Maryland Lighthouse Industries Upskilling and Reskilling Program
(Lighthouse Industries UP)
Questions & Answers

Question: Will this presentation be made available to those who attended?
Answer: Yes, the slide deck will be posted on the MD Labor website.

Question: Is there a page limit for the proposal?
Answer: The application (Appendix A) should not exceed 20 pages in length. Supporting documentation (Appendix B) and the budget (Appendix C) do not count towards the page limit. More detailed information can be found in Section 4.1 of the Solicitation.

Question: What is the deadline for proposal submission?
Answer: Proposals must be submitted by Friday, April 24, 2026 at 11:59 PM ET in order to be considered. Submissions received after this date and time will not be considered. Incomplete submissions will not be considered.

Question: Is the letter of application due with the full package or in advance?
Answer: The letter of application must be submitted as part of the application submission. More detailed information on the letter of application can be found in Section 4.1 of the Solicitation.

Question: Can an individual employer submit an application?
Answer: Per Section 2.3.1 of the Solicitation, employers are eligible to apply for funding. In order to be considered, applicants must provide a letter of commitment for the proposed training from at least three employers within the target industry. Employer commitments may include, but are not limited to: interviewing participants, hiring participants, partnering in training development, reviewing curricula, identifying incumbent workers to send to training, and promoting incumbent workers. If the Lead Applicant is an employer, one of the three required letters of commitment may be from the Lead Applicant.

Question: Do "transferable skills" include technical training plus professional development training?
Answer: For the purpose of this Solicitation, transferable skills are defined as foundational skills that are general, technical, or role-related and can be utilized across a range of jobs and industries. These may include communication, project management, business skills, entrepreneurship, leadership and people management.

Question: Can a letter of commitment come from out-of-state employment partners?
Answer: Inclusion of out-of-state employer partners is allowable but must demonstrate the benefit to Maryland workers and prospective workers, as well as Maryland's employers and economy. Applicants are strongly encouraged to partner Maryland-based employers.

Question: Is there a Q&A deadline, or can we submit questions on a rolling basis while preparing the proposal?
Answer: All questions must be submitted by April 10, 2026. Questions should be submitted via email to Brittney Hansen (brittney.hansen@maryland.gov) and Eve Boyle (eve.boyle@maryland.gov).

Question: Is there any specific requirement on the "credential" that is earned?
Answer: Applicants should engage employers to ensure the proposed curriculum is industry-led, responsive, and innovative. To that end, credential attainment is not a requirement of this program.

Question: Do leveraged resources count toward a match?
Answer: There is no required match for this funding opportunity. However, applicants are strongly encouraged to leverage additional resources to support implementation of the Training Plan. Applications that include leveraged resources in the project budget will receive preference during the evaluation process. Leveraged resources may include direct financial or in-kind contributions by members of the target industry and braided funding from other public, private, and/or philanthropic sources.

Question: How important is a commitment from employers to hire trainees or is this one of many factors?
Answer: It is one of many factors that will be considered during proposal review. Per the solicitation, Lighthouse Industries UP seeks to meet immediate workforce needs. Therefore, training plans that target unemployed or underemployed workers, including former federal 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 and/or advancement.

Question: Do you encourage non-profit partnership for the upskilling program?
Answer: Applicants are encouraged to include partner organizations that can contribute to the successful implementation of their Training Plan, including non-profit organizations. A letter of commitment for any organization that will support the Training Plan should be included with the application submission.

Question: Is it okay to have transferrable skills embedded in a project that is focused on the technical training track?
Answer: Applicants should select one track, either transferable skills or emerging technology skills, as their primary focus. That being said, applicants are encouraged to incorporate skills from the alternative track within their curriculum so long as it is aligned with employer demand.

Question: Is there a need to provide "job titles" that the trainees may be hired into in the narrative?
Answer: Yes. Question 4 in the application requires applicants to identify the specific occupations or job titles for which participants will be prepared.

Question: Are entry-level technology positions (e.g., help desk or similar roles) eligible deliverables under this program?
Answer: Entry-level technology roles may be considered within the scope of deliverables if the applicant can clearly demonstrate documented industry demand for training in those specific roles within the designated lighthouse industries. Proposals must include evidence that the targeted positions align with identified workforce needs and industry priorities.

Question: If an employer partner is headquartered out-of-state but has offices in Maryland, would additional justification still be needed?
Answer: If the employer is actively operating in Maryland and is certified to do business in the state, no justification is needed.

Question: What are leveraged resources?
Answer: Leveraged resources are <u>not</u> required but are strongly encouraged. Leveraged resources are additional financial or in-kind contributions that support a project but are not funded directly by the grant award. Examples could include, but are not limited to, staff time, donated equipment, software, technology, the use of a training space, or curriculum development.

Question: The solicitation states that signed letters of commitment from at least 3 Maryland-based employers are required, Is this correct?
Answer: In order to be considered, applicants must provide three letters of commitment from employer partners. Applicants are strongly encouraged to partner with employers that are operational in Maryland.

Question: Can an applicant submit multiple applications across different domains, such as Advanced Manufacturing and AI Training?
Answer: Each applicant may submit only one application. However, the proposed training can include multiple domains.

Question: Is there preference given to having more than three employer partners?
Answer: MD Labor views employer partnerships as crucial for the effective implementation of training plans. While the Solicitation requires three employer partners for consideration, MD Labor encourages applicants to partner with additional employers.

Question: Can you explain what is considered a Lighthouse Industry?
Answer: Executive Order 01.01.2024.39, Strengthening Maryland's Business Climate to Bolster Economic Competitiveness, directs state agencies to leverage existing state resources to support the development and growth of priority industries and emerging sectors. For the purposes of this solicitation, the Lighthouse Industries are:

1. **Life sciences** – computational biology and bioinformatics, cell and gene therapy; biomanufacturing;
2. **Technology** – quantum computing, information technology, cybersecurity, computer systems design, nanotechnology, software development, data analytics, artificial intelligence and machine learning;
3. **Aerospace and Defense** – navigation systems, drones, space technology, aerospace data & intelligence, aerospace manufacturing;
4. **Manufacturing** – advanced manufacturing, food processing, production technology and heavy machinery, and materials.

Question: Does it matter if the employer partner is a startup (small) or more established?
Answer: No.

Question: Do you anticipate future Requests For Proposals related to Lighthouse Industries?
Answer: The Department is unable to speculate as to whether similar opportunities will be made available but it is worth noting the Lighthouse sectors are a priority of the Moore-Miller administration.

Question: Is there a cost to submit an application?
Answer: No.

Question: How many awards are expected to be granted? What is the total amount of funding available for the program?
Answer: The Department has allocated $1 million for the Lighthouse Industries UP Program. Applicants may request up to $200,000. The number of awards and the amount awarded across tracks 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.

Question: Are smaller requests/budgets accepted?
Answer: Yes.

Question: If you apply for $200k, would you be considered for a lower number of funds or only the amount requested?
Answer: MD Labor reserves the right to negotiate the final award amount with applicants.

Question: Is there a minimum funding request?
Answer: No.

Question: Can the trainees be charged for the training?
Answer: No.

Question: Is there an ideal amount delegated to funding each sector of the lighthouse program?
Answer: No.

Question: For three businesses applying together, is a letter of intent acceptable as proof of partnership?
Answer: Three letters of commitment from employers are required for consideration.

Question: Is the Life Sciences field limited to human-focused areas?
Answer: No. Proposals for training in the life sciences are not restricted to human-focused disciplines.

Question: Is there a minimum length required for the training program?
Answer: No. Applicants are encouraged to develop training programs in concert with employer partners to ensure training program length aligns with industry demand.

Question: Would training programs that prepare participants for non-AI jobs be less competitive than those focused on AI-related roles?
Answer: The solicitation states that preference will be given to applications incorporating AI tools and/or AI methods into the training plan.

Question: Is there a minimum number of trainees and job hires to be competitive?
Answer: No.

Question: Is there a preference for format of training such as in-person or virtual?
Answer: No.