



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



**PI 2025-11 | Maryland Department of Labor’s Rural Advancement for Maryland
Peers (RAMP) Program Policy | August 25, 2025**

TO	RAMP Applicants and Subgrantees
FROM	DWDAL Maryland Department of Labor (MD Labor)
SUBJECT	Maryland Department of Labor’s Rural Advancement for Maryland Peers (RAMP) Program Policy
PURPOSE	To provide the process for subgrantee applicants and awardees for the Rural Advancement for Maryland Peers (RAMP) Program within the Maryland Department of Labor DWDAL.
ACTION	DWDAL policies are available on the MD Labor website .
EXPIRATION	May 31, 2028.
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Maryland Department of Labor's Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning's Office of Strategic Initiatives (OSI) is responsible for workforce development initiatives and grant programming in key economic sectors of the State. This policy outlines the Rural Advancement for Maryland Peers (RAMP) Grant Program. The purpose of RAMP is to alleviate the shortage of Certified Peer Recovery Specialists by offering a competitive grant opportunity for community agencies in rural areas of the State.

GENERAL INFORMATION

MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF LABOR'S DIVISION OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND ADULT LEARNING (DWDAL)

The Maryland Department of Labor's (MD Labor) Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning (DWDAL)'s mission is to improve the lives of all Marylanders by implementing innovative, responsive practices that nurture a skilled workforce, connect people to good jobs, and ensure businesses have the skilled workforce they need to compete in a global economy.

MARYLAND'S OFFICE OF OVERDOSE RESPONSE (MOOR)

Maryland's Office of Overdose Response (MOOR) promotes collaboration across all State and local agencies working to address substance use and overdose in the state. Through a partnership with MOOR and funding through Maryland's [Opioid Restitution Fund](#), DWDAL's Office of Strategic Initiatives (OSI) developed the Rural Advancement for Maryland Peers Program, otherwise known as RAMP.

RURAL ADVANCEMENT FOR MARYLAND PEERS (RAMP)

The purpose of RAMP is to alleviate the shortage of Certified Peer Recovery Specialists (CPRS) in rural areas by competitively awarding grant funds to organizations that will offer the necessary training for prospective peer specialists to become certified in the State of Maryland. The CPRS credential is designed for individuals with personal, lived experience with recovery from addiction, mental illness, or co-occurring disorders, and family and allies of such individuals.¹ Furthermore, MD Labor recognizes that there is a need to increase retention of CPRS and grow opportunities for advancement to mid-level behavioral health roles through targeted workforce development efforts. RAMP funds will also be used to prepare current CPRS for higher level behavioral health roles. Priority will be given to applicants who serve residents in rural areas of the State (as defined below) hardest hit by workforce shortages and those with a high prevalence of opioid-related overdose deaths.

THE ENOUGH INITIATIVE

Launched and administered by the Governor's Office for Children, Maryland's ENOUGH Initiative aims to reduce the number of children living in poverty through community-led, government-supported solutions. The initiative addresses the root causes of poverty in specific neighborhoods that have been historically left behind and impacted by barriers to economic mobility. Driven by data, residents' lived experiences and cross-sector collaboration, this grant initiative supports community-led organizations across every region of Maryland to improve access to quality health care, good schools, good jobs and safe neighborhoods so that more children and families can prosper. A list of ENOUGH communities in rural areas of the state can be found in ***Attachment B - ENOUGH Communities in Rural Areas of the State***.

¹ More information regarding Maryland Certified Peer Recovery Specialist Certification requirements can be found here: <https://www.mabpcb.com/certified-peer-recovery-specialist-cprs>.

MD LABOR AWARD

MD Labor received \$2,000,000 from MOOR via the Maryland Opioid Restitution Fund to initiate the RAMP project. MD Labor will implement RAMP beginning February 1, 2026 with a sunset period in May 2028 following successful completion of RAMP grant deliverables.

ELIGIBLE ENTITIES

Entities eligible to apply for RAMP funding include but are not limited to:

1. Non-profit organizations;
2. Community-based organizations;
3. Faith-based organizations;
4. Local workforce development boards;
5. Local government agencies;
6. Registered Apprenticeship sponsors;
7. Postsecondary education institutions;
8. Local and regional economic development entities; and
9. Other organizations as deemed allowable by MD Labor.

Applicants must be based in or serve participants residing in counties wholly defined as rural in State statute.² Eligible counties wholly defined as rural in State statute can be found in ***Attachment A - Maryland Counties Wholly Defined as Rural***. MD Labor will fund proposals located in or that serve participants from rural areas of the state and will prioritize geographic diversity among awardees. Preference will be given to applicants who serve participants from rural areas designated as ENOUGH communities.³

ALLOWABLE ACTIVITIES

Eligible applicants may apply for up to \$200,000 to promote the growth of CPRS over a 28-month period of performance February 1, 2026 through May 31, 2028.

Allowable costs for applicants include:

1. Occupational training and education;
2. Credentialing and certification costs, including exam and assessment fees;
3. Supportive services (MD Labor strongly encourages the use of supportive services for participants. Examples of supportive services as they relate to RAMP can be found within the Application Narrative section);
4. Staffing;
5. Travel;
6. Supplies;
7. Preapproved related advertising or promotional activities; and
8. Other costs as approved by MD Labor.

Additionally, applicants may utilize RAMP funding to begin the implementation of new programs or support *established* training programs, not to supplant existing local, state or federal funds.

² [State Finance and Procurement Article, § 2-207, Annotated Code of Maryland.](#)

³ <https://goc.maryland.gov/Pages/enough-initiative.aspx>.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

PROHIBITED COSTS

Applicants that include prohibited costs as part of their project design will not be considered. Prohibited costs for subgrantees are as follows:

1. Building or land purchases;
2. Vehicle purchases;
3. Research;
4. Sales tax for Non-profit and Governmental entities; and
5. Naloxone and Fentanyl/Xylazine test strips, as those are provided at no cost to the requester by the Maryland Department of Health Office of Harm Reduction.

PROJECT COMPONENTS

Applicants will be required to include detailed plans for outreach and recruitment of CPRS participants to ensure the target participant population is adequately reached. Additionally, applicants will be required to partner with at least two organizations to support outreach and recruitment. Partners organizations may include, but are not limited to:

1. Recovery Treatment Programs;
2. Recovery Wellness Centers;
3. Recovery Housing Organizations;
4. Local Health Departments; and/or
5. Local Workforce Development Boards, and other community-based organizations.

Applicants must include letters of commitment from at least two organizations who will support with the outreach and recruitment components of the project.

LETTERS OF COMMITMENT OR MEMORANDA OF UNDERSTANDING FROM SUBGRANTEE PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS AND EMPLOYERS

Applicants must provide Letters of Commitment or Memoranda of Understanding from at least three employers. The Letters of Commitment or Memoranda of Understanding must outline the established partnerships with at least three employers who have committed to provide internships and/or employment to participants working towards CPRS certification. If applicants intend to partner with a subgrantee, a letter of commitment and/or Memoranda of Understanding must be submitted with the application.

APPLICATION COMPONENTS

Applications must include a project plan with a description of:

- 1) Current or projected job openings for, or relevant labor market information related to, behavioral health professionals served by the project within their county or region;
- 2) The geographic service area and population to be served by the project as wholly defined as rural in State statute;⁴
- 3) Specific efforts and strategies that the project will undertake to conduct outreach and recruitment of unemployed, underemployed, or current Peer Recovery Specialists;
 - a) Applicants must provide at least two letters of commitment from partners identified who will support outreach and recruitment efforts including the required letters outlined above.
- 4) Specific efforts and strategies that the project will undertake to reduce barriers to the recruitment, retention, or advancement of peers;
- 5) How participants will receive all of the required training and coursework during the grant period of performance; and,
- 6) Partnerships that the applicant has established with at least three employers who commit to provide internships, transition work experience, and/or employment to participants. These partnerships should be memorialized through Letters of Commitment and/or Memoranda of Understanding.

Applicants will receive priority points for the following:

- 1) Being located in or serving participants from ENOUGH communities.
- 2) Serving as an approved vendor for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training (SNAP E&T) Program, administered by the Maryland Department of Human Services (DHS).

CPRS CERTIFICATION PROCESS AND EXAMINATION

Applicants must demonstrate funding to cover the full cost of the peer certification process including training, materials, and examination fees. Applicants must provide a training plan that outlines how CPRS participants will receive training and the required course materials during the grant period of performance.

DEVELOPING CAREER PATHWAYS FOR CPRS

To ensure the continuation of the great work that CPRS provide to the recovery and rural communities of Maryland, applicants must provide clear and direct strategies for participants seeking peer specialist opportunities or other mid-level behavioral health roles; including strategies for participants to retain employment within the field.

⁴ [State Finance and Procurement Article, § 2-207, Annotated Code of Maryland](#)

SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

Applicants must provide supportive services to participants to ensure their successful completion of the program and employment. Applicants must provide information about their supportive service plan, including any necessary partnerships with community organizations to effectively provide these services.

The supportive service examples noted below do not represent an exhaustive list. Applicants do not need to provide all services mentioned, but must provide comprehensive and individualized support that enables participants to successfully complete their program. Supportive services may include, but are not limited to:

1. Transportation;
2. Childcare;
3. Individualized planning for successful program completion;
4. Identifying or locating potential employment opportunities;
5. Long term strategies to encourage retention of participants in the behavioral health field; and
6. Other wraparound support measures, as approved by MD Labor in writing.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS FOR APPLICANTS

Where appropriate, MD Labor encourages applicants and their partners to apply to have CPRS trainings or related trainings included on the State's Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL). The ETPL, which is maintained by MD Labor as required by the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), is comprised of entities with demonstrated capabilities of training individuals to enter quality employment.

APPLICATION REVIEW PROCESS

RAMP is a competitive funding opportunity through DWDAL's OSI. To apply for funding, eligible entities must submit an application, which is provided separately from this policy issuance, by the prescribed due date. Applicants must submit completed proposals via email to Anna Whitney at: anna.whitney@maryland.gov. Incomplete applications or those submitted after the due date will not be considered.

APPLICATION REVIEW TEAM

To determine which applications for RAMP will receive funding, MD Labor will convene a review panel of subject matter experts from both the behavioral health and workforce development field to evaluate applications. The review team is comprised of the:

1. DWDAL Office of Strategic Initiatives Director (or designee);
2. DWDAL Apprenticeship and Training Director (or designee);
3. MOOR Special Secretary (or designee); and,
4. Director of the State Office of Rural Health Director (or designee).

The review team must ensure that approved applications meet budgetary and programmatic requirements.

To ensure compliance with the Public Ethics Law, MD Code Ann. Gen'l Provisions, § 5–501, all staff who participate in discretionary grant reviews are required to complete the DWDAL Reviewer Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest Form. Should a conflict of interest exist, staff must recuse themselves from application review and if staff becomes aware that a conflict may exist during the process, that person must immediately notify the DWDAL Assistant Secretary.

APPLICATION APPROVAL AND DENIAL

MD Labor must inform applicants via email of approvals or denials at the conclusion of the review process. If approved, the MD Labor's OSI shall provide the applicant with a Grant Award Notification to be signed by the applicant. After an award agreement has been formally executed, MD Labor shall provide funds to the approved program on a cost reimbursement basis. The subgrantee will invoice MD Labor via the quarterly fiscal report and invoice. If the review team denies an application, the MD Labor's OSI shall provide the applicant with a Grant Denial Notification containing feedback on the application.

REPORTING AND MONITORING

REPORTING

RAMP Subgrantees will submit quarterly activity and expenditure reports to the MD Labor RAMP Program Manager.

MONITORING

MD Labor has the authority to monitor the administration of the RAMP project. To ensure that policies are being followed and expectations are being met, the subgrantees should expect MD Labor to conduct monitoring throughout the performance period. The RAMP Program Manager will meet with each Subgrantee monthly and conduct quarterly site visits. The RAMP Program Manager will also provide technical assistance as needed by subgrantees.

In addition to monitoring, conducted by MD Labor, MOOR may monitor the following:

1. Number of individuals completing the certification,
2. Completion dates during the grant performance period,
3. CPRS training contracts,
4. Reimbursement documentation,
5. Other documentation or grant deliverables as required by MOOR.

RECORD RETENTION

The Maryland Department of Health requires awarded subgrantees and MD Labor to retain RAMP records for at least five years after the final payment, or until all audit and litigation issues are resolved, whichever is later. If any litigation, claim, or audit is started before the expiration of the five -year period, the records then must be retained until all litigation, claims, or audit findings involving the records have been resolved and final action has been taken.

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, MD Labor provides equal access to public services to individuals with limited English proficiency in compliance with MD. Code Ann. State Government Article, § 10-1101 et seq., and MDH Policy 01.02.05. Interested parties may refer to MD Labor's Nondiscrimination Plan⁵ and Language Access Plan⁶ for more information on accommodations and services.

MD Labor also notes that it does not discriminate in any manner against employees or applicants for employment because of race, color, religion, creed, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identification, marital status, national origin, ancestry, genetic information, or any otherwise unlawful use of characteristics, or disability of a qualified individual with a disability unrelated in nature and extent so as reasonably to preclude the performance of the employment, or the individual's refusal to submit to a genetic test or make available the results of a genetic test. To receive funding under this program, applicants must agree not to discriminate on these bases and must also agree to post in conspicuous places available to employees and applicants for employment, notices setting forth the substance of this paragraph.

⁵ MD Labor's Nondiscrimination Plan can be found here: <https://www.labor.maryland.gov/employment/ndp/>

⁶ MD Labor's Language Access Plan can be found here: <https://www.labor.maryland.gov/employment/wioa-access.pdf>

REFERENCES

LAW

- Md. Ann. Code, Labor and Emp. Art., Title 11, [Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning](#);
- MD Code, General Provisions Article § 5-501;
- MD Code, State Government Article, § 10-1101 et seq; and
- MD Code, State Finance and Procurement Article, § 2-207.

REGULATION

- COMAR 09.33 *et seq.* [Job Service](#);
- COMAR 09.12.42 *et seq.*, [Equal Employment Opportunity](#);
- COMAR 09.12.43 *et seq.*, [Maryland Apprenticeship and Training](#); and,
- COMAR 09.37.01 *et seq.*, [Workforce Development and Adult Learning](#).

OTHER RESOURCES

- [DWDAL Policy Issuance Page](#);
- [Language Access Plan](#);
- [Maryland Local Plans](#);
- [MD Labor's Non-Discrimination Plan](#);
- [MDH Policy 01.02.05](#);
- [ENOUGH Initiative Overview](#)
- [Maryland's Opioid Restitution Fund](#)
- [Maryland State Office of Rural Health](#);
- [Maryland Overdose Data Dashboard](#);
- [Maryland Eligible Training Provider List](#) and
- [Maryland Addiction & Behavioral-Health Professionals Certification Board \(MABPCB\) Certified Peer Recovery Specialist](#).

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment A - Maryland Counties Wholly Defined as Rural
- Attachment B - ENOUGH Communities in Rural Areas of the State

Maryland Counties Wholly Defined as Rural
Allegany
Calvert
Caroline
Carroll
Cecil
Charles
Dorchester
Frederick
Garrett
Harford
Kent
Queen Anne's
St. Mary's
Somerset
Talbot
Washington
Wicomico
Worcester

ENOUGH Community	County
South Penn and John Humbird	Allegany
Federalsburg	Caroline
Waldorf	Charles
Cambridge and South Dorchester	Dorchester
Route 40 The Golden Mile	Frederick
Edgewood	Harford
South End, Hagerstown	Washington