



**Division of Workforce
Development and Adult Learning
(DWDAL)**
Policy Issuance

Maryland Apprenticeship Incentive Program Policy | January 28, 2026

TO Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning (DWDAL) staff, Local Workforce Development Area (Local Area) directors, and Registered Apprenticeship Sponsors

FROM DWDAL
Maryland Department of Labor (MD Labor)

SUBJECT Guidance on the Maryland Apprenticeship Incentive Program

PURPOSE To provide policy guidance on the Maryland Apprenticeship Incentive Program

ACTION Local Area directors, American Job Center (AJC) Reemployment Program Directors, central office managers, and Office of Apprenticeship staff will ensure all employees are aware of and receive copies of this policy. DWDAL policies are available on the [MD Labor website](#).

EXPIRATION Until Cancelled.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Maryland Department of Labor's Maryland Apprenticeship Incentive Program, administered by the Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning, is designed to strengthen Registered Apprenticeships across the State by offsetting the costs of training Apprentices for Sponsors and employers. The Program supports the State's broader workforce development goals by incentivizing high-quality Apprenticeship opportunities that lead to sustainable employment and career advancement.

Under this policy, eligible Registered Apprenticeship Sponsors or employers may receive up to \$3,000 per Apprentice, or up to \$7,500 per High School Level of Registered Apprentice, to reimburse certain apprenticeship training costs. To qualify, newly registered Apprentices must (1) have been a Registered Apprentice for at least seven months and (2) be within their first year of employment as a Registered Apprentice with the Sponsor or employer. Additional details and criteria are described within the policy.

The Program establishes clear application, review, and approval processes, including submission deadlines, eligibility checks, and appeal procedures for denied applications. Awarded Sponsors or employers are required to comply with reporting, monitoring, and record retention standards to ensure fiscal accountability, program quality, and compliance with nondiscrimination and accessibility requirements. Questions can be sent to MarylandApprenticeship.IncentiveProgram@maryland.gov.

By reducing barriers to participation and supporting employer investment in Registered Apprenticeship, the Maryland Apprenticeship Incentive Program advances Maryland's commitment to expanding Apprenticeship opportunities, building a pipeline of skilled workers, and aligning training with industry needs.

GENERAL INFORMATION

REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP

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

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

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

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

² Certain Joint Registered Apprenticeship programs may operate differently. Additionally, business involvement may involve coordination between the business, Sponsor, and bargaining unit as applicable).

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

REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP IN MARYLAND

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

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

High School Level of Registered Apprenticeship

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

MARYLAND APPRENTICESHIP INCENTIVE PROGRAM

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

1. Develop a well-trained, productive workforce that meets the needs of the State’s economy; and,
2. Help employers and Sponsors³ offset costs, including recruitment, education, training, and accommodations for disabilities or materials, associated with hiring newly Registered Apprentices.

The Program operates as a rolling reimbursement program where Sponsors or employers can be granted up to \$3,000 to offset the costs associated with hiring new Registered Apprentices or up to \$7,500 for HSLRA. Specifically, funds may be used to:

1. Offset a portion of the Sponsor’s own related instruction costs;
2. Offset a portion of the Apprentice’s employer’s related instruction costs;
3. Costs associated with mentorship;
4. Costs associated with recruitment. Recruitment costs must be associated with the individual Apprentice being hired. These may include marketing materials and job fairs, among other items;
5. Costs associated with accommodation for individuals with disabilities; and,
6. Costs associated with providing supportive services. Supportive services may include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Assistance obtaining a driver’s license;
 - b. Transportation assistance;
 - c. Uniforms, tools, and related equipment;
 - d. Child or dependent care;
 - e. Union initiation fees;
 - f. Application fees; and
 - g. Other supportive services as approved by MD Labor.

Funds may go towards multiple activities associated with hiring new Registered Apprentices. For example, \$2,500 of an award may be used towards related instruction costs and another \$500 of the same award may be used towards costs associated with recruitment.

All newly Registered Apprentices served through the Maryland Apprenticeship Incentive Program, including HSLRA, must:

1. Have been employed as a Registered Apprentice for at least seven months; and,
2. Be within the initial year of employment as a Registered Apprentice⁴ with the Sponsor or employer.

Sponsors or employers must submit applications within 30 days of the registration of the Registered Apprentice with MD Labor. MD Labor encourages Sponsors or employers to submit 30 days *prior* to registration, but will accept applications up to 30 days after the Apprentice’s registration. Once the Apprentice completes at least seven months of the Registered Apprenticeship, MD Labor will award funds

³ For the Maryland Apprenticeship Incentive Program, MD Labor defines “Sponsors” as an individual, association, committee, organization, intermediary, or employer in whose name or title the Registered Apprenticeship program is or is to be registered.

⁴ Incumbent workers are eligible for the Maryland Apprenticeship Incentive program, as long as they have not previously been a Registered Apprentice with the Sponsor or employer.

to the Sponsor or employer. An employer or a Sponsor may be awarded only one grant per each newly Registered Apprentice per year.

Additionally, whereas Sponsors/employers may submit unlimited applications for HSLRA apprentices per calendar year (subject to the limitation that an employer or Sponsor may be awarded only one grant per each newly Registered Apprentice per year), Sponsors or employers are otherwise limited to awards for 10 Registered Apprentices, per employer, per calendar year.⁵

MD Labor encourages Sponsors/employers to contact MarylandApprenticeship.IncentiveProgram@maryland.gov for clarification on these requirements or to request flexibility on a case-by-case basis.

ELIGIBLE ENTITIES

Registered Apprenticeship Sponsors or employers approved by MD Labor are the only eligible entities for the Maryland Apprenticeship Incentive program. Sponsors can be private, public, Individual, Group Joint, Group Non-Joint, or non-profit.

Sponsors and employers may not be reimbursed through the Maryland Apprenticeship Incentive program for Apprentices working on any type of covered prevailing wage project – including Davis-Bacon, Maryland Stadium Authority, and local, among others.⁶ However, Sponsors and employers remain eligible for reimbursement for HSLRAs working on prevailing wage projects.

Sponsors or employers that have previously been awarded funds through a separate MD Labor grant program are eligible to apply to the Maryland Apprenticeship Incentive Program. Additionally, MD Labor encourages braiding funds to support Registered Apprentices. For example, Sponsors or employers can use the Maryland Apprenticeship Incentive Program to cover related instruction costs and another funding stream to cover supportive services. However, the same costs may only be covered one time. For instance, using Maryland Apprenticeship Incentive funds to cover the cost of related instruction and then using another funding stream to cover the same related instruction costs is strictly prohibited. Additionally, if an incentive is awarded to an employer or a Sponsor on behalf of a newly Registered Apprentice, another employer or Sponsor cannot apply for an incentive under the Program for the same newly Registered Apprentice.

⁵ For example, if a Sponsor or employer applies for five Registered Apprentices in December, they would be eligible to apply for 10 Registered Apprentices starting in January.

⁶ MD Labor does not accept prevailing wage projects for the Maryland Apprenticeship Incentive Program due to existing incentives available to Sponsors/employers that employ Registered Apprentices on prevailing wage projects.

APPLICATION PROCESSES

The Maryland Apprenticeship Incentive Program is a rolling application program. To apply for reimbursement through the Maryland Apprenticeship Incentive Program, Registered Apprenticeship Sponsors or employers must first submit the Maryland Apprenticeship Incentive Program application. Registered Apprenticeship Sponsors or employers may find the Maryland Apprenticeship Incentive application on MD Labor's website at <https://www.labor.maryland.gov/employment/appr/apprgrantreimb.shtml> and can send completed applications electronically to MarylandApprenticeship.IncentiveProgram@maryland.gov.

Applications must be submitted within 30 days of the Apprentice's registration with MD Labor. MD Labor encourages Sponsors or employers to submit 30 days *prior* to registration, but will accept applications up to 30 days after the Apprentice's registration. If an application is approved, the Sponsor or employer may invoice MD Labor once the Apprentice completes at least seven months of employment as a Registered Apprentice. Invoice requests must be submitted to MD Labor in a timely manner following the Apprentice's seven months of employment. A sample invoice can be found in ***Attachment A - Sample Invoice for Reimbursement.***

As part of the application process, a Sponsor or employer must attest to their intent to retain the Apprentice(s) through the duration of the full Registered Apprenticeship and after completion of the Registered Apprenticeship, unless the Apprentice(s) leaves on their own accord or has been dismissed for cause.

APPLICATION REVIEW

A Grant Manager from the MD Labor Office of Strategic Initiatives will review all Maryland Apprenticeship Incentive Program applications. The reviewer must approve or deny submitted applications within 14 calendar days of receipt and must ensure that approved applications meet eligibility requirements.

APPLICATION APPROVAL/DENIAL

MD Labor must inform applicants via email of approvals or denials within 14 calendar days of application and invoice receipt. Any approval is contingent on the Apprentice completing at least seven months of employment.

If approved, the MD Labor Office of Strategic Initiatives shall provide the applicant with a Grant Award Notification to be signed by the applicant.

MD Labor will deny incomplete applications. If a grant application is denied, the MD Labor Office of Apprenticeship shall provide the applicant with a Grant Denial Notification containing feedback on the application. Additionally, MD Labor may deny invoice requests if Registered Apprentices do not meet the requirements of the Program, such as being retained for the full seven months, or if the Sponsor/employer is no longer eligible, such as the Program being deactivated. Applicants with denied applications or invoices may request reconsideration of the decision. The appeal must be emailed to MarylandApprenticeship.IncentiveProgram@maryland.gov within 14 calendar days of the date of denial and must state (1) the grounds for the request; and (2) the reasons why the application or invoice should be reconsidered and approved.

The DWDAL Assistant Secretary (or designee) will consider all requests for reconsideration and provide a written response to the applicant within 30 calendar days of request receipt. The DWDAL Assistant Secretary (or designee)'s decision is final.⁷

⁷ Any of the time periods under this section, "Application Approval/Denial," may be extended by the MD Labor DWDAL Assistant Secretary at their sole discretion.

REPORTING, MONITORING, AND RECORD RETENTION

REPORTING

MD Labor requires Maryland Apprenticeship Incentive grantees to report updates for all Registered Apprentices supported by the Maryland Apprenticeship Incentive program through existing Registered Apprenticeship reporting mechanisms, such as reporting cancellations and completions to the Department's Office of Apprenticeship.

MONITORING

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

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

RECORD RETENTION

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

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

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

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

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

FAIR PRACTICES AND ACCESSIBILITY

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

REFERENCES

LAW

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

REGULATION

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

OTHER RESOURCES

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

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment A - Sample Invoice for Reimbursement