal.
- 4.2.6 The following items, combined, may not exceed 20 pages
- a. **Table of Contents** (Sec. 4.1.3)
  - b. **Executive Summary** (Sec. 4.1.4) (max 1-page)
  - c. **Proposal Narrative** (Sec. 4.1.5 and Appendix B)

*All forms, appendices, and supporting documents are excluded from the 20-page limit.*

## **SECTION 5 – GRANT EVALUATION AND SELECTION**

### **5.1 Grant Evaluation**

- 5.1.1 Initial screening of written applications to ensure that submission requirements were met and all required sections were included. Proposals not meeting all screening requirements will not be read.
- 5.1.2 Proposals will be evaluated by a Review Committee established by DLLR. The Review Committee will be composed of representatives from DLLR as well as several other State agencies.
- 5.1.3 If necessary, oral presentation of the proposal may be required.
- 5.1.4 Final approval for awards will be determined by the Secretary of the Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation, based on the recommendations of the Review Committee and taking into account other factors, such as geographic distribution and industry diversity.
- 5.1.5 DLLR may require that proposals be combined for the purposes of implementation funding.
- 5.1.6 Upon request, DLLR will provide feedback on proposals that do not receive funding.
- 5.1.7 Preference will be given to plans that demonstrate:
  - Maximum collaboration through direct financial or in-kind contributions by members of the target industry
  - Braiding of other public or philanthropic funding streams or in-kind support

## **SOLICITATION FOR GRANT PROPOSALS APPENDICES**

**APPENDIX A** – Cover Page Template

**APPENDIX B** – Proposal Narrative

**APPENDIX C** – Data Source List

**APPENDIX D** – Strategic Industry Partnership Membership List and Subgrantee Information

**APPENDIX E** – Workforce Training Module(s) Overview

**APPENDIX F** – Workforce Training Module Template

**APPENDIX G** – Participant Management Template

**APPENDIX H** – Budget Summary and Narrative Form

**APPENDIX I** – Characteristics of a Strong Strategic Industry Partnership Workforce Training Plan

**APPENDIX J** – Assurances Form

**APPENDIX K** – Fiscal Agent Form

***PLEASE NOTE: All Appendices are available as Word and Excel documents on the EARN Maryland website at [www.earn.maryland.gov](http://www.earn.maryland.gov). Please visit the site to download these documents so that you may complete them electronically.***

***\*\*END OF DOCUMENT\*\****