MAXIMIZING WIOA’S POTENTIAL:
A Regional Analysis of the State Plans of Maryland, Virginia, and Washington, DC
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A. Introduction and Background

The passage of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) in 2014 created a unique opportunity for all states to improve their workforce training and education systems. The legislation revamps state workforce systems to more effectively meet the needs of jobseekers and incumbent workers (especially those with high barriers to employment), as well as employers. By emphasizing career pathways, sector partnerships, employer/demand-driven training, coordinated performance measurement, and integration of programs, WIOA seeks to create a more streamlined, coordinated, and effective workforce system. As the U.S. Department of Labor describes the law, “WIOA is landmark legislation that is designed to strengthen and improve our nation’s public workforce system and help get Americans, including youth and those with significant barriers to employment, into high-quality jobs and careers and help employers hire and retain skilled workers.” The creation of a WIOA state plan is an important first step in this process.

Maryland, Virginia, and Washington, DC have very close economic and labor market ties. For this reason, in this research report, we compare several specific elements of the WIOA state plans of these jurisdictions in order to gauge the similarities and differences between the different approaches—including the greatest strengths and weaknesses.

We believe that this analysis can be helpful in several ways. For instance, many companies have locations in multiple jurisdictions throughout the DC-MD-VA area. A cross-jurisdictional comparison can help businesses assess the different practices or policies they may need to adopt in order to access the resources of each jurisdiction’s workforce system and/or benefit from their programs. In addition, workers in the Metropolitan Washington area often change jobs across jurisdictional lines. State plans can impact things such as credential portability and the ability of workers to access training appropriate to their needs. Finally, lawmakers in a single jurisdiction may be able to look to their neighbors to make improvements within their own state, and/or locate opportunities to collaborate across jurisdictional lines.

This report seeks to answer the following questions:

» How does each jurisdiction seek to meet the needs of vulnerable populations who face significant barriers to employment?

» To what extent does each of the state plans maximize the opportunities presented by WIOA, especially in terms of sector partnerships, career pathways, in-demand training, performance measures, and integration of SNAP and TANF?

» What are strong practices within each jurisdiction that can be shared and adopted by the other jurisdictions to achieve a more effective and coordinated regional workforce system?

To this end, we assess the three jurisdictions’ WIOA state plans along the following issue areas:

1. Vulnerable Subpopulations, including:
   • Adult learners
   • Returning citizens
   • Individuals with disabilities
   • Youth
   • English-language learners and immigrants
   • Low-income individuals

2. Performance Measurement

3. Sector Partnerships and Career Pathways

4. High-Demand Sectors

5. Governance and Management of Implementation

For each issue area, we note what we consider the most promising practices in each jurisdiction, as well as each jurisdiction's key areas for improvement. “Promising practices” are those that
stood out as strongest and/or most innovative within the region. Also, where applicable and where noted, they are based on best practices recommendations from expert groups such as the National Skills Coalition and the Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP).

In some areas of analysis, no jurisdiction stood out in this way, and therefore, a “promising practice” designation is not necessarily given in every subsection. Similarly, “areas of improvement” are the ways in which we believe that the jurisdiction could make its state plan and implementation trajectory stronger, either based on what other jurisdictions are doing in this area, or what best practices experts recommend.

Our analysis includes this Summary Report, which highlights the key findings and recommendations from our research, as well as a series of supplementary modules which go into far greater detail in each of the five key issue areas.

It should be noted that this report is solely an assessment of the WIOA state plans, and not the overall workforce development systems. The authors acknowledge that the WIOA state plans are very much a blueprint for activities that have not yet been implemented, and that strong implementation will be key to the workforce development system’s overall success. The authors also acknowledge that there very well may be additional job training and education programs, activities, and initiatives within each jurisdiction which are not mentioned in the state plan itself. To assess, or even describe, every activity that each jurisdiction may be embarking on is outside the scope of this paper, and therefore only the activities that are mentioned in the state plan are discussed in this report. To the extent that we identified programs that were initiated after the WIOA state plan submission deadline of April 1, 2016, and they are in line with the state plan’s stated goals or planning procedures, those activities are included in this report.

It should also be noted that, as geographically larger jurisdictions, Maryland’s and Virginia’s state plans must be applicable to diverse labor markets in rural, suburban and urban settings. Both jurisdictions also have local plans that are not reviewed in this report that address some of their more regionalized needs. Finally, as federal approval of these respective plans occurred in summer and fall 2016, there may be certain revisions to these plans not reflected in this report.

This research is coauthored by The Commonwealth Institute for Fiscal Analysis, DC Appleseed, the DC Fiscal Policy Institute, the Job Opportunities Task Force, and the Maryland Center on Economic Policy. The project is made possible by a grant from the Greater Washington Workforce Development Collaborative, an initiative of the Community Foundation for the National Capital Region.

B. Key Cross-Jurisdictional Learnings

A few issues stand out as requiring additional planning and resources across all three jurisdictions. In the following areas, no single jurisdiction stood out as particularly strong or innovative, either compared to the other jurisdictions’ plans, or compared to nationally-recognized best practices. Notwithstanding that Maryland’s and Virginia’s State Plans are designed to guide more specific local plans, some of these areas lacked sufficient detail or clear direction to guide implementation and all are necessary to the effective implementation of WIOA. These cross-jurisdictional issues include:

» **Barrier Remediation:** Populations that face barriers to employment often face multiple barriers at once. Thus, a comprehensive approach to barrier remediation is needed. However, though some of the plans carefully identified what the potential barriers might be, none of the three jurisdictions’ plans contains what might be considered a comprehensive approach to barrier remediation for key vulnerable subpopulations. For example, while each of the state plans note lack of reliable and/or affordable transportation as a key barrier, none of the state plans provide concrete plans for expanding transportation assistance programs. All three jurisdictions should integrate a comprehensive transportation assistance program into their WIOA implementation plans. Regarding
child care, none of the three jurisdictions integrate into their WIOA implementation teams—or require that local Workforce Development Boards (WDBs) integrate into their WIOA implementation teams—the agencies, organizations, and/or experts who can assist with child care planning in their communities.

» Career Pathway Services for Adult Learners: All three jurisdictions include some level of attention to career pathways and to services for adult learners (meaning adults with basic skills at or below the 8th grade level), but there is limited attention to linking adult learners to those career pathway opportunities. In order to better serve adult learners, all three jurisdictions need to strengthen their efforts to establish career pathways partnerships that offer specific opportunities for those with limited basic skills, provide barrier remediation to address the many barriers faced by adults with limited basic skills, and provide connections to apprenticeship opportunities that would otherwise be out of reach for many adult learners.

» Services for Individuals with Disabilities: Each of the jurisdictions has strengths in this area and opportunities to leverage resources and expertise, including Maryland’s commitment to improving inclusive governance by including a Title IV (Vocational Rehabilitation) representative on each of the state level WIOA implementation working groups. But Maryland and Virginia have long waiting lists for services, and all three jurisdictions have areas where participants and service providers have identified unmet needs, including transportation. Each jurisdiction could take additional steps to serve as many eligible people as possible and get them into or back to work. All three jurisdictions need to increase their focus on removing the multiple barriers to employment that people with disabilities may face. In addition, all three jurisdictions should continue to expand co-location and data sharing efforts to ensure that people with disabilities can access all the services they need—physically and programmatically—while minimizing unnecessary hurdles.

» Performance Measures: Performance measures indicate where the “rubber meets the road” in WIOA. As performance benchmarks are set and adjusted over the first two years of implementation, all three jurisdictions should outline the specific benefits for programs that meet, and/or consequences for programs that fail to meet, performance goals.

» Resource Allocation: Aside from required priority of service commitments, none of the plans indicate priorities or identify targeted resources to achieve the goals, except for Virginia’s commitment of 40 percent of adult training funds to programs leading to certification in high demand occupations. Without aligned resources, it is difficult to determine the likelihood of the jurisdictions reaching their stated goals for education and training activities.

C. Cross-Jurisdictional Recommendations Moving Forward

As they begin to implement their respective state plans, the three jurisdictions should consider collaborating on these and other issues described in this report in order to foster a more cohesive regional workforce system. For example, since many businesses cross jurisdictional lines, the three jurisdictions should consider coordinating their sector strategies, especially within the overlapping target industries they have identified. This would make individual companies better able to contribute to sector strategy development, and would streamline credentialing and access to appropriate education and training opportunities for workers crossing jurisdictional lines. Both Virginia and Maryland could direct local workforce areas in the Greater Washington DC area to more closely collaborate.

Given the common industries, sectors, and employers that are shared throughout the region, a regional workgroup should be formed under the aegis of a neutral regional or national organization. The workgroup should include key staff from agencies in all three jurisdictions as well as major employers who have operations in multiple jurisdictions. Regular meetings could
elicit sharing of knowledge, resources, and promising practices, with the goal of better serving the needs of workers, jobseekers, and employers across the three jurisdictions and achieving greater effectiveness and efficiency for all. For example, it may be beneficial for leaders of each of the workforce systems to begin a dialogue to identify areas of common interest where collaboration would benefit all.

Moving forward, we recommend that the three jurisdictions establish a formalized strategy to implement this cross-jurisdictional collaboration on WIOA implementation. To that end, a workforce board leadership council should be convened by April 2017 to develop a list of at least three shared priorities and recommendations for workgroup membership. We strongly encourage a first step of ensuring cross-jurisdictional eligibility for training providers, as well as a discussion of barrier remediation throughout the region.

Overall, an ongoing dialogue among leaders of the workforce systems in each of the three jurisdictions would be beneficial for sharing knowledge, resources and promising practices, and to developing and working towards a vision for a comprehensive, regional workforce system that maximizes the opportunities presented by WIOA. This analysis provides a starting point for a regional conversation.

D. Promising Practices in Each Jurisdiction

The charts that follow outline key findings specific to each jurisdiction’s plans. The authors sought to identify promising or innovative practices in the three state plans in each of ten selected issue areas. For most issues, one or more of the jurisdictions had program or plan elements that could be cited as noteworthy. Examples include: Maryland’s Skilled Immigrants Task Force to reduce barriers to work for immigrants; Virginia’s requirement that local WDBs spend at least 40 percent of Title I (WIOA adult and dislocated worker) training funds annually on training services that lead jobseekers to a credential in a high-demand industry; and DC’s Data Vault, which provides a shared client intake platform across multiple agencies. These and other examples are listed in the table below, and elaborated on in the supplementary modules.
VULNERABLE SUBPOPULATIONS: BARRIER REMEDIATION

**MD**  
Maryland’s plan calls for continuous staff training, improved coordination to reduce duplication, and information sharing.

The state’s sector partnership model includes barrier remediation.

**VA**  
Virginia’s plan includes an “integrated resources” team to determine strategies for helping multiple-barrier clients.

VULNERABLE SUBPOPULATIONS: SUBPOPULATIONS OF INTEREST

**MD**  
The state’s oversight of adult education is housed within a Department of Labor rather than Department of Employment, which may enable greater integration of adult education with workforce development activities.

The MI-BEST and ACE integrated education and training pilot programs include job placement staff and integrated wraparound services.

**VA**  
The Adult Learning Resource Center, dedicated to adult learners, provides professional development, technology integration, and technical assistance, and serves over 3,500 of Virginia’s adult education administrators and practitioners annually.

PluggedInVA provides career pathways specifically for adult learners through partnerships with community colleges and other post-secondary institutions.

**DC**  
The adult education and system performance dashboard, once fully developed, will outline key goals for the system with specific measures and targets to gauge performance.
**Returning Citizens**

**MD** Correctional education for inmates as described in Maryland's plan includes adult basic education, vocational programs, post-secondary education, certifications, pre-apprenticeships, and apprenticeships.

**VA** Virginia's plan includes a SNAP Employment & Training ex-offender program—a partnership between state agencies and reentry organizations to help enroll returning citizens in employment and training services. (However, it is currently active in only one region.)

**DC** DC provides the strongest policy environment for employment of returning citizens with its "Ban the Box" policy, as it applies to both government and private employers.

DC's Jail Work Reentry Program—a six week program appropriate for jail rather than prison populations—links directly to transitional employment opportunities for participants upon release.

**Individuals with Disabilities**

**MD** All WIOA implementation working groups include a vocational rehabilitation (VR) representative, improving inclusive governance.

Maryland's apprenticeship program includes strong outreach to youth with disabilities.

Maryland's plan includes good coordination with employers through a single point of contact model.

**VA** Virginia's plan includes a promising Common Needs Assessment tool, robust youth outreach activities, and good coordination with employers (in only one region).

**DC** DC's plan includes promising youth outreach programs, including coordination with the summer youth employment program.

**Youth**

**MD** Maryland's plan includes a youth apprenticeship pilot program as well as local management boards that ensure coordinated implementation of a local inter-agency service delivery system for children, youth, and families.

**DC** DC's plan includes an education-focused Re-engagement Center with a new virtual component.
All DC one-stops have a bilingual workforce development specialist. Vital documents at DC’s Department of Employment Services are translated into six languages, and language helpline provided.

Maryland’s plan includes concrete strategies for TANF integration and jobseeker focus groups.

DC’s Workforce on Wheels mobile American Job Center (AJC) helps to ensure that individuals in targeted low-income communities are reached.

Maryland’s plan includes additional measures on TANF, and performance targets for ETPs and TANF funding.

DC’s plan includes additional measures on TANF and youth. DC’s new Data Vault can provide efficient data alignment.

Maryland’s plan includes a specific sector strategy model (EARN).

MI-BEST and ACE programs integrate basic education and job training. They also include job placement staff and wraparound services.

Virginia’s plan includes a strong directive to local workforce boards on expectations for high quality services to employers.

A Career Pathways Workgroup helps develop and coordinate initiatives that involve multiple state agencies and workforce development programs. One example is PluggedInVa, which provides career pathways and Integrated Education and Training (IET) specifically for adult learners through partnerships with community colleges and other post-secondary institutions.

A Career Pathways Task Force has developed a city-wide strategic plan to design and develop career pathways specifically for adult learners. Sector-specific career pathways profiles have been developed through stakeholder engagement, and a Career Pathways Innovation Fund was established through legislation to pilot and scale best practices in career pathways implementation.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VA</td>
<td>Virginia’s plan and state law requires local boards to spend at least 40 percent of Title I funds annually on training services for jobseekers that lead to a high-demand industry credential.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DC</td>
<td>DC’s Labor Market Information focuses on jobs that provide a living wage and require an associate’s degree or less.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MD</td>
<td>Maryland submitted a combined WIOA plan that includes a thorough and detailed implementation strategy and oversight structure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VA</td>
<td>Virginia submitted a combined WIOA plan that includes a concrete commitment to transparency.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EACH JURISDICTION

This chart offers specific implementation recommendations for each jurisdiction based on the starting places identified in the plans, and the models provided by the other jurisdictions.

VULNERABLE SUBPOPULATIONS: BARRIER REMEDIATION

**MD** Maryland’s plan expresses intent to braid funds to provide supportive services including transportation and child care, but doesn’t make concrete funding commitments or specify implementation details.

Maryland’s current efforts for barrier remediation are largely program-specific and disjointed. A more comprehensive approach should be taken if Maryland is to meet the draft performance benchmarks that were recently developed. A study of major barriers faced by job seekers and workers should be done for each vulnerable subpopulation and geographic area. The job seeker focus groups can play a key role in informing the development of a more comprehensive barrier remediation strategy.

Maryland’s plan also lists several general strategies to facilitate barrier removal, but does not include specifics for how those strategies will take shape, or what funding sources will be deployed to implement them.

**VA** Virginia should form the “integrated resources” team for multiple barrier clients as proposed in the plan and support implementation of the strategies that the team identifies.

**DC** DC’s plan for barrier remediation includes general goals like increasing “earn and learn” opportunities, but does not include specifics for how those opportunities will take shape, or what funding sources will be deployed to implement them. DC should create an infrastructure for ongoing planning and improvement.

**MD** Maryland should identify specific strategies to increase access to child care resources for WIOA participants. Maryland should consider making more explicit in its WIOA materials the resources available to adult learners and jobseekers to remediate barriers related to child care.
### Virginia

Virginia should identify child care resources in their plan such as WIOA supportive services and Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) subsidies and identify strategies to make these funds more accessible to parents, similar to DC.

Virginia should integrate into the WIOA Implementation Team the agencies, organizations, and/or experts who can assist in child care planning.

### DC

DC should plan to integrate into its WIOA implementation team the agencies, organizations, and/or experts who can assist with child care planning, and in particular those who can provide expertise on the child care subsidy system.

### Transportation

While each of the state plans note that the lack or cost of reliable public and private transportation is a key barrier to employment, none of the state plans provide concrete plans for expanding transportation assistance programs. All three jurisdictions should integrate a comprehensive transportation assistance program into their WIOA implementation plans.

### Vulnerable Subpopulations: Subpopulations of Interest

#### Adult Learners

**Maryland (MD)**

Maryland should seek to establish and strengthen linkages between EARN and the adult education system as identified in the plan, as well as work to support the expansion of promising practices from MI-BEST and ACE, including the provision of state funding to support integrated education and training.

Maryland should identify strategies to better serve its large population of adult learners who are immigrants and English Language Learners.

Maryland should also work to improve barrier remediation for adult learners.

**Virginia (VA)**

Virginia should work to achieve greater integration and coordination between partners and to expand PluggedInVA to adults with lower literacy levels as identified in the plan.

The state should also outline a clear, specific plan to connect adult learners to apprenticeships and to address the barriers that prevent these connections from being made or taking hold.

Virginia should also work to improve barrier remediation for adult learners generally.

**DC**

DC mentions an interest in linking apprenticeships with adult learning, but has not outlined a clear, specific plan to connect adult learners to opportunities through sector partnerships or pre-apprenticeships, or to address the barriers that prevent these connections from being made or taking hold.
DC must address significant gaps in its career pathways strategy by ensuring that sector partnerships are established and technical training providers integrate basic skills.

DC should also work to improve barrier remediation for adult learners.

Maryland should extend its existing “Ban the Box” employment policy to include private employers.

Virginia should consider a more coordinated and systemic statewide effort for prisoner reentry. The state should start by expanding the SNAP E&T ex-offender program, which is only active in one region of the state.

Virginia should extend its existing “Ban the Box” employment policy to include private employers.

DC should ensure that the Reentry Program links to a career pathway. Career opportunities, including additional educational options, should be built into the transitional employment program model.

DC should emulate inclusive governance structures currently in place in Maryland and Virginia.

DC should increase its focus on removing the multiple barriers to employment that people with disabilities may face. It is especially important to develop strategies to address areas where participants

Maryland should use state resources as well as braiding strategies to serve applicants currently on the waiting list.

Maryland should continue to expand its efforts on coordination between vocational rehabilitation and other WIOA agencies through data sharing and increased physical co-location.

Virginia should use state resources as well as braiding strategies to serve applicants currently on the waiting list.

Virginia should continue to scale-up the Common Needs Assessment Tool and expand co-location and data sharing efforts to ensure that people with disabilities can access all the services they need, while minimizing hurdles.

The state should also increase its focus on removing the multiple barriers to employment that people with disabilities may face.

Virginia should leverage its Career Pathways for Individuals with Disabilities (CPID) grant to flesh out career pathway opportunities for people with disabilities and/or basic skill deficits.

Maryland should use state resources as well as braiding strategies to serve applicants currently on the waiting list.

Maryland should continue to expand its efforts on coordination between vocational rehabilitation and other WIOA agencies through data sharing and increased physical co-location.
Youth

DC
cont.

and service providers have indicated that unmet needs exist, such as transportation and affordable housing, as well as ensuring that one-stop services are physically and programmatically accessible.

DC should adopt a single point of contact model in its employer outreach efforts.

MD

Maryland should specify barrier remediation strategies to serve youth with disabilities and youth who have aged out of the foster care system.

Maryland should formalize the plan to co-enroll WIOA, TANF, and SNAP E&T recipients aged 18-24.

VA

Virginia should more clearly specify how the state will comply with the WIOA requirement that 75 percent of WIOA Title I Youth funds are spent on out-of-school youth and provide guidance to local workforce development boards.

Virginia should also more clearly identify how work-based learning opportunities, including apprenticeships will be included in CTE programs and STEM and Health Sciences Academies.

Virginia should seek to co-enroll TANF recipients aged 18-24.

DC

The U.S. Department of Labor has identified issues related to WIOA Youth program enrollment, participant documentation and privacy, policies and procedures, and cost allocation. DC’s Corrective Action Plan (CAP) stipulates that enrollment will be expanded through contracting and outreach, and performance will be improved through better sub-grantee coordination, service offerings, and case management. DC should ensure this CAP is followed, with transparency throughout the process.

DC should seek to co-enroll TANF recipients aged 18-24.

MD

Maryland should translate more of the informational material provided at American Job Centers, and should add dedicated bilingual staff where population warrants.

Maryland should identify strategies to better serve its large population of adult learners who are immigrants and English Language Learners.

VA

Virginia should staff bilingual workforce development specialists at one-stop centers in areas of the state with large populations of English Language Learners.

Virginia should also provide translated documents at all one-stop centers.

DC

With a growing population of immigrants in DC, and a high unemployment rate, DC should increase the availability of bilingual specialists and career training opportunities for English Language Learners.
Virginia should set performance benchmarks or requirements for providing employment services to low-income individuals to ensure that this population is adequately served.

Virginia should also specify strategies in the plan for TANF and WIOA integration and conducting outreach to low-income individuals, similar to DC’s Workforce on Wheels, to enroll more people from targeted communities.

DC should set performance benchmarks or requirements for providing employment services to low-income individuals to ensure that this population is adequately served.

Maryland’s performance benchmarks could be strengthened by expanding them to include not only TANF recipients, DORS clients and foster care youth, but also the broader population of low-income individuals who do not fall into these categories.

As Maryland works to develop a comprehensive data system, it should ensure that it includes strategies for assessing and referring candidates to the programs that best fit their needs and for tracking performance and outcomes across programs. DC’s Data Vault can serve as a model.

Once performance targets are finalized, Maryland should outline the specific benefits for meeting and repercussions for failing to meet the performance goals. Currently, this is only mentioned for eligible training providers.

Virginia should consider adopting additional performance measures for specific programs such as those adopted by DC and Maryland for TANF participants and youth in order to serve these clients more effectively.

Virginia should develop a comprehensive data system for assessing and referring candidates to the programs that best fit their needs and for tracking performance and outcomes across programs.

Virginia should outline the specific benefits for meeting and repercussions for failing to meet performance goals.

DC’s plans are relatively vague on how meeting the set performance measures will impact programs. As performance benchmarks are set and adjusted over the first two years of implementation, DC should outline the benefits of meeting and specific repercussions for failing to meet the performance goals, so that providers have a clear understanding of their requirements and potential consequences.

While DC’s Data Vault is a very promising data tool, the District should spell out a timeline for completing it, and make it a priority.
**MD** While EARN Maryland serves as an excellent sector partnership model, the program is ripe for expansion. Bringing EARN to scale and increasing opportunities for adult learners should be a main priority in the first years of WIOA implementation.

Maryland has several key initiatives that can be built upon to develop a more comprehensive career pathways strategy, including EARN Maryland, the ACE and MI-BEST pilot programs, and apprenticeship programs. Developing a strategic plan for career pathways that clearly delineates the roles and activities of various stakeholders and the integration of these existing initiatives will greatly aid in this effort. The WIOA Career Pathways workgroup can oversee this effort.

**VA** Virginia should model the implementation of the recently approved GO Virginia off of the EARN Maryland program in which funds are awarded by labor market need in target industries.

Virginia should also more clearly outline the roles and activities related to sector strategies in the creation of the sector strategies “play book” that the state has committed to developing in the plan.

Virginia should work to achieve greater integration and coordination between partners and to expand PluggedInVA to adults with lower literacy levels as identified in the plan.

The state should also outline a clear, specific plan to connect adult learners to apprenticeships and to address the barriers that prevent these connections from being made or taking hold.

Virginia should leverage its Career Pathways for Individuals with Disabilities (CPID) grant to flesh out career pathway opportunities for people with disabilities and/or basic skill deficits.

**DC** DC should more specifically outline the roles and activities related to sector partnerships, and clarify the roles of the Department of Employment Services and Department of Disability Services in ensuring employer compliance with ADA and job development for people with disabilities.

DC must address significant gaps in its career pathways strategy by ensuring that sector partnerships are established and technical training providers integrate basic skills education opportunities.

**MD** Maryland should focus on job opportunities that provide a living wage in determining priority industries and occupations, particularly in the analysis of skills gaps.

**VA** Virginia should focus on job opportunities that provide a living wage in determining priority industries and occupations, particularly in the analysis of skills gaps.
Virginia should use labor market analysis that targets industries and occupations with a living wage in awarding funds for the recently approved non-credit grant program.

DC should specify how alignment between WIOA funding and the five high-demand sectors will be demonstrated.

DC should also delineate a specific timeline and funding for its stated goal of expanding on-the-job-training and apprenticeship programs to all five high-demand sectors.

Maryland should outline a specific timeline for implementation.

Virginia should outline a specific timeline for implementation.

Virginia should seek to streamline and increase coordination within its fragmented workforce system as mentioned in the plan.

DC should outline a specific timeline for implementation.

DC should seek to achieve greater transparency and accountability by making information on WIOA implementation and performance publicly available.

**F. Conclusion**

The analysis of the three state plans in this report provides a starting point for a regional conversation about planning and implementing WIOA.

Perhaps not surprisingly, the WIOA state plans of each of the three jurisdictions have different strengths and limitations. One jurisdiction may have a well-developed strategy in a particular area, but has lessons it could learn from the other jurisdictions in others.

As the various “promising practices” highlighted in this report are fully developed and implemented, each jurisdiction can look to these models for insight into how to build and/or improve its own programs. In addition, working across state lines to align and streamline efforts could benefit the region’s economy, especially for workers and employers who live and work cross-jurisdictionally.

There are some areas in which all jurisdictions need improvement—namely, remediating barriers related to transportation, developing services for adult learners, and integrating services for individuals with disabilities. As the jurisdictions seek to address these deficiencies within their plans, they may benefit from coordinating efforts at improvement.

Finally, regardless of the strength of the ideas in each of the individual WIOA state plans, all of the jurisdictions must now shift their focus to implementation. Many of the ideas laid out in the plans are worthy of considerable merit, but the details can be vague, or lacking entirely. It will be up to the state agencies—and local advocates who support workforce and economic development—to ensure that these plans are implemented in a strategic, transparent, and effective manner, in order to provide the most benefit to the workers and employers who rely on these systems.
Module One: Vulnerable Subpopulations
Promising practices in barrier remediation for vulnerable subpopulations include:

- **Maryland**: Efforts to improve barrier remediation infrastructure include continuous staff training, improved coordination to reduce duplication, and information sharing.
- **Virginia**: The state plan includes an “integrated resources” team to determine strategies for helping multiple-barrier clients.
- **DC**: For child care barrier remediation, the state plan identifies federal funding resources to be utilized, and includes strategies to make subsidies more accessible.

In this section, we first compare the overall infrastructure of each of the three jurisdictions’ strategies and activities to address the needs of vulnerable subpopulations, per the WIOA state plans. Next, we outline the strategies for six specific subpopulations. WIOA Section 3(24) defines an extensive list of subpopulations that face barriers to employment. From this list, we have selected key subpopulations of interest and aggregated them into six categories for easier comparison between the jurisdictions. (Of course, we acknowledge that in many cases, these populations can and do overlap.) The subpopulations of interest are:

1. Adult Learners
2. Returning Citizens
3. Individuals with Disabilities
4. Youth
5. English-language Learners and Immigrants
6. Low-Income Individuals

i. **Priority of Service**

WIOA provides a focus on serving “individuals with barriers to employment,” defined in WIOA section 3(24) and seeks to ensure access for these populations on a priority basis.

WIOA establishes a priority requirement for funds allocated to a local area for adult employment and training activities. One-stop center staff responsible for these funds must give priority to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient in the provision of individualized career training services. Under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA, the predecessor of WIOA), priority was required to be given to public assistance recipients and low-income individuals when States and local areas determined that allocated funds were limited. Under WIOA, priority must be provided regardless of the level of funds. WIOA also expanded the priority to include individuals who are basic skills deficient as defined in WIOA section 3(5). In addition, the law stipulates that Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) is a required partner in the WIOA one-stop system, unless the governor affirmatively opts out. These two provisions are intended to increase the number of higher-need adults in job training services.¹

Veterans and eligible spouses continue to receive priority of service for all DOL-funded job training...
programs, which include WIOA programs. However, when programs are statutorily required to provide priority for a particular group of individuals, such as the WIOA priority described above, priority must be provided in the following order:

i. First, to veterans and eligible spouses who are also included in the groups given statutory priority for WIOA adult formula funds. This means that veterans and eligible spouses who are also recipients of public assistance, low-income individuals, or individuals who are basic skills deficient would receive first priority for services provided with WIOA adult formula funds.

ii. Second, to non-covered persons (that is, individuals who are not veterans or eligible spouses) who are included in the groups given priority for WIOA adult formula funds.

iii. Third, to veterans and eligible spouses who are not included in WIOA’s priority groups.

iv. Last, to non-covered persons outside the groups given priority under WIOA.

Maryland and DC identify in their plans the above list of populations that face barriers to employment, as well as the new WIOA priority of service requirements. Virginia also states priority of service for veterans and eligible spouses, and also plans to implement a policy addressing priority for public assistance recipients, other low-income individuals, and those who are basic-skills deficient.

ii. Barrier Remediation

All three jurisdictions speak to barrier remediation for key vulnerable subpopulations though none contains what might be considered a comprehensive approach. From a best practice perspective, the plans would either describe in sufficient detail—or direct local boards to describe—how they will address the most common barriers to participation in education and employment programming, such as child care, transportation, criminal history, health/mental health issues, and basic skills deficiencies. In addition, plans should include, or require local boards to include, analysis of their intake, assessment, and referral processes for individuals with barriers, including describing the capacity of the community-based organizations and other resources that will be called upon to remediate those barriers throughout training and employment. Equally important, plans should describe how the state or its regions will ensure program and physical accessibility for individuals with disabilities for all WIOA funded activities and how the state will manage the ongoing collaboration required to address education and employment barriers. The general approach of each jurisdiction to barrier remediation is discussed here, whereas barrier remediation strategies of each jurisdiction that pertain to specific subpopulations are discussed in the relevant subsections below.

DC’s plan includes a comprehensive goal but is non-specific on implementation. The plan states as a goal that all residents including people with disabilities and those with multiple barriers to employment, as well as youth, regardless of education or skill level, can access the education, training, career, and supportive services necessary to move forward in their career pathway. It also includes general goals like increasing “earn and learn” opportunities, such as supporting apprenticeships and on-the-job training. It does not include specifics about what funding sources will be deployed to implement them, or how they will be expanded. The strategy to “strengthen partnerships” among agencies to better address barriers is named but is also lacking in specificity.

Maryland’s plan expresses intent to braid funds to provide supportive services including transportation and child care, but doesn’t specify implementation details. Various programs (Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessments and EARN Strategic Industry Partnerships, for example) provide barrier identification and remediation services, but efforts are largely disjointed and program-specific. However, Maryland’s plan does list several general strategies to facilitate barrier removal and more effective service provision to populations facing barriers to employment including continuous staff training, improved coordination to reduce duplication, and information sharing. Maryland will also be conducting focus groups with jobseekers to understand the barriers they face, and to solicit their input in streamlining operations and services, including existing programs, to better help jobseekers overcome any barriers to
employment. Local plans may include additional barriers that local areas may wish to address through local service delivery. In addition, while not included in the state plan, in September 2016, Maryland issued draft performance benchmarks for public comment, which specifically seek to track and improve access and use of supportive services in each of the following areas: child care, transportation, substance use, behavioral health issues, housing issues, child support issues, criminal background issues, and domestic violence issues. Though not specifically focused on barrier remediation, Maryland was awarded $2 million under the federal ApprenticeshipUSA initiative, which will be utilized to grow Registered Apprenticeship opportunities for populations that face barriers to employment: low income individuals, youth, women, communities of color, and persons with disabilities.2

Virginia’s plan proposes that the state form an “integrated resources” team to determine strategies for helping multiple-barrier clients. The team will design a plan for broader dissemination that records best practices in serving these groups.

iii. Child Care

Child care is one of the most common barriers faced by low-income parents trying to access and complete education and training. In addition to simply trying to find, arrange, and pay for child care, low-income parents are faced with many additional challenges, including balancing education/training with work, changing or unpredictable class and work schedules that don’t align with formal child care options, and insufficient supply of quality child care options.3

The newly passed WIOA and Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) laws present key opportunities to support low income parents to access workforce development services.4 Not only does WIOA give priority for individuals with barriers to employment, including single parents and young parents, but key strategies highlighted in the law offer opportunities for serving low-income parents, such as the emphasis on individual assessment, career plan development, and career pathways, which can and should include provisions for child care. WIOA’s focus on partnerships also points to opportunities to engage state child care partners and have child care programs be active in service delivery.5 A reauthorized CCDF, which provides vouchers to low-income populations, also provides opportunities around partnership and consumer education.6

Child care is mentioned in each of the state’s WIOA plans, but overall, little detail is provided.

DC’s plan has the most specific language with respect to addressing the child care needs of low-income parents. DC already integrates child care services at its youth re-engagement center, and aims to integrate child care services more fully into American Jobs Centers (AJCs) as well, allowing staff in these locations to assess eligibility and issue vouchers for child care subsidies. DC provides public preschool and prekindergarten for all three- and four-year-olds, which leverages federal Head Start funding. This alleviates the cost of care for families, but summers and before- and after-care are not included. DC has increased the number of nontraditional slots in recent years, but this increase is still insufficient. Similarly, many of DC’s child care services offer nontraditional hours, but these are not necessarily within convenient proximity to parents’ work or home.7 The DC plan has identified two child care resources for the WIOA service population—WIOA supportive services funding and CCDF subsidies—and includes strategies to make CCDF subsidies more accessible to young parents and those seeking employment services.8

The Virginia plan mentions the availability of transitional child care for one year for clients of the Virginia Initiative for Employment not Welfare (VIEW)9 who are no longer eligible for TANF benefits, but this is only for those who are working. The Maryland plan provides the least detail, but has some discussion of child care for TANF recipients. Maryland and Virginia should consider making more explicit in their WIOA materials the resources available to adult learners and jobseekers to remediate barriers related to child care.

All three states (and local WDBs10) should plan to integrate into their WIOA implementation teams the agencies, organizations, and/or experts who can assist with child care planning in their
communities, and in particular those who can provide expertise on the child care subsidy system. Local providers around the country have incorporated innovative strategies for addressing these issues, which DC, MD, and VA can look to as models. As a starting place, implementation teams can pose the following questions:

1. To what extent do intake processes at AJCs or local programs inadvertently screen out parents, for example by requiring parents to have child care in place before allowing enrollment in the program?

2. Do AJC or local WIOA funded providers assess the child care needs and barriers of adult learners interested in participating in education and training at intake? Are child care needs part of the client’s employment plan? Is any help provided to adult learner parents who need help finding child care so they can participate in education and training?

3. What are the likely hours and schedules of the education and training services being offered to adult learners in your state/community— including for related activities such as homework or internships? How compatible are the overall time demands of education, training, and/or work with schedules of child care providers (which tend to operate more during traditional work hours and require regular attendance)? Could the education and training schedules be adjusted to make it easier for parents to access child care—such as block scheduling?

4. To what extent are child care options available to adult learner parents who need care on evenings or weekends? If the supply is inadequate, are there steps that can be taken to expand available options for this population?

5. If activities are short-term, can the adult education and training providers provide drop-in care during the activity? What licensing or other requirements need to be considered to ensure the health and safety of the children?

6. Can WIOA supportive service funding be used to meet child care needs (as is specified in the DC plan)? Under what conditions? States can set their own criteria for how these funds should be used, including how much will be paid to providers, whether there are requirements, etc.

7. Are eligibility requirements for CCDF consistent with the programming that is being promoted through career pathways and sector partnerships, such as apprenticeships or adult basic education? Are there hidden barriers, such as minimum hour requirements? How easy or difficult is it for parents to enroll and do they need help? Is there a sharp “cliff” at which parents are cut off from CCDF eligibility because they are earning too much, but are unlikely to be able to pay for child care at the current local rates?

iv. Transportation Assistance

Another very common barrier faced by participants in job training programs is access to reliable, affordable transportation. In addition, the integration of transportation assistance is a key barrier remediation strategy to ensure that adult learners can fully access and complete adult education programs.

Each of the state plans notes that limited access to reliable and/or affordable public and private transportation is a key barrier to employment. However, none of the state plans provide concrete plans for expanding transportation assistance programs. While DC’s Department of Employment Services and all three jurisdictions’ vocational rehabilitation (VR) agencies do provide some transportation funding, this assistance does not cover the full need, since the cost of local public transit is high, and many programs and individuals don’t have access to these funds. As with child care, all three jurisdictions should integrate a comprehensive transportation assistance program into their WIOA implementation plans.
Promising practices in services for adult learners include:

- **Maryland:** The state’s oversight of adult education is housed within a DOL rather than DOE, which may enable greater integration of adult education with workforce development activities. The MI-BEST and ACE integrated education and training pilot programs include job placement staff and integrated wraparound services.

- **Virginia:** The Adult Learning Resource Center, dedicated to adult learners, provides professional development, technology integration, and technical assistance, and serves over 3,500 of Virginia’s adult education administrators and practitioners annually. PluggedInVA provides career pathways specifically for adult learners through partnerships with community colleges and other post-secondary institutions.

- **DC:** The adult education and system performance dashboard, once fully developed, will outline key goals for the system with specific measures and targets to gauge performance.

Services for adult learners fall under Title II of WIOA, also known as the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act. Adult education is defined in WIOA as academic instruction and education services below the postsecondary level that increase an individual’s ability to:

1) read, write and speak in English and perform mathematics or other activities necessary for the attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent;

2) transition to postsecondary education and training;

3) obtain employment.

The goals of WIOA Title II are to:

1) assist adults to become literate and obtain the knowledge and skills necessary for employment and economic self-sufficiency;

2) assist adults who are parents or family members to obtain the education and skills that:

3) are necessary to becoming full partners in the educational development of their children; and

4) lead to sustainable improvements in the economic opportunities for their family;

5) assist adults in attaining a secondary school diploma and in the transition to postsecondary education and training, including through career pathways; and

6) assist immigrants and other individuals who are English language learners in:

   A) improving their:

      i. reading, writing, speaking and comprehension skills in English; and

      ii. mathematics skills; and

   B) acquiring an understanding of the American system of government, individual freedom, and the responsibilities of citizenship.

More information on adult learning opportunities, including career pathways and integrated education and training initiatives, can be found in the module on Sector Partnerships and Career Pathways. In addition, while English language learners are touched upon in this section, we feel that their needs are unique, and therefore we engage in a deeper discussion of the three jurisdictions’ approach to serving this population in the English Language Learners and Immigrants section of the module on Vulnerable Subpopulations.
i. Defining Adult Learners

WIOA defines individuals eligible for Title II services as an individual:

1) who has attained 16 years of age;

2) who is not enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under State law; and

3) who:

   A) is basic skills deficient;
   B) does not have a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and has not achieved an equivalent level of education; or
   B) is an English language learner.

WIOA Title II does not define basic skills deficient, but instead follows the National Reporting System (NRS) educational functioning levels (EFLs) that provide standardized assessment benchmarks to define the various literacy levels for adult learning and English language instruction. The NRS has defined a set of six EFL descriptors for Adult Basic Education/Adult Secondary Education (ABE/ASE) and six for English Language Acquisition (ELA). WIOA requires standardized assessments to be utilized to determine the literacy levels of individuals seeking Title II services.

DC defines “Basic Skills Deficient” according to a single standardized assessment, the eCASAS test (the electronic version of the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems). In DC, a learner who tests at or below the eighth grade level in math and/or reading is considered Basic Skills Deficient. There are clear advantages to this strategy, especially as DC’s shared intake data system is expanded, to use a clear and measurable standard across agencies and systems, as well as ensuring that the system focuses on learners least likely to succeed in most current vocational training opportunities. There may be disadvantages as well, however, insofar as testing may serve as a barrier to entry for some, and may exclude others based on skill deficits that the eCASAS is not designed to measure. It is too soon to determine whether the single assessment strategy is one to be emulated, or whether states that opt for providing a menu of options, including self-attestation and American Job Center (AJC) staff observation, are best able to achieve their overall performance goals.

Though not specifically mentioned in their WIOA plans, Maryland and Virginia have issued separate policies to provide guidance on basic education skills and English language assessments. Maryland permits ABE/ASE assessments to be done using the CASAS and TABE tests, and ELA assessments to be done using CASAS, TABE, TABE CLAS-E and BEST Literacy and/or BEST Plus. Maryland has also released guidelines for assessment for Title I and Title II providers to reduce duplication and requires local partners to coordinate assessment. Virginia permits the use of BEST Literacy, BEST Plus, CASAS Life and Work Series and TABE CLAS-E to be used for ELA assessment, and CASAS Life and Work Series and Life Skills, GAIN and TABE to be used for ABE/ASE assessment.

ii. Barrier Remediation for Adult Learners

DC’s plan mentions that gaps exist in the provision of support services to adult learners, such as transportation, housing, child care, counseling, coaching and income supports, which adult learners often need in order to fully access and complete education and training opportunities. Child care is stated to be one of the most persistent barriers for District residents in DC’s adult education and workforce development system as a whole. The immediate need for income is also stated as a major barrier to participation in adult education. Thus, agencies in DC are working to increase access to “earn and learn” opportunities through expanding apprenticeships and on-the-job training opportunities.

In Virginia, adult education service providers are expected to help individuals assess their own skill levels, schedules, and potential barriers to successful participation in instruction as part of the application and orientation process.

In Virginia, adult education service providers are expected to help individuals assess their own skill levels, schedules, and potential barriers to successful participation in instruction as part of the application and orientation process.

The Maryland Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (MI-BEST) program and the Accelerating Connections to Employment (ACE) model piloted in Maryland included wraparound support services to help adults overcome barriers they faced in completing the program, as well as in securing and maintaining employment.
iiii. Adult Learning Approaches and Activities

The adult learning efforts of DC and Maryland align with Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS) and integrate CASAS competencies. In DC, all Adult and Family Education (AFE) grantees will be required to embed career awareness (lowest basic skills level) or Integrated Education and Training towards an industry certification (at the intermediate and secondary levels). In contrast, Virginia has not adopted the CCSS, but instead has adopted the Mathematics and English Standards of Learning (SOLs). There is alignment of CCSS with SOL.

All three jurisdictions have a primary oversight body for adult education. DC’s oversight is conducted by the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE), Maryland’s oversight is by the Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning (DWDAL) within the Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation (DLLR), and Virginia’s Department of Education administers Title II of WIOA, with leadership and support from the Virginia Adult Learning Resource Center (VALRC). It is worth noting that Maryland’s adult education (WIOA Title II) administration is within the Department of Labor rather than Education, which may facilitate greater integration and alignment of adult education with workforce development activities. The table below summarizes the adult learning programs and services offered within each jurisdiction. DC’s adult education services are provided at the AJCs, as well as by providers subgranted through OSSE. Through competitive grants to ensure that services are available in every jurisdiction based on level of need, Maryland and Virginia offer services through subgranted providers only.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program or Service</th>
<th>Maryland</th>
<th>Virginia</th>
<th>Washington, DC</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adult Basic Education (ABE)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adult Secondary Education (ASE)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>ELA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Correctional Education</td>
<td>X</td>
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WIOA-FUNDED ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMS
In all three jurisdictions, adult education is supported by a combination of federal and local funding.

DC currently has 23 service providers, which include community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, and select DC Public Schools and DC Charter Schools that specialize in serving a diverse population of District residents. These providers serve nearly 4,000 residents annually.

In Maryland, adult education providers include a wide range of community colleges, local public school systems, community-based organizations, public libraries, and the state’s Correctional Education program. Annually, Maryland serves approximately 35,000 to 40,000 adults through funded programs. Students are wait-listed every year when classes reach their maximum capacity.

Virginia’s adult education programs enrolled 20,221 individuals in 2015-16. This total represents enrollment in all adult education programs as well as PluggedInVA, the state career pathways program. Virginia’s Office of Adult Education and Literacy (OAEL) competitively awards funds to adult education providers in each of its 22 adult education regions. The funds will only be awarded to providers that serve the entire region and that address educational and workforce needs identified by local workforce development boards. Key factors in determining grantees include meeting federal requirements and demonstrating past effectiveness. Additional consideration will be given to applicants for the inclusion of career pathways, family literacy, corrections education, workforce preparation, and integrated education and training. Notice of funding will be provided to community colleges, community-based organizations, local workforce development boards, and workforce development system partners.

Virginia’s CCRS strategic plan calls for the VALRC to lead and support efforts to develop and sustain instructional approaches in each of Virginia’s 22 adult education regions. Virginia’s Office of Adult Education and Learning (OAEL) will provide VALRC leadership funds to carry out WIOA Title II state leadership activities. VALRC provides opportunities throughout Virginia for professional development, technology integration, and technical assistance, and serves over 3,500 of Virginia’s adult education administrators and practitioners annually.

\*ESL (English as a Second Language) is no longer used in WIOA. The new term is ELA (English Language Acquisition). ESL is used in this table because it is the phrase used in the State WIOA plans of Maryland and DC.
iv. Other Efforts and Activities Related to Adult Learning

DC plans to develop an adult education and system performance dashboard, which will outline key goals for the system with specific measures and targets to gauge performance. It will be available to the public to ensure transparency and accountability. The District will also develop an instrument to evaluate the quality of service providers currently in the workforce system, including adult education providers. This tool will allow residents to search service providers and make informed decisions about which providers meet their needs.

After the submission of Maryland’s WIOA plan, DLLR and DHR established a Skilled Immigrants Task Force (described in detail in the English Language Learners and Immigrants section of the module on Vulnerable Subpopulations), which includes a subcommittee focused on assessing the need for and connecting the skilled immigrant population to ESL/Adult Education and Literacy services. Maryland also received $2 million under the ApprenticeshipUSA federal initiative to expand Registered Apprenticeships for populations that face barriers to employment. Maryland’s Department of Workforce Development and Adult Learning is seeking to utilize this apprenticeship expansion to establish more partnerships between the adult learning system and apprenticeships in Maryland.

v. Summary and Key Takeaways

All three jurisdictions are facing a challenge in meeting the high demand for adult education services, as current investments in adult education and career pathways skill building are insufficient to meet demand.

None of the three jurisdictions seem to be particularly strong in providing barrier remediation or connections to apprenticeship opportunities for adult learners. Establishing strong barrier remediation strategies will be essential in ensuring that adult learners become and remain connected to career pathways and stable employment. The integration of supportive services, particularly transportation assistance, is a key barrier remediation strategy to ensure that adult learners can fully access and complete adult education programs.

DC’s plan notes a need to increase capacity and better align adult education content standards, and various partners have begun work to provide professional development and technical assistance to adult education providers.

In Maryland, since 90 percent of participants enrolled in adult education test below high school proficiency in English and/or math, and English language learners represent approximately 49 percent of the adult education population, Maryland’s plan notes the unique challenges it faces in serving adult learners, as this population has a variety of skill levels and a number of cultural challenges that must be addressed. Since the plan’s submission, the establishment of the Skilled Immigrants Task Force may help address these specific challenges.

Virginia’s strategic plan for VALRC to provide professional development, technology integration, and technical assistance seems promising. However, Virginia’s plan states that the adult education system has numerous service providers, leading to a disjointed system. The state is seeking to achieve greater integration and coordination between partners and to expand the PluggedInVA model to adults with lower literacy levels (K-8). As provision of services to adult learners throughout the education spectrum is a strength of DC, Virginia may benefit from DC’s expertise in this area.
Promising practices in correctional education include:

- **Maryland**: Programming includes ABE, vocational programs, post-secondary education, certifications, pre-apprenticeships, and apprenticeships.
- **Virginia**: The SNAP E&T ex-offender program is a partnership between state agencies and reentry organizations to help enroll returning citizens in employment and training services. The program is only active in one region of the state and could be further expanded in Virginia.
- **DC**: The Jail Work Reentry Program—a six week program located in DC’s main correctional institution—links directly to transitional employment opportunities for participants upon release. DC also provides the strongest policy environment for employment of returning citizens with its “Ban the Box” policy, as it applies to both government and private employers.

### i. Barrier Remediation for Returning Citizens

Correctional education is recognized as an effective strategy to reduce recidivism and can therefore be considered part of the strategy to remediate the barriers that many returning citizens face.  While vocational programs are reported to have the strongest correlation with post-correctional employment, those who participate in adult basic, secondary, and post-secondary education also experience a boost in employment outcomes. But even with education and vocational training, those with criminal histories face discrimination in the workplace, as well as challenges that can come from trying to meet conflicting demands associated with community corrections (probation or parole). All three jurisdictions have programs to support offender reentry and address the barriers ex-offenders face in obtaining and retaining employment. The District is the only one of the jurisdictions that goes beyond programs to issue policies that impact all employers and all those with criminal backgrounds.

Virginia reports just over 12,000 residents were released from incarceration in 2014. The Virginia Department of Social Services, in partnership with the Department of Criminal Justice Services, utilizes funding from the SNAP Employment & Training (E&T) program to provide services for returning citizens. The program, specific to ex-offenders, requires state agencies to coordinate with reentry organizations to enroll returning citizens in SNAP E&T services. These services include case management, job search, basic employment skills training (job readiness), community work experience, vocational training, education and job retention services. Educational services include basic skills training, career readiness leading to a Career Readiness Certificate (CRC), and preparatory courses for the General Educational Development (GED) certificate. The program is currently active in only one region—the Charlottesville area—due to turnover in reentry organizations in other areas of the state, though that region has served about 1000 clients each year. The state is currently pursuing expansion of the program to other areas of the state including Northern Virginia.

The Maryland plan acknowledges that more collaboration is required to better serve the needs of ex-offenders. Maryland’s correctional system released close to 11,400 inmates in 2013, the last year for which data is publicly available. DLLR has a number of programs to improve workforce outcomes for ex-offenders including: participation in a federal program that provides bonding and tax credits for employers who hire ex-offenders; the utilization of staff specifically trained in ex-offender employment; and, the establishment of workshops aimed at opportunities for record expungement. Maryland also supports partnerships that carry from incarceration through re-entry, such as pre-release meetings for inmates with local workforce organizations. One such
partnership exists with Vehicles for Change, which not only provides additional training opportunities to ex-offenders who complete auto-mechanic certification while incarcerated, but also helps participants access vehicles for their personal use post-release to mitigate transportation barriers. Maryland also funds an Offender Workforce Transition Initiative which prepares and supports inmates’ efforts to reintegrate into the community by supporting family reunification, promoting financial literacy, and providing work readiness coaching. This program starts in the correctional institution but, for select offenders, continues past release. Staff work with recommended offenders until job placement occurs and continues with post-employment follow-up.

No entity in Maryland currently carries out the functions of Section 212 of the Second Chance Act of 2007. However, Maryland recognizes that the ex-offender population is a priority population and, as such, plans to incorporate any non-profit entity, who receives Section 212 grant funds from the USDOL, within the next 4 years into the Maryland State WIOA Plan to ensure effective integration and service delivery. Maryland will update its plan if and when an entity exists to administer this program.

In the District, the Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency supervised more than 18,000 individuals in FY2015, including those on probation, parole and supervised release. The District’s Office on Returning Citizens Affairs provided reentry services to just over 5,000 individuals, including referrals and support for housing, health care, job search and education, some programming for which is provided through WIOA Title II. The District has attempted to reduce barriers for returning citizens in a variety of ways, including passing “Ban the Box” legislation which is designed to limit the impact of a criminal record on employers' hiring practices. DC also offers the federally-funded Work Opportunity Tax Credit program to encourage employers to hire returning citizens, as well as other targeted groups.

Programmatically, the District offers a Transitional Employment Program—which also known as Project Empowerment—which primarily serves returning citizens, and funds an “Earn While You Learn” basic skills opportunity for young adults under supervision through Title II. It also supports pre-apprenticeship programming which, because of employer agreements to hire all successful completers, has been particularly effective in reducing the impact of a criminal background on participant success. The District’s on-the-job-training (OJT) strategy, which the District proposes to expand, currently includes a 90 percent reimbursement rate to employers for ex-offender hires. Since the submission of the state plan, DC’s Department of Employment Services and Office of Attorney General have announced that they will be collaborating on a diversion program for returning citizens; the details of this program are forthcoming.

ii. Changes to Correctional Education Under WIOA

WIOA Title II includes a requirement that states provide education to those who reside in correctional institutions, as well as other institutional settings. In addition to the correctional education activities allowed under WIA, WIOA includes additional allowable activities consistent with the overall WIOA focus, such as career pathways and transition to re-entry services, designed to reduce recidivism. WIOA increased the spending limit on correctional education to 20 percent of Title II funds (versus 10 percent under WIA), and requires that priority be given to those scheduled to leave prison within five years.

All three state plans include a commitment to correctional education, though Maryland offers the most robust statewide services.

Maryland’s Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation includes an Office of Correctional Education. That office is overseen by the Correctional Education Council and works in partnership with the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services to provide both academic and vocational educational programs in Maryland’s 22 state prisons and pre-release centers. Programming in local detention centers is provided by local adult education grantees, and focuses on improving basic academic skills and preparation for post-secondary or vocational programming. In the state prisons,
adult education is required for all inmates with 18 months or more to serve and no high school diploma or equivalent (unless exempted). Programming begins with adult basic education (ABE) and continues through post-secondary and vocational options. For those who enter with or complete a high school degree or equivalent, the Office of Correctional Education provides a choice of 23 pre-apprenticeship vocational programs or a limited selection of post-secondary courses. Students earn college credit at a four year liberal arts college or community college. Goucher College offers inmates the great chance to earn a 4-year degree. Certificates are available in occupations aligned with in-demand industry requirements and may be applied toward an associate’s degree upon release. Incarcerated individuals may also participate in an apprenticeship program in meat cutting. Maryland cites two American Job Centers that focus specifically on returning citizens.

As DC does not have a prison system, incarcerated individuals include those housed in the local jail and half-way houses. This typically includes those who are serving sentences of one year or less, and those being held pre-trial or pending transfer to another state or federal facility. The average length of stay for men in custody of the DC Department of Corrections (DOC) is about three months, and over 70 percent of male inmates spend six months or less. For women, the stays are even shorter: the average length of stay is two months, and over 80 percent spend six months or less (2014 figures). For this reason, DC’s correctional education programming is focused on short-term intervention.

The DC Jail Work Reentry Program was established in July 2015 as a partnership between the Department of Employment Services (DOES) and the DOC to provide intensive six-week job training for incarcerated persons with an impending release date. The program includes a dedicated housing unit for a 20 inmate cohort, and is designed to parallel and align with DOES’s Project Empowerment, a transitional employment program that focuses largely (though not exclusively) on returning citizens. Classes in the Jail Work Reentry program are held Monday through Friday from 9 am to 4 pm, and include job readiness workshops, hands-on computer training through a contracted computer instructor, case management for wrap-around services, and post-release services. Upon release, these individuals are eligible for immediate job placements through Project Empowerment. It is not clear from the plan whether and how WIOA funds will be used in relation to the Jail Work Reentry Program. The plan makes reference to the possibility of using WIOA funding to provide civil legal services to further assist returning citizens with supports such as record expungement. WIOA funds are committed to be used, however, to fund at least one AFE grantee that specializes in providing services to returning citizens.

Virginia awards funds to adult education and literacy providers based on location, service area, scope of program, demographics served, demonstrated need, data collection, and fiscal management. The WIOA plan states that each of the 22 adult education regions will be required to fund one Title II program that serves incarcerated individuals. Virginia’s Workforce Development Board will work with representatives from the Virginia DOC, local and regional jails and other education stakeholders to identify best practices to inform development of the Request for Proposals.

iii. Summary and Key Takeaways

Because of the proven link between correctional education, increased post-incarceration employment, and decreased recidivism, states should invest in a strong infrastructure to ensure institutionalized individuals have access to high-quality education and training services as well as strong linkages with post-incarceration reentry supports and services. Of the three state plans, Maryland’s describes the most robust infrastructure for increasing availability of educational opportunities for incarcerated individuals, from ABE through post-secondary and vocational credentials, while DC has a state office dedicated to serving the reentry needs of returning citizens and has implemented a “Ban the Box” policy to reduce hiring discrimination against those with criminal records. DC also operates a subsidized jobs program, the Transitional Employment Program, which largely serves returning citizens. Because it runs a jail but not a prison system, DC faces the specific challenge of
only having access to incarcerated individuals for very limited periods of time. In this context, the Jail Work Reentry Program makes a great deal of sense, and efforts should be made to provide similar systematic linkages and supports for additional inmates to increase their education and employment capacities. Virginia should consider a more coordinated and systemic statewide effort.

D. INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

Promising practices in services for individuals with disabilities include:

- **Maryland**: All WIOA implementation working groups include a VR representative, which improves inclusive governance. The state’s apprenticeship program includes strong outreach to youth with disabilities. The plan includes good coordination with employers through a single point of contact model.

- **Virginia**: The plan includes a promising Common Needs Assessment tool; robust youth outreach activities; and good coordination with employers.

- **DC**: Programming includes promising outreach to youth with disabilities, including coordination with the Summer Youth Employment Program.

Each jurisdiction’s state plan includes extensive discussion of the services available to workforce system participants who have disabilities. The majority of this discussion occurs in a section of each plan describing the implementation of WIOA Title IV, which concerns vocational rehabilitation (VR) services, although information concerning people with disabilities is present throughout each plan as well.

Each jurisdiction provides VR and other workforce services to people with disabilities through a different administrative structure. In DC, these services are provided by the Rehabilitation Services Administration, which resides within the District’s Department on Disability Services. In Maryland, VR is provided by the Division of Rehabilitative Services, which resides within the Maryland State Department of Education. The Maryland Department of Disabilities also provides services such as assistive technology and performs a governance role. In Virginia, VR services are divided between two agencies: the Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired serves Virginians with visual disabilities, and the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services serves as the state’s general VR agency.

i. Capacity and Priority of Service

Limited capacity is an issue affecting all three jurisdictions. Currently, the VR agencies in Maryland and Virginia do not receive enough funding to serve all eligible individuals. Between these two states, more than 5,000 eligible applicants are currently on a waiting list rather than receiving services that could put them back to work. Although DC currently serves everyone who is eligible, it is considering instituting a waiting list in response to budget constraints, according to the plan. This suggests that more resources—from the states as well as the federal government—are needed to meet the employment needs of residents who have disabilities.

When there are not enough resources to serve everyone who is eligible, VR agencies must establish an order of selection, in which applicants with the most significant disabilities are served first. All three jurisdictions have defined an order of selection, although they differ in the precise definitions used to assess applicants’ disabilities. The order of selection is currently in use in Maryland and Virginia’s general VR agencies. In addition, VR agencies may choose whether to deliver specific services to applicants who need these services to keep their current job, regardless
of their position in the order of selection. In states that choose this option, eligible individuals whose disabilities are deemed less severe may receive services before those whose disabilities are considered more significant, if these specific services are necessary to maintain employment. Each approach has strengths and weaknesses: specific, targeted services can be a powerful tool to prevent job loss, but it is important that VR agencies maintain a strong commitment to serving individuals with the most significant disabilities. Virginia and DC have indicated in their plans that they will prioritize these applicants, while Maryland has not.

ii. Barrier Remediation for Individuals with Disabilities

Many people with disabilities also face other barriers to employment, and removing these barriers is a necessary step to enable participants to find and keep jobs. Each jurisdiction’s plan discusses efforts to address barriers to employment—such as access to transportation, assistive technology, housing, substance use, literacy, and assistance with Social Security benefits—although each jurisdiction does not address every barrier. No jurisdiction discusses in detail the child care needs of participants who have disabilities, for example.

Identifying the barriers to employment faced by program participants is a necessary first step in effectively addressing those barriers. While steps to identify barriers are a standard part of VR services, the DC and Virginia plans discuss several of these steps in detail, such as the development of intake assessments, hiring of re-engagement and retention specialists, and regional supportive service planning meetings.

Access to transportation poses a major challenge for many individuals with disabilities, with program participants and service providers in Maryland and Virginia naming this as an important barrier to employment. Maryland’s VR agency has committed to exploring ways to expand transportation assistance through partnerships with other organizations, including other WIOA agencies, but has not developed detailed plans. Maryland does provide transportation-related assistive technology, including adaptive driving and hand controls for cars. DC and Virginia’s general VR agencies both provide transportation assistance to participants in supported employment, and in parts of Virginia, VR staff are helping participants obtain driver’s licenses. While the ability of state agencies to provide transportation assistance is partly limited by the options available in each local jurisdiction, all three jurisdictions should develop more detailed plans to assist participants with transportation.

All three plans include substantial discussion of assistive technology services available to participants:

» Each jurisdiction’s VR agency trains the staff of other WIOA agencies in assistive technology, ensures that appropriate equipment is available at American Job Centers (AJCs), and helps participants determine what assistive technology they need.

» Maryland provides transportation, mobility, and computer equipment through its Workforce and Technology Center.

» Virginia provides devices to participants in supported employment.

» Maryland and Virginia lend equipment to participants on a short-term basis, and Maryland helps people purchase assistive technology by offering them low-interest loans. Maryland’s lending program is administered by the state’s Department of Disabilities. Virginia has a separate authority that provides the low-interest loans for assistive technology.

» Maryland and Virginia provide training and assistance to employers, including worksite assessments. The DC plan does not indicate whether any training on assistive technology is offered to employers.

The Virginia and DC plans also discuss other barriers that participants may face:

» Individuals with disabilities in Virginia and DC cite the lack of affordable housing as a major barrier to employment. The District’s needs assessment recommends addressing this barrier, but does not offer specific strategies.
The DC plan discusses coordination between the VR agency and other service providers to address the substance-related needs of some individuals considered to have the most significant disabilities. Virginia’s general VR agency has agreements with the Department of Social Services as well as the Department of Behavioral Health and Development Services to help program participants who have both disabilities and substance-related needs find jobs.

According to the DC statewide needs assessment, many participants who receive Supplemental Security Income or Social Security Disability Insurance need assistance planning these benefits as they transition into employment. The plan recommends taking steps to address this need, but does not describe specific strategies.

DC plans to incorporate literacy assessments into its intake process for individuals with disabilities.

iii. Programmatic Integration

WIOA places a strong emphasis on the coordination and integration of workforce services, which allows participants to access all the supports they need to find a job while minimizing administrative hurdles. This goal is especially important for participants with disabilities, many of whom face multiple barriers to employment and have not always had equal access to services and opportunities.

The steps jurisdictions can take to coordinate services and ensure that the overall workforce system is accessible fall into three general categories: inclusive governance, system-wide accessibility, and program integration.

Inclusive governance includes efforts to ensure that policymakers in the workforce system consider the needs of people with disabilities. Maryland and Virginia have made progress on this front. Maryland’s Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation has established several working groups charged with planning aspects of WIOA implementation. Each of these groups includes a representative from the state’s VR agency, ensuring that at least one institutional voice for people with disabilities is present in important policy discussions. In addition, Maryland’s VR agency is represented along with the state’s other WIOA agencies on Maryland’s system-wide Alignment Group. Virginia has created an Executive Management Committee for advising and monitoring Department of Labor disability grants, as well as a task force on the accessibility of the one-stop service delivery system. Both groups are expected to make policy recommendations to enhance system accessibility. DC should look to the approaches taken in Maryland and Virginia in developing more inclusive governance structures.

System-wide accessibility concerns any concrete steps a jurisdiction takes to ensure that the entire workforce system, including programs that do not use disability to determine eligibility, is accessible to people with disabilities. Each state plan is required to include a section describing these efforts. Highlights from each jurisdiction include:

- DC is working to eliminate discriminatory practices such as requiring that one-stop participants identify themselves using a driver’s license. The District also plans to provide additional services to those who need them, such as assistance and extra time in completing intake forms.
- The Maryland plan describes in detail the state’s process for monitoring accessibility, which includes site visits and input from disability experts. After Maryland’s plan was submitted in 2016, the state was awarded a $2.5 million Disability Employment Initiative grant to improve system-wide accessibility and expand career pathways for people with disabilities in Montgomery and Anne Arundel counties.
- The Virginia plan discusses the state’s Common Screening Tool, a web-based assessment currently in the pilot stage, which is used to identify disabilities in one-stop participants. According to the plan, this tool has helped to identify disabilities in 17 percent of participants who have used it, and as a result may have enabled them to obtain additional services.

Finally, program integration ensures that participants who need multiple services are able to transition between them as seamlessly
as possible. Two concrete steps can promote program integration: co-location of services and data sharing.

When VR offices and other workforce programs share a physical location, it saves time and effort for participants who need multiple services. All three jurisdictions co-locate some services, but this process is not complete in any jurisdiction. Vocational rehabilitation services are available at all four of DC’s AJCs, but at two of these centers they are currently offered only one day a week. Maryland co-locates six of its 22 VR offices at AJCs. Five out of 35 Virginia offices are co-located. While not co-located, Virginia does have VR staff and office space at other one-stop centers. Although all three jurisdictions conduct a geographic needs assessment to inform the allocation of VR resources, the plans do not state whether these analyses are used in making co-location decisions. Co-location efforts improve access to services, and more participants will benefit if these efforts are expanded. The Maryland and DC plans state that these jurisdictions plan to expand co-location as opportunities arise.

Data sharing is an important tool that workforce agencies can use to streamline service delivery. When service providers share participant data (with appropriate safeguards) they can determine eligibility for multiple programs at once, simplify referrals, and reduce unnecessary paperwork. Maryland and DC have begun integrating their workforce data systems in the form of the Maryland Workforce Exchange and the DC Data Vault. However, at the time the state plans were developed, neither of these systems included vocational rehabilitation services. This means that individuals with disabilities may face greater administrative burdens in accessing a suite of services than other workforce development participants. At this time, none of Virginia’s WIOA partners have fully integrated data systems. All three jurisdictions plan to eventually create comprehensive workforce data systems. In the interim, Maryland plans to conduct a data inventory to determine what information is collected by each agency, to establish memorandums of understanding that would allow agencies to share data, and to create a standardized staff confidentiality form. Virginia plans to scale up pilot resources, such as its Common Needs Assessment. All three jurisdictions should continue efforts to further integrate data systems, and should ensure that programs serving people with disabilities are fully incorporated into these systems.

iv. Students and Youth with Disabilities

WIOA increases state VR agencies’ responsibility for serving students with disabilities, mandating that they spend at least 15 percent of their budgets on pre-employment transition services for this population and requiring these services to use broader eligibility rules than other programs. Each state plan discusses at length the institutional arrangements required for these services.

Each jurisdiction has established cooperative agreements between its VR agency and educational agencies that define each agency’s operational and financial responsibilities for transition services, as well as how the agencies will identify and reach out to potentially eligible students. These agreements were in place before WIOA, and therefore do not currently address the changes mandated by the law. Maryland and DC are currently updating their agreements to incorporate these changes, and the Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired plans to do so when the current agreement expires. Virginia’s general VR agency is working to develop agreements that incorporate changes from WIOA, but do not have a timetable for when that will be accomplished.

The three jurisdictions also differ in the outreach strategies described in their plans. All three jurisdictions place VR counselors in schools and produce outreach materials such as brochures. DC and Virginia’s general VR agencies each describe additional steps that may help identify more eligible students. In the District, VR counselors participate in school staff meetings and provide information to school employees on the services available. The agency also meets monthly with school staff responsible for post-secondary transition planning services for students with disabilities to monitor referrals. Virginia uses its case management database to identify students turning 14 who have visual disabilities and may be eligible for VR or pre-employment transition
services. The agency sends letters to these families with a description of the services available as well as contact information for a nearby VR counselor, and then makes direct contact within 10 days. In addition, Virginia’s Postsecondary Education Rehabilitation Transition (PERT) Program, identifies secondary-aged students with disabilities and provides a comprehensive career evaluation for each of these students. Services are provided at the Wilson Workforce and Rehabilitation Center which provides intensive residential transition services to youth with disabilities, as well as medical rehabilitation and vocational services for youth and adults. The other agencies should adopt these comprehensive outreach strategies, as they may help in enabling more eligible students to access services.

Each jurisdiction also provides services outside of the school system to youth with disabilities. In DC, the Summer Youth Employment Program coordinates with local community-based organizations that provide substantial outreach to youth with disabilities, and a “boot camp” is available a week before the summer program starts to provide work readiness training to youth considered to have the most significant disabilities, along with support and troubleshooting throughout the placement. This program is currently expanding.

Maryland’s VR agency plans to coordinate with the apprenticeship program to ensure that youth with disabilities are aware of and can access apprenticeships. DLLR’s youth and disability services program provides service coordination and technical assistance to local workforce areas and partners.

v. Coordination with Employers

As required under WIOA, each jurisdiction’s VR agency has established an employer relations unit to coordinate workforce services for people who have disabilities. These units cultivate relationships with employers, gather information on businesses’ workforce needs, host career fairs, identify qualified candidates for specific jobs, and coordinate with other WIOA agencies. The units also provide education, training, and technical assistance to employers. They encourage businesses to employ people with disabilities, provide information on tax incentives, and offer assistance in developing and implementing reasonable accommodations as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act.

In addition to the above universal practices, each jurisdiction’s employer relations unit takes certain steps that some others do not:

» Maryland and Virginia’s general VR agencies designate their employer relations units as a single point of contact for businesses interacting with the VR system, which streamlines communication and service delivery to employers. The Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired does not use this term, but this agency assigns project managers to business partners, a step that may deliver similar benefits. The District’s employer relations unit should consider adopting a single point of contact model.

» Virginia’s Career Pathways for Individuals with Disabilities grant and Maryland’s Disability Employment Initiative grant (awarded after the state plan was submitted) include resources to expand career pathways for people with disabilities, enabling participating individuals to receive the workforce services they need to develop high-demand skills that will meet employers’ needs.

» Virginia’s general VR agency places a unique emphasis on developing partnerships with other state agencies to employ people with disabilities. This approach may have the advantage of producing especially stable opportunities, as there is little risk of these employers failing or relocating. However, it is important to ensure that these jobs, like any other, satisfy the WIOA standard of competitive integrated employment. VA also has five staff whose focus is outreach to business in a staffing solution approach to business engagement and approximately 20 counselors to assist in these efforts.

vi. Summary and Key Takeaways

Although the availability of federal funding is an important determinant of states’ capacity to provide VR services, each jurisdiction should
take steps to identify the necessary resources to serve as many eligible people as possible and get them back to work. These steps could include supplementing federal funding with state and local resources, as well as braiding of funds to use resources as efficiently as possible.

Maryland has made important progress on inclusive governance by including its VR agency on the state’s WIOA implementation working groups and Alignment Group. Virginia’s Executive Management Committee and accessibility task force have the potential to deliver similar benefits. DC should emulate these efforts.

All three jurisdictions should increase their focus on removing the multiple barriers to employment that people with disabilities may face. It is especially important to address areas where participants and service providers have indicated that unmet needs exist, such as transportation.

All three jurisdictions should continue to expand co-location and data sharing efforts to ensure that people with disabilities can access all the services they need, while minimizing unnecessary hurdles. While full data system integration should be the end goal, steps like Maryland’s data inventory can improve service integration in the short term.

Virginia’s Common Needs Assessment is a promising tool for helping AJC users identify disabilities and access a full range of services. Virginia should continue to scale up this tool, and Maryland and DC should develop similar capabilities, with attention to the necessary safeguards and privacy protections.

Virginia’s General VR agency places a unique emphasis on developing partnerships with other state agencies to employ people with disabilities. This approach may have the advantage of producing especially stable opportunities, as there is little risk of these employers failing or relocating.

The DC and Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired plans both include detailed plans on school outreach. The District’s close cooperation with school officials and Virginia’s multipronged outreach approach each have the potential to make services available to a greater share of eligible students. These jurisdictions should learn from each other, and Maryland should explore similar outreach options.

Maryland’s apprenticeship program and DC’s Summer Youth Employment Institute for youth with disabilities participating in the Summer Youth Employment Program provide strong examples of coordination with other workforce agencies to provide employment opportunities to youth who have disabilities. All three jurisdictions should continue to seek opportunities for this kind of cooperation.

Maryland and Virginia have taken important steps to streamline service delivery to businesses that employ people with disabilities by designating the employer relations units as a single point of contact or by assigning project managers to employers. DC should take steps in this direction as well.
Youth are a special population of focus under WIOA, as a large number of youth—some 5.5 million nationally—are disconnected from school and employment. While a number of factors contribute to this problem, much can be done by the workforce system to affect change. Even youth who successfully obtain their high school diplomas are finding it difficult to transition to the workforce due to the lack of opportunities to explore various career paths; obtain hands-on experiences, internships, and entry-level job opportunities; and identify clear pathways for career progression. Youth who have prolonged periods of disconnection from work and school have far more difficulty building an economic foundation for independence. A 2012 study of collective community impact for disconnected youth by Foundation Strategy Group (FSG) found that disconnected youth need four things to be successful in school and career: re-engagement, educational momentum, connection to a career, and youth development. Thus, youth require effective training in skills that lead to employment and careers delivered through youth-friendly strategies that meet the unique needs and challenges they face.

i. Barrier Remediation for Youth

All three jurisdictions identify youth as a population that faces significant barriers to employment. In DC, the Re-engagement Center is now authorized to assess eligibility and provide child care vouchers for youth who want to pursue education. And DC plans to create a new cross-agency assessment to identify each young person’s individual barriers to successfully completing education, training and employment. In Maryland, specific attention is given to youth with disabilities and youth who have aged out of the foster care system, but no specific barrier remediation strategies are mentioned. Virginia does not specifically reference any barrier remediation strategies for youth in its plan.

ii. Emphasis on Out of School Youth

Within the youth subpopulation, the WIOA Title I Youth program stipulates that a minimum of 75 percent of Title I funds must be spent on out-of-school youth (OSY). As such, all three jurisdictions have plans to comply with this requirement.

DC is in a unique situation with regards to youth programs. The USDOL has considered DC a “High-Risk grantee” since 2010, having identified issues with WIOA Youth programs, WIOA implementation steps, and Workforce Board governance. In order to avoid sanctions, the District was required to design a Corrective Action Plan (CAP), which was approved by the USDOL in March 2016 and the Workforce Investment Council (WIC) has been reporting progress since then. The District’s High-Risk designation will remain until CAP deliverables have been met, and/or three quarters of positive performance have been documented.

Redoubling its efforts in light of its USDOL designation, DC has invested heavily in recent years in identifying and serving disconnected or out-of-school youth. The Re-engagement Center (REC) has been established with local funds to serve as an “educational one-stop” for youth where they can identify appropriate programs and support services that will allow them to return to school to complete a secondary credential. DC’s stated goal is to provide increased opportunities
through the REC to connect youth with employment as well as education, but right now employment services are provided only if the lack of a job is identified as a barrier to educational success. DC is also using pre-apprenticeship as a key strategy for supporting youth with basic skill deficits to access a career pathway. To the extent that programs are eligible for WIOA funding, DC proposes to shift local funds away from OSY and into in-school youth, and WIOA funds to OSY.

Virginia’s plan broadly indicates that the state will take into consideration the shift in priorities toward OSY in awarding grants for youth workforce investment activities. Both Virginia and Maryland will allocate Title I Youth funds to local areas based on identifying areas of substantial unemployment and data on the number of economically disadvantaged youth, and local areas must detail how they will serve out of school youth in their local plans. No additional details are outlined in Virginia’s plan.

In Maryland, local management boards are established to ensure the coordinated implementation of a local inter-agency service delivery system for children, youth and families. Local management boards are able to apply flexible state funds through the Governor’s Office for Children to provide supportive services for youth and fill in service gaps. Maryland’s plan indicates interest in expanding youth apprenticeship opportunities for both in-school and out-of-school youth, and in engaging younger TANF recipients ages 18-24 who may also be out-of-school youth in workforce development services in order to help place them on a career pathway that will lead to self-sufficiency and earlier independence from public assistance. Beyond this, no concrete strategies are outlined in the Maryland state plan for engaging out-of-school youth, as this is viewed as the responsibility of programs working in local areas.

### Work-Based Learning

WIOA requires that 20 percent of youth formula funds are spent on work-based learning. Both the DC and Maryland plans outline several initiatives to provide work-based learning opportunities for youth, with a particular emphasis on apprenticeships.

DC’s plan commits to expanding a portion of the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) to be year-round, aligning Career and Technical Education (CTE) students with relevant work experience, and using the SYEP, Youth Earn and Learn, Pathways for Young Adults, and DC High School Internship programs to recruit (primarily in-school youth) for WIOA programs in order to direct youth to credential-earning programs.

Maryland and Virginia have both mentioned CTE programs as a key strategy through which the needs of in-school youth will be supported. Maryland currently offers CTE programs to high school students. These include a work-based learning opportunity (e.g. internships, clinical experiences, or industry-mentored projects) tied to the student’s area of interest. These programs are aligned to establish academic, technical, and employability skill standards, and are centered on ten career clusters. These career clusters connect educators and employers, and provide a framework that is responsive to industry demands, but which needs to be monitored to ensure alignment with WIOA activities in high-growth sectors and current industry needs.
In addition to CTE, the Governor’s STEM and Health Sciences Academies in Virginia are designed to expand options for the general student population to acquire STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) and health science literacy and other critical skills, in order to prepare them for high-demand, high-wage, and high-skill careers. Each academy is a partnership among school divisions, postsecondary institutions, and business and industry. Students are required to earn at least nine dual enrollment college credits.

Maryland is committed to ensuring that at least 20 percent of Title I Youth funds at the local level are spent on work experiences that incorporate academic and occupational education. These funds will be used to support work-based training activities such as summer jobs, on-the-job training, and apprenticeships for in-school and out-of-school youth.

In particular, Maryland is dedicating much effort to increasing apprenticeship opportunities for youth. For in-school youth, starting in September 2016, Maryland’s Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation (DLLR), in partnership with the State Department of Education (MSDE), began piloting a program to establish youth apprenticeships in the STEM fields for high school juniors and seniors in two Maryland counties. Over the course of the next few years, DLLR hopes to build on best practices identified by this pilot to potentially expand this earn-and-learn model.

DLLR also established a Youth Apprenticeship Advisory Committee, a group of business, labor, and CTE experts and other stakeholders, which serves three roles: 1) Evaluate models for high school youth apprenticeship programs and prepare for implementation in Maryland; 2) Identify and secure funding sources such as tax credits, grants, other subsidies to support the establishment and operation of high school youth apprenticeship programs; and 3) Set enrollment targets for the number of apprenticeship opportunities for youth that the state should reach over the next three years. Through its work, the committee has prepared an initial report that outlines eight key recommendations for the state in order to establish apprenticeship opportunities for youth in both traditional and nontraditional apprenticeable fields.45

iv. Other Initiatives

In DC, DOES is working to modify its existing Virtual One-Stop (VOS)—which provides access to employment opportunities, online training modules, available job training programs, and labor market information—to be more youth friendly. Core partners will also register youth in VOS through their universally shared intake system, as appropriate. DOES’s Office of Youth Programs is piloting a badging program with next year’s SYEP participants and some community-based organizations, with potential expansion to WIOA core programs based on pilot results. The badging program is a virtual way to engage young people in online learning where they earn a virtual badge for their knowledge and skills in topical areas. DC’s Youth Re-engagement Center includes a virtual engagement platform for service providers and youth to connect to programming at the REC without the need to go to the brick-and-mortar location.

Virginia is considering engaging specialized agencies to serve disconnected youth. As WIOA requires 14 program elements to be provided for youth, Virginia’s state plan has charged local areas to detail in the local plans how these program elements will be made available and implemented. Virginia’s guidance for the youth program elements is under development.

In Maryland, TANF is referred to as Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA). Due to the new WIOA focus on OSY, as well as inclusion of TANF as a mandated partner, efforts will be made to co-enroll youth ages 18-24 in TANF and WIOA services, with the goal of placing individuals on a career pathway that will lead to self-sufficiency and earlier independence from public assistance. Additionally, the TCA summer youth employment program provides work subsidies for work placements focused on basic skills enhancement and the opportunity to learn marketable work skills.

Additionally, Maryland’s Tomorrow46 is a statewide dropout prevention program operating in 70 high schools across the state (all jurisdictions) and 23 middle schools (in 9 jurisdictions). In addition to preventing high school dropouts, goals of the program are to prevent teen pregnancies, promote academic and career success, and
encourage students to continue education and training. The program population includes 15-20 percent students with identified disabilities.

v. Summary and Key Takeaways
Among the three jurisdictions, DC and Maryland seem to be most actively engaged in efforts to meet the needs of out-of-school youth. DC’s Re-engagement Center in particular provides key supports and resources that disconnected youth need in order to become reconnected to education, but needs to better develop its employment resources and supports. Neither Maryland nor Virginia mention a similar dedicated effort in their plans to serve out-of-school youth. Though both Maryland and Virginia require local areas to specify how they will serve youth, particularly OSY, in their local plans, Maryland has local management boards through the Governor’s Office for Children, which work to ensure coordinated implementation of service for youth at the local level. This adds greater consistency, infrastructure, and accountability at the local level.

Virginia’s efforts focus on STEM and CTE education for in-school youth, and it is unclear from the plan the extent to which these programs involve work-based learning. Maryland is leading the charge in establishing youth apprenticeships. The recommendations issued by Maryland’s Youth Apprenticeship Advisory Committee are likely to be useful as a guideline for other jurisdictions interested in developing youth apprenticeship programs. Indeed, DC has already developed plans to create a Youth Apprenticeship Council, modeled after Maryland. Maryland’s youth apprenticeship pilot program in STEM fields will also likely yield useful lessons for other states.

F. ENGLISH-LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Promising practices in services for English-language learners and immigrants include:

✔ Maryland: Two new initiatives have begun to assist skilled immigrants in overcoming the barriers they face in accessing employment commensurate to their skills and experience: The Skilled Immigrants Task Force and a pilot apprenticeship program in health care.

✔ DC: All one-stops have a bilingual workforce development specialist; vital DOES documents are translated into six languages; and a language helpline is provided.

i. Transition to Postsecondary Education and Employment
WIOA expands services for English language learners beyond the programs in WIA by requiring that programs of instruction within the English Language Acquisition Program lead to postsecondary education and employment.\textsuperscript{47} In addition, WIOA clarifies that English Language and Civics funds can be used for workforce training.\textsuperscript{48} These additional requirements ensure that workforce development programs further the educational and career attainment of English language learners.

Maryland, Virginia, and DC propose similar strategies for providing these newly required services to English language learners. Each jurisdiction proposes offering programs that provide education and literacy activities concurrently with workforce preparation and training. In addition, each region specifies that their integrated education and training programs will focus on a specific occupation or occupational cluster to transition participants into employment opportunities. Virginia’s plan further specifies that these occupations or clusters must be aligned with the local labor market and be connected to “realistic, existing employment opportunities.”

Maryland’s Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (MI-BEST) initiative\textsuperscript{49} is modeled off of Washington state’s I-BEST model.\textsuperscript{50} This approach
provides supportive and wrap-around services to individuals while they are receiving adult literacy and workforce training.

ii. Language Translation Services

While WIOA expands services for English language learners, it does not remove many of the barriers that prevent individuals from participating in workforce development programs. Most importantly, translation services are not available at all American Jobs Centers (AJCs), and important documents may not be available in the native language of interested jobseekers. States can play a vital role in helping to remediate these barriers so that all English language learners and immigrants can receive services that help them pursue their career ambitions.

DC leads the way in offering important translation services that can overcome these language barriers and offers a model for Maryland and Virginia. Every AJC in DC has bilingual workforce development specialists. In addition, the Department of Employment Services (DOES) translates all of its vital documents into the top six languages identified for the demographic area and offers a language helpline that provides translation services. DC is different from Virginia and Maryland in that it enacted the DC Language Access Act of 2004[51] which requires most government agencies to provide oral translation services and written translation of important documents to non-English speakers. While the law shows promise for improving access to vital services for non-English speakers, reviews of its implementation show that many barriers still exist.[52]

The DC plan indicates that the District will be further expanding translation services. DOES will be partnering with the Office of Equal Employment Opportunity to ensure that workforce development materials across all programs are translated into identified languages and are made available in AJCs.

Maryland and Virginia have translated some of the informational material provided in their AJCs. Yet these efforts do not appear as comprehensive as DC’s, and do not include dedicated staffing.

While Virginia does not yet have as comprehensive an approach as DC, the state is in the process of establishing a Limited English Proficiency (LEP) advisory committee that will provide guidance to the one-stops to better ensure that LEP individuals will have access to programs and services. The committee has not yet met, but it will work to develop an action plan that will develop tasks and timelines, key deliverables for one-stops, and resource requirements. Virginia revised its WIOA plan after receiving public comment to include details on this advisory committee. Some resources the committee may encourage one-stop providers to offer include:

» A list of translated documents, materials, and posters such as Your Right to an Interpreter Card and Language Identification Card

» A directory of available interpreter services

» Guidance on establishing partnering agencies to create a local database of interpreters using Refugee Resettlement, community based literacy organizations, and local bilingual staff of other organizations as appropriate

» List of regional adult education services for basic skills development, transition to post-secondary education and training, and credentialing

» Google translate widget for the website

» Staff training on providing services to English Language Learners

iii. Other Activities

Maryland’s DLLR, in partnership with the Maryland Department of Human Resources (DHR) Office of Refugees and Asylees, established the Maryland Skilled Immigrants Task Force in June 2016. The Task Force is a consortium of public and private workforce development organizations that seek to leverage skills that foreign-trained immigrants bring to the United States to meet local job market demand. “Skilled immigrants” are individuals who have acquired extensive education and/or work experience abroad and are ready to work, but often face barriers to full employment, such as lack of written and spoken English language proficiency, lack of professional networks, lack of access to career pathways, undervalued education and
credentials, and expensive and difficult licensing evaluation and acquirement processes. Thus, the Task Force was established with the goal of helping this population overcome these barriers to employment, and aims to foster a win-win environment whereby immigrants secure jobs that match their professional and educational background, and businesses in Maryland have access to a skilled workforce to meet their needs.

The Task Force consists of representatives from the Maryland DHR, DLLR, community colleges, Refugee Resettlement Agencies, American Job Centers, the Governor’s Office of Community Initiatives, and many non-profit organizations that help immigrants achieve integration in their U.S. communities. The Task Force is comprised of five subcommittees: Professional Licensing, ESL/Adult Education and Literacy, Financial Literacy and Assistance, Capacity Building and Best Practice, and Business Engagement and Marketing. It is important to note that this Task Force was developed after submission of Maryland’s WIOA plan and was not legislatively mandated, but was created to respond to both the need observed by DHR and DLLR, and an opportunity from the White House to attend the National Skills and Credential Institute. A report detailing the Task Force’s activities and progress will be issued in July 2017.

Under the Federal ApprenticeshipUSA initiative of the Obama Administration, Maryland has also recently received $2 million in funds to grow and diversify apprenticeship opportunities, $500,000 of which will go towards developing a pilot program to develop a pipeline for skilled immigrants to re-enter jobs in health care.

iv. Summary and Key Takeaways

DC leads the way in offering important translation services. Every AJC in DC has a bilingual workforce development specialist to facilitate access to services and resources for some non-English-speaking DC residents. In addition, DOES translates all of its vital documents into the six most common languages identified for the demographic area and offers a language helpline that provides translation services. The DC plan indicates that the District will be further expanding translation services. It is important to note, however, that advocates in DC have identified as a problem a lack of vocational training and certification opportunities in languages other than English, and this issue is not explicitly addressed in the plan. Maryland and Virginia appear to have translated some of their informational material provided in their AJCs. Yet these efforts do not appear as comprehensive as DC’s, and do not include dedicated staffing. Maryland and Virginia should work to expand their translation services.

Maryland’s Skilled Immigrants Task Force represents an innovative approach to reducing brain waste and ensuring that skilled immigrants are able to successfully translate and apply their expertise and knowledge as members of Maryland’s workforce. As this initiative is in its initial stages, it will be instructive to monitor the outcomes of the Task Force’s activities in order to identify any best practices and assess suitability for replication in DC and Virginia.
Low-income individuals, who often have limited employment skills, are a key population facing barriers to employment. Often, they are relegated to low-wage jobs that lack job security, and must work several jobs to pay their bills. These individuals are often referred to as the “working poor.” Many rely on public assistance programs to supplement their income, as earned income alone is insufficient to make ends meet. Strategies to facilitate economic mobility for this population include providing opportunities for skill-building in order to qualify for middle- and high-skill jobs that pay a family sustaining wage, as well as providing wraparound support services to enable them to fully access training opportunities and succeed in employment. As such, WIOA mandates the integration of TANF and SNAP Employment and Training programs with WIOA, in order to more effectively assist individuals receiving TANF and SNAP benefits in securing stable employment and reducing dependence on public assistance.

i. Defining Low-Income and Establishing Priority of Service

DC’s plan does not define low-income, though the analysis refers to “poverty” and “deep poverty” as well as eligibility for TANF and SNAP. Priority of service is based on the recommendation in the Training and Employment Guidance Letter 3-15 (defined at the beginning of this module).

Virginia’s plan does not define a low-income subpopulation. The plan indicates that priority of service will be given to public assistance recipients, other low-income individuals, or individuals who are basic skills deficient, but the specific guidance for local Workforce Development Boards (WDBs) in implementing the policy is still under development. This policy will establish the priority of service requirement with respect to WIOA Title I formula funds allocated to local workforce development areas for adult employment and training activities. The local workforce development board will be required to direct its American Jobs Centers (AJCs) to adhere to the priority of service requirement and the participant selection process. This must be demonstrated through documentation maintained by the AJCs. The priority of service requirements must be included in the local plan approved by the Governor.

Maryland’s plan includes the WIOA definition of low-income individual and priority of service follows the WIOA Title I priority of service guidelines. Veterans are given first priority of service, before recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient. But under WIOA, low-income individuals must be served, regardless of available funds.

None of the three jurisdictions have set performance benchmarks or requirements for providing employment services to low-income individuals, nor for the share of adult participants receiving job training who are low-income. However, in DC, DOES has traditionally served predominantly low-income individuals and returning citizens. There is a concern that WIOA Title IV services tend to reach a more varied population and, as such, might be seen as bringing down the number of low-income individuals served. DC plans to develop performance measures for priority of service, including “percentage of people successfully moved off income support services through successful and sustainable activity.”

Promising practices in services for low-income individuals include:

- **Maryland**: The state plan includes concrete strategies for TANF integration and jobseeker focus groups.
- **DC**: The Workforce on Wheels mobile AJC helps to ensure that individuals in targeted low-income communities are reached.

G. LOW-INCOME INDIVIDUALS
ii. Barrier Remediation

DC’s plan states that the Department of Human Services, which administers TANF and SNAP E&T, will seek to improve coordination in efforts to better serve the needs of low-income jobseekers. TANF has a barrier remediation component that is referenced in the plan: TANF participants are assessed to determine their readiness for work-related programming, and those with barriers such as active substance abuse will be placed in two categories of barrier remediation programming, one of which includes some work-readiness services.

Virginia’s plan proposes that the state form an “integrated resources” team to determine strategies for helping multiple-barrier clients. The team will design a plan for broader dissemination that records best practices in serving these groups. For TANF clients, supportive and social services are provided to remove barriers to the individual’s participation and to stabilize employment. Supportive services are provided as needed and available to support participation in orientation; assessment; approved self-initiated education, training, and employment activities; or to accept or maintain employment. Provided services include child care; transportation, including certain vehicle repairs; program and/or work related expenses; emergency intervention, such as provision of food, payment of utilities, or other items necessary for the participant to gain or keep employment or participate in other work activities; and medical and dental services.

Virginia plans to partner with SNAP E&T through provision of the following services to SNAP recipients: job search, basic employment skills training, community work experience, vocational training, education, and job retention services. Virginia also has agreements with Offender Aid and Restoration to provide specific services to re-entering individuals who are on SNAP that meet their unique needs and have a direct link to employment.

Maryland has several programs that seek to aid low-income individuals and families in overcoming the barriers they face in securing gainful employment. The Job Skills Enhancement for non-TCA Families Program (i.e., families not receiving TANF) provides comprehensive job skills enhancement services to low-income working families whose employed members’ lack of job skills consigns the family to inadequate income and little opportunity for improved earnings in the future. This program seeks to reduce welfare dependence by enhancing the job skills of these wage earners, and to improve participants’ incomes and their capacity for long-term financial self-sufficiency. It does not provide payments, but offers assistance, including child care support. Other programs designed to help low-income families include the Housing Counselor program, Electric Universal Service Program, EITC, After School Programs, and Bridge to Excellence Program. There are also a number of programs provided by local departments of social services to aid low-income individuals. These programs are sometimes stand alone, and at other times supplement some of the programs mentioned elsewhere in the plan. They provide eligible families with income under 300 percent of the poverty level with services considered to be non-assistance for TANF purposes.

iii. Integration of TANF and SNAP E&T into the Workforce Development System

All three jurisdictions operate job preparation services through their human services agency—including the TANF program for low-income families with children and the SNAP E&T program for certain SNAP recipients—but these programs are often not well-coordinated with other workforce development services. WIOA encourages states to do more to integrate these programs into the state’s workforce development system.

Virginia has initiatives underway to increase coordination for co-location, co-enrollment, and common screening and assessment, but only for core programs. This does not include TANF or SNAP E&T. However, AJC staff will be trained to provide employment services to TANF and SNAP recipients. Additionally, the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) was awarded a federal grant to pilot an effort to test existing and new employment and training initiatives to increase the number of SNAP work registrants who obtain unsubsidized employment, increase earned income, and reduce reliance on public assistance. Outcomes of this pilot will be informative.
Though DC submitted a unified plan, DC will be implementing co-location of TANF at AJCs and plans to integrate intake on their Data Vault. The Data Vault, one of the key efforts touted by the District, is a common intake process currently underway between WIOA Title I (DOES) and WIOA Title II (OSSE) agencies with plans to expand to DHS (TANF and SNAP) and DDS (WIOA Title IV). The plan also cites co-location at the AJCs, interagency agreements and MOUs, staff cross-training, and shared case management (of 33,560 individuals). The DC plan includes a Memorandum of Understanding that describes integration of SNAP with Title II and the awarding of funds to Title II grantees to serve SNAP recipients.

Maryland submitted a combined plan, integrating TANF and WIOA. TANF will be integrated into WIOA services over the first 4 years of implementation. The plan outlines the specific steps that both DHR (which administers TANF) and DLLR (which administers WIOA) will take to achieve the WIOA and TANF partnership. Over the first four years of the plan, DHR will begin to integrate TANF into the WIOA system as a full partner, thus increasing meaningful access to WIOA services for TANF work eligible individuals (WEI) who are determined to be ready, supported, and eligible. DHR, in partnership with the 24 Local Departments of Social Services (LDSS) and the WIOA partners, will implement this partnership using a phased-in approach over the four year period of the plan in all of Maryland's 12 local workforce development areas. The specific duties and activities of DHR, LDSS, and DLLR to achieve the integration of TANF are also outlined in the plan, and include the provision of supportive services by LDSS, and provision of labor market information, recruitment, job development, and placement services by WIOA partners. The Maryland WIOA partners strongly encourage inclusion of local representation of TANF and VR programs on local boards as a way to ensure constant communication and alignment of programming at the local level.

Moreover, Maryland is seeking to move towards a universal performance management system, where TANF would be included along with data collected through AJCs for seamless data collection and integration. Maryland would like to baseline these TANF Common Measures data for two years to evaluate the effectiveness of the WIOA/TANF mandated partnership. The plan also sets a goal to develop an approach for industry-led programs to target special populations such as those served by DORS and TANF.

Additionally, due to the new WIOA focus on older, out-of-school youth, as well as including TANF as a mandated partner, Maryland views this as a prime opportunity to engage younger TANF recipients between the ages of 18-24 in local WIOA youth services. This earlier engagement in workforce development for young TANF recipients can place individuals on a career pathway that will lead to self-sufficiency and earlier independence from public assistance. Co-enrollment of youth in TANF, WIOA, and SNAP is encouraged in Maryland, but there is no formal integration or coordination of SNAP E&T with WIOA activities.

### iv. Outreach to Low-Income Populations

In Washington DC, DOES is relying heavily on its Workforce on Wheels mobile AJC to enroll more people from targeted neighborhoods. VR will be using its Youth in Transition Units for in-school youth. DC’s RSA established MOUs with the District’s largest Local Education Agency (LEA) and many of the smaller LEAs that serve high school students to ensure effective identification, referrals and intake services for in-school youth with disabilities. MOUs with the remaining LEAs will be developed during SY2016-17. Though DC’s high schools do not serve exclusively low-income students, many serve a predominantly low-income population. OSSE (Title II) depends on its service providers to conduct their own outreach.

Virginia State representatives say that outreach efforts will be detailed in local plans.

Maryland will be holding job-seeker advisory focus groups to seek input from jobseekers on the barriers they face, and advise the WIOA partners on how best to assist jobseekers in overcoming these barriers. Outside of these focus groups, there aren’t any strategies to conduct outreach to low-income populations for service provision. Low-income individuals are expected to reach out to the system, or to be integrated into WIOA activities through the integration of TANF.
v. Other Initiatives

DC's plan mentions Community Services Block Grants but “integration” is vague. The plan also includes a discussion of adding legal aid services (record expungement, for example), but no commitment is made. The plan states that the addition of pre-apprenticeship programs will aid those with low basic skills. As much of DC's workforce system is locally funded, many programs are mentioned in the plan, though not in detail, because they are not funded through WIOA.

No other initiatives for low-income individuals are mentioned in Virginia's plan.

In Maryland, many of the EARN Maryland strategic industry partnerships target specific underserved populations, including returning citizens, low-skilled workers, and the long-term unemployed. Additionally, the jobseeker advisory focus groups will advise the workforce system, help streamline processes, and improve reemployment efforts. Local areas will be encouraged to include in their local plans how they intend to engage jobseekers to use their services. Career pathway models will be integrated into competitive grant applications. There is also interest in expanding collaborative efforts to provide robust supportive services to customers, as well as to strengthen correctional education and provide greater programming to help returning citizens get hired by employers, though no specific commitments or plans exist.

vi. Summary and Key Takeaways

Maryland is leading the way in developing concrete strategies for TANF and WIOA integration, which can provide useful practices for DC. DC, however, plans to integrate TANF performance measures into a single performance measurement system. As Maryland is seeking to move towards a universal performance management system, DC's Data Vault may be a useful system for Maryland to learn from. Virginia does not have current plans to change any systems or practices for the integration of TANF or SNAP E&T beyond providing employment services at AJCs to TANF and SNAP recipients. However, the outcomes of Virginia's SNAP employment pilot program may lend lessons for the other jurisdictions.

DC is the only jurisdiction which has articulated a strategy to conduct specific outreach to low-income individuals. Virginia has required local areas to specify outreach strategies in their local plans. Maryland should also follow this lead, as no outreach strategies are mentioned in the plan. Maryland's utilization of jobseeker focus groups to engage low-income individuals and seek feedback to improve services is an innovative strategy. It will be important to see what type of information is obtained through these focus groups, and how the state uses it to improve the system and its ability to effectively meet the needs of low-income individuals. All three jurisdictions should consider developing performance targets for serving all low-income individuals to ensure that this population is adequately served. All three jurisdictions have concrete barrier remediation strategies for low-income individuals, though Maryland is the only jurisdiction that provides extensive support services for low-income individuals who are not TANF and SNAP recipients.
Module Two: Performance Measures
WIOA includes updated and different performance measures than those previously mandated under WIA. WIOA requires the following performance measures across core programs:

- Entry into unsubsidized employment (2Q after exit),
- Retention in unsubsidized employment (4Q after exit),
- Median earnings (2Q after exit),
- Credential attainment rate,
- Measurable skills gains, and
- Effectiveness in serving employers

New measures in WIOA that were not mandated by WIA include the credential attainment rate and measurable skills gains. In addition, WIA required reporting of entry and retention in unsubsidized employment in Q1 and Qs 2 and 3, respectively (in other words, the WIOA standard lags reporting by one additional quarter).

The new measures were added to recognize that many program participants, who may begin at an extremely low literacy level, for example, may not be ready for unsubsidized employment immediately upon finishing any particular program. The new WIOA measures are intended to ensure that individuals of all skill levels are able to access the education and training programs and services they need to continue to build skills that will enable them to eventually obtain quality employment and career opportunities.

The National Skills Coalition recommends that “The state plan should describe a comprehensive cross-agency data and performance measurement system that covers all major workforce development programs, not just the four titles of WIOA.” 62 The state plans of DC, Maryland, and Virginia all go beyond the WIOA performance measures to report on additional measures for various individual programs, as shown in the chart the follows.

Promising practices in performance measurement include:

- **Maryland**: Plan includes additional measures on TANF, as well as performance targets for eligible training providers and for TANF funding.
- **DC**: Plan includes additional measures on TANF and youth. The Data Vault can provide efficient data alignment across multiple programs and agencies.

A. REQUIRED AND SUPPLEMENTAL PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Module Two: Performance Measures
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Maryland</th>
<th>Virginia&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>Washington, DC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TANF</td>
<td>Work participation rate, job placements, ten dollar per hour job placements, job retention.*</td>
<td>Work participation rate.</td>
<td>Percent of people successfully moved off of income support services, including TANF, through successful and sustainable activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voc-Rehab</td>
<td>None listed.</td>
<td>Employment closures, entered employment rate; percent of employed participants who earn at or above the minimum wage; percent of individuals with significant disabilities who gain employment and earn at least the minimum wage; average hourly earnings at or above the minimum wage as a ratio to the state's average hourly earnings for all employed; earnings from work as primary income source; minority service rate as a ratio to the service rate for all non-minority individuals with disabilities.</td>
<td>Annual change in employment outcomes; percent of employment outcomes; competitive employment outcomes (percentage of individuals who enter employment at or above the minimum wage); significance of disability; earnings ratio (percent of participants earning on average at least 52 cents for every dollar earned by all employed individuals in the state); self-support at beginning and exit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade Adjustment Assistance</td>
<td>Participant demographics, types of services received, and performance outcomes.</td>
<td>Entered employment rate, employment retention rate, and six-month average earnings.</td>
<td>None listed. (DC's trade adjustment assistance program served just one participant in 2014.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG)</td>
<td>Entered employment rate, employment retention rate, six-month average earnings, for all participants and disabled veterans separately. For the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP), intensive services provided by DVOP specialists; total veterans and eligible persons served by DVOP specialists.*</td>
<td>Entered employment rate, employment retention rate, six-month average earnings, for all participants and disabled veterans separately. For the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP), the number of individuals receiving intensive services, compared to the total served by DVOP, is also tracked.*</td>
<td>DC does not receive this grant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>Youth</td>
<td>WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker</td>
<td>Washington, DC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Maryland</strong></td>
<td>For Title I Youth programs, same as the core measures, except that for the first two core measures, “education or training” is also added along with employment.</td>
<td>None listed.</td>
<td>Number of youth using brick and mortar and virtual one-stops; percentage of youth who are disconnected; percentage of youth participating in work-based learning and career exploration opportunities; percentage of youth enrolled in programs who are successfully connected to barrier remediation services; percentage of youth enrolled in programs who are successfully connected to work-based learning and career exploration opportunities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Virginia</strong></td>
<td>None listed.</td>
<td>Each local workforce development board has to allocate a minimum of 40 percent of WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker funds to training services that lead to recognized postsecondary education and workforce credentials aligned with in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area or region.</td>
<td>Enrollment levels in programs v. capacity; people receiving services in mobile outreach services by ward; percentage of clients enrolled in virtual one-stop (broken out by 14 subcategories of barriers); percentage of people successfully moved off of income support services; number of barriers identified and percentage successfully mitigated; number of people successfully transitioning from one step within a career pathway to the next.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* These performance measures are required per the terms of the JVSG grant.
Because the U.S. Department of Labor had not yet issued final guidance on actual performance targets by the time that states were required to submit their WIOA plans, many states did not outline specific performance benchmarks within their plans. Of the three jurisdictions in this report, Washington, DC was the only jurisdiction to set out actual performance target thresholds within its state plan. Maryland and Virginia developed performance targets at the local and state level for WIOA Title I after submitting the draft plan to USDOL. Maryland has also developed performance targets for WIOA Title III and issued supplementary performance benchmarks for comment in September 2016.

Performance targets may be subject to change within the first two years based on negotiations with the USDOL, and any economic changes based on the DOL’s statistical model. WIOA federal guidelines state that once the performance measures are fully established, if States or local areas fail to meet them in any given program year, they are subject to sanctions. These can include the development of a performance improvement plan and reduction in funding, and can increase in severity with continued failing performance.

The DC state plan delineates the following performance targets for the first two years of implementation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DC’S WIOA STATE PLAN PERFORMANCE TARGETS</th>
<th>Plan Year 2016-2017</th>
<th>Plan Year 2017-2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employment (Q2)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dislocated</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth (Education, Training, or Employment)</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Education</td>
<td>NA – baseline*</td>
<td>NA – baseline*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wagner-Peyser</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational</td>
<td>45.8%</td>
<td>45.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employment (Q4)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dislocated</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth (Education, Training, or Employment)</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Education</td>
<td>NA – baseline*</td>
<td>NA – baseline*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wagner-Peyser</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational</td>
<td>35.8%</td>
<td>35.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Median Earnings (Q2)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults</td>
<td>$5,130</td>
<td>$5,130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dislocated</td>
<td>$4,957</td>
<td>$4,957</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth (Education, Training, or Employment)</td>
<td>$1,586</td>
<td>$1,586</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Education</td>
<td>NA – baseline*</td>
<td>NA – baseline*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wagner-Peyser</td>
<td>$4,569</td>
<td>$4,569</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational</td>
<td>$4,685</td>
<td>$4,685</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Credential Attainment Rate</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dislocated</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth (Education, Training, or Employment)</td>
<td>33.6%</td>
<td>33.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Education</td>
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<td>NA – baseline*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wagner-Peyser</td>
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<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational</td>
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</table>
Maryland had included state targets for TANF and eligible training providers (ETPs) in the draft plan, and after receiving feedback from USDOL, developed specific performance targets for both local areas and the state for Title I and Title III WIOA programs.

The newly developed Maryland Title I and III performance targets for program year 2016 are detailed in the table that follows.

**DC’s WIOA State Plan Performance Targets**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measurable Skill Gain</th>
<th>Plan Year 2016-2017</th>
<th>Plan Year 2017-2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adults</td>
<td>NA – baseline*</td>
<td>NA – baseline*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dislocated</td>
<td>NA – baseline needed*</td>
<td>NA – baseline needed*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth (Education, Training, or Employment)</td>
<td>NA – baseline*</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effectiveness in Serving Employers</th>
<th>Plan Year 2016-2017</th>
<th>Plan Year 2017-2018</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adults</td>
<td>NA – baseline*</td>
<td>NA – baseline*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dislocated</td>
<td>NA – baseline needed*</td>
<td>NA – baseline needed*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth (Education, Training, or Employment)</td>
<td>NA – baseline*</td>
<td>NA – baseline*</td>
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<tr>
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<td>NA – baseline*</td>
<td>NA – baseline*</td>
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<tr>
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<td>NA – baseline*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational</td>
<td>NA – baseline needed*</td>
<td>NA – baseline needed*</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Baseline indicators are those for which a state is not likely to have adequate data on which to make a reasonable determination of an expected level of performance.
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</table>
Measures for TANF that were included in the draft WIOA plan include:

» Work participation rate (total number of work eligible TANF recipients that met their work requirement, averaging 30 hours/week): Set at 50 percent.

» Job placements (total number of TANF recipients that were placed in a subsidized public employment, subsidized private employment, unsubsidized employment, or on the job training activity): No specific target set.

» $10/hour job placements (total number of TANF recipients placed in employment and scheduled for 30 hours/week or more): Set at 75 percent.

For Maryland’s eligible training providers, in order for initial and continued eligibility, at least 61 percent of all students in a training program, and the subset of WIOA-funded students, must be in unsubsidized employment during the 2nd and 4th quarters after program exit or completion.

In addition, while not included in the state plan, in September 2016 Maryland released draft benchmarks for public comment, which are copied below. Maryland developed these additional measures to ensure focus on individuals that are hardest to serve and have the greatest barriers to employment. These measures are meant to capture success beyond the WIOA common measures, and will not be used punitively, but rather to inspire leadership.

The state plans to roll out these additional performance benchmarks over the course of three years. By June 2017, a WIOA workgroup focused on performance measures will make recommendations to Maryland’s WIOA Alignment Group on defining variables and determining appropriate data sources. Baseline data will be collected from July 2017 to June 2018, and after establishing performance targets, the first year of data will be collected from July 2018 to June 2019.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic Goal</th>
<th>Benchmark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Strategic Goal 1: Increase earning capacity of Marylanders by maximizing access to employment. | 1. Increase the % of participants who obtain earning at a living wage* from X% to Y% by date  
- Increase the % of TANF recipients who obtain employment at a living wage* from X% to Y% by date  
- Increase the % of Foster Care Youth who obtain employment at a living wage* from X% to Y% by date  
- Increase the % of DORS participants who obtain employment at a living wage* from X% to Y% by date  
2. Increase the median wage of participants by X% to Y% by date  
- Increase the % of TANF recipients whose median wages increase from X% to Y% by date  
- Increase the % of Foster Care Youth whose median wages increase from X% to Y% by date  
- Increase the % of DORS participants whose median wages increase from X% to Y% by date  
3. Increase the % of participants who earn at least a living wage* for 4 consecutive quarters from X% to Y% by date  
- Increase the % of TANF recipients who earn at least a living wage* for 4 consecutive quarters from X% to Y% by date  
- Increase the % of Foster Care Youth who earn at least a living wage* for 4 consecutive quarters from X% to Y% by date  
- Increase the % of DORS participants who earn at least a living wage* for 4 consecutive quarters from X% to Y% by date  
4. Increase the number of businesses that are formally engaged in the workforce system by X% by date  
5. Increase the % of participants who obtain an industry recognized credential from X% to Y% by date  
- Increase the % of TANF recipients who obtain an industry recognized credential from X% to Y% by date.  
- Increase the % of Foster Care Youth who obtain an industry recognized credential from X% to Y% by date.  
- Increase the % of DORS participants who obtain an industry recognized credential from X% to Y% by date.  
6. Increase the % of participants who obtain adult education from X% to Y% by date. This will be defined.  
- Increase the % of TANF recipients who obtain adult education from X% to Y% by date.  
- Increase the % of Foster Care Youth who obtain adult education from X% to Y% by date.  
- Increase the % of DORS participants who obtain adult education from X% to Y% by date.  

Strategic Goal 2: Increase earning capacity of Marylanders by maximizing access to and use of skills and credentialing. |
MARYLAND’S DRAFT PERFORMANCE BENCHMARKS

Strategic Goal 2: Increase earning capacity of Marylanders by maximizing access to and use of occupational skills training.

7. Increase the % of participants who complete occupational skills training from X% to Y% by date
   - Increase the % of TANF recipients who obtain occupational skills training from X% to Y% by date.
   - Increase the % of Foster Care Youth who obtain occupational skills training from X% to Y% by date.
   - Increase the % of DORS participants who obtain occupational skills training from X% to Y% by date.

8. Increase % of current or former foster youth that are job ready by date

Strategic Goal 3: Increase earning capacity of Marylanders by maximizing access to and use of life management skills.

9. Increase the % of participants who have mastered life management skills from X% to Y% by date
   - Increase the % of participants’ who become financially literate from X% to Y% by date
   - Increase the % of participants who are able to demonstrate professional behavior from X% to Y% by date
   - Increase the % of participants who are able to demonstrate appropriate communication skills in the workplace from X% to Y% by date
   - Increase the % of participants who are able to set appropriate goals from X% to Y% by date

Strategic Goal 4: Increase earning capacity of Marylanders by maximizing access to and use of supportive services.

10. Increase the % of participants who successfully address barriers to employment from X% to Y% by date
    - Increase the % of participants who successfully address child care as a barrier to employment from X% to Y% by date
    - Increase the % of participants who successfully address transportation as a barrier to employment from X% to Y% by date
    - Increase the % of participants who successfully address substance abuse as a barrier to employment from X% to Y% by date
    - Increase the % of participants who successfully address behavioral health issues as a barrier to employment from X% to Y% by date
    - Increase the % of participants who successfully address housing issues as a barrier to employment from X% to Y% by date
    - Increase the % of participants who successfully address child support issues as a barrier to employment from X% to Y% by date
    - Increase the % of participants who successfully address criminal background issues as a barrier to employment from X% to Y% by date
    - Increase the % of participants who understand the impact of work on their benefits from X% to Y% by date
    - Increase the % of participants who successfully address domestic violence issues as a barrier to employment from X% to Y% by date
Although no actual statewide target thresholds are given here, and the nature of draft benchmarks is that they are subject to change before being finalized, Maryland’s goals to specifically track—and improve—the performance benchmarks of TANF recipients, foster care youth, and DORS participants are commendable.

Similar to Maryland, Virginia developed their WIOA Title 1 performance targets after the release of the draft of the state WIOA plan. The newly developed Virginia Title I performance targets for program years 2016 and 2017 are detailed in the table below.

MARYLAND’S DRAFT PERFORMANCE BENCHMARKS{88}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic Goal</th>
<th>Benchmark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strategic Goal 5: Strengthen and enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the workforce system.</td>
<td>11. Create and implement common tools and processes by date.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Create and implement a common comprehensive employment readiness assessment</td>
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<td>• Create and implement a common case management tool</td>
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<td>• Create and implement a common professional development system</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. Complete partnership development and work by date.</td>
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<td>• Establish a local implementation team in each of the State’s 12 local workforce areas.</td>
</tr>
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<td>• Increase # of community partners engaged in the workforce system by date</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Increase % of co-located partners by date</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Establish and clarify roles for each member of the workforce system by date.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Living wage will be defined for each local area by DLLR using this tool: [http://livingwage.mit.edu/states/24/locations](http://livingwage.mit.edu/states/24/locations)

VIRGINIA’S PERFORMANCE LEVELS UNDER WIOA TITLE I FOR PROGRAM YEARS 2016 AND 2017{89}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance Indicator</th>
<th>Negotiated Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adult</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Employment rate 2nd quarter after exit</td>
<td>77%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Employment rate 4th quarter after exit</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median earnings 2nd quarter after exit</td>
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<tr>
<td>Credential attainment within 4 quarters after exit</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measureable skills gain</td>
<td>Baseline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effectiveness of core programs serving employers</td>
<td>Baseline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dislocated workers</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment rate 2nd quarter after exit</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment rate 4th quarter after exit</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median earnings 2nd quarter after exit</td>
<td>$7,600</td>
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</table>
**VIRGINIA’S PERFORMANCE LEVELS UNDER WIOA TITLE I FOR PROGRAM YEARS 2016 AND 2017**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance Indicator</th>
<th>Negotiated Level</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dislocated workers (cont.)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Credential attainment within 4 quarters after exit</td>
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<tr>
<td>Effectiveness of core programs serving employers</td>
<td>Baseline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Youth</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Employment rate 2nd quarter after exit</td>
<td>63%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Employment rate 4th quarter after exit</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median earnings 2nd quarter after exit</td>
<td>Baseline</td>
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<tr>
<td>Credential attainment within 4 quarters after exit</td>
<td>68%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Measureable skills gain</td>
<td>Baseline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effectiveness of core programs serving employers</td>
<td>Baseline</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Baseline indicators are those for which a state is not likely to have adequate data on which to make a reasonable determination of an expected level of performance.*

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**C. ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES AND ACTIVITIES**

The DC state plan describes the following accountability activities:

- Monthly implementation progress meetings among agency heads. [Relevant agencies are Department of Employment Services (DOES), Department of Human Services (DHS), Office of the State Superintendent for Education (OSSE), Department on Disability Services and Rehabilitation Services Administration (DDS/RSA), and the University of the District of Columbia Community College (UDC-CC)].
- Annual “CapStat” performance report on the state plan, and quarterly CapStat meetings on progress toward the Plan’s goals.
- Customer feedback, including recurring meetings with advocates and stakeholders, and periodic updates on the progress of implementation.

Additional performance activities listed in DC’s plan are:

- Adult education and workforce system performance dashboard.
- Scorecard for training providers, service providers, and employers, with a searchable online tool.
- Common data dictionary and methods for measurement.
- Workforce system evaluation, including working with an outside entity to evaluate the overall effectiveness of the system, in year two.

Maryland is seeking to develop a comprehensive system that includes cross-cutting performance measures, which will supplement the WIOA measures specified by law. The Governor’s Workforce Development Board formed a task force to develop these additional performance accountability measures to ensure that the state’s focus remains squarely on its business and jobseeker customers. Maryland is also interested in securing a third party evaluator to focus on...
overall WIOA system effectiveness in relation to the WIOA performance measures prescribed by law.

In Virginia, each Local Workforce Area must create teams of local workforce partners to meet the needs of local industry. Though not prescriptive about the composition of the teams, the state requires that local workforce system partners must meet “business service requirements” and “quality standards.” The partners must execute a memorandum of understanding that shows a common vision and strategy for integrated business-driven service delivery, and develop a measurable framework indicating how the team will achieve and track progress in providing optimal business service solutions. Business service partners must also develop a written communications plan that includes:

» A single point of contact for employers,
» Standardized timeframes to respond to businesses,
» Expected levels of customer service, and
» Measurement of business satisfaction.

In addition, programs operating in American Jobs Centers are required to provide a quarterly report on quality standards for customer relations (no wrong door), operations, professional development, and resource management.

D. DATA ALIGNMENT

WIOA encourages unified and comprehensive data linking between providers, programs, and agencies. The National Skills Coalition recommends that the state plan “should identify a comprehensive system for linking data across workforce and education agencies for the purpose of measuring outcomes.”

DC’s plan describes a new data system, the Data Vault, which will include a universal intake, assessment, and referral system for all participants in job training and adult education programs; track performance and outcomes; and link participants to programs and services across all government agencies. The goal is to ensure an efficient process to assess and refer candidates to the programs that best fit their needs. Further details, such as how existing data systems will be incorporated into the Data Vault, a strategy for public engagement in the development and use of the Data Vault, and a timeline for the system’s launch, are not given.

Maryland is working towards a single, streamlined system for performance measurement that would capture data for all WIOA programs. Currently, several different platforms are utilized for specific programs. Maryland is seeking to “reset” the performance standards for the state’s workforce system by developing a single state performance measurement system that includes data sharing between agencies. The goal is to establish a baseline measure for performance over the next two years, as agencies and partners within the workforce system serve an increased number of customers, since many new groups are being added that were not served previously under WIA. It is anticipated that a clearer picture of Maryland’s performance measures should be available within the first year of implementation.

Virginia’s core workforce programs operate on three different client data platforms. This lack of a shared data platform limits the system’s ability to serve common business clients in a coordinated and comprehensive way. Virginia plans to evaluate the benefits and costs of creating interoperable information systems. An Integrated Data and System Performance workgroup was convened to explore a process and product. There are a number of successful pilot efforts underway utilizing a common Client Needs Assessment or Common Screening Tool.
Under WIOA, the common performance measures must be reported by all training providers other than apprenticeship programs. The National Skills Coalition recommends that state plans “describe the state’s process to provide scorecards for consumers that show training program performance as measured by the WIOA common metrics for credential attainment, employment, and earnings.” In addition, the plan “should describe how the state will use the metrics to measure the results of programs. The plan should describe the state’s dashboard or the steps the state will take to create a dashboard that displays program and system results as measured by WIOA common measures.”

DC’s plan indicates that scorecards will be developed in the future, but does not include detail on the content, process, or timeline. More recently, however, at the Workforce Investment Council meeting on July 12, the Department of Employment Services (DOES) announced that it had started developing the scorecards, based on previous scorecards they had created for TANF vendors. They conducted surveys and focus groups of providers, and have incorporated some of their feedback. Data elements of the scorecards are likely to include:

- Unsubsidized employment,
- Unsubsidized employment by sector,
- Unemployment insurance receipt,
- Successful/unsuccessful program completion,
- Demographics,
- Ward,
- Educational attainment,
- Pre- and post-program CASAS score, and
- Satisfaction score.

Next steps will include meetings with individual providers to gauge additional feedback. According to DOES, the scorecards will help drive strategic decisions at both the provider and system level. Scorecard scores can help determine contract renewals and expansion of services, for example. It is yet to be determined how much of the scorecard data will be made publicly available.

Maryland’s plan does not mention anything specific on how the state will provide scorecards to consumers. Once a streamlined data management system is in place, and individual participant level data is aggregated, MD will submit outcomes to USDOL, which will be displayed as the USDOL Performance Scorecard and the WIOA Pay-for-Performance Scorecard.

Each program will generate a program specific report that mirrors the construct of the USDOL Performance Scorecard. A Job Openings Report will collect data on individuals who receive core employment and workforce information services through Wagner-Peyser program. All of these reports will be sent to USDOL on a quarterly basis. This data will include information on how many people obtained jobs, their earnings, and what skill gains they achieved. The report will include data that are necessary for program management and to convey complete and accurate information on the performance of workforce programs to policymakers and stakeholders.

Virginia has made it a goal to develop a performance matrix that delineates both WIOA and additional state measures for performance/evaluation and to support a more dynamic decision dashboard. The plan states that the Performance and Accountability Committee on the state’s Board of Workforce Development will publish “comprehensive workforce scorecards and other longitudinal data” that will enable the state’s workforce system to measure comprehensive accountability and performance. In order to increase accountability, the state will develop a “system performance dashboard” to publish measurable information in real-time, in a navigable online format online.
F. PERFORMANCE MEASURES’ IMPACT ON ACTIVITIES AND FUNDING

DC does not list specific consequences for not meeting performance targets. The plan includes a stated goal to “assess its workforce system more thoroughly to help increase high-quality program offerings and move away from less effective services and providers.” This includes “expanded use of performance-based contracting and grant-making, with a consistent process across agencies and programs.” No further details are given.

In Maryland, most programs do not yet have specific targets, with the exception of eligible training providers (ETPs). The Plan states that the ETP performance target (that 61 percent of participants must be in unsubsidized employment during the 2nd and 4th quarters after exit) must be met for initial and continued ETP eligibility.

In Virginia, measures are reported to the Performance and Accountability Committee on the state’s Board of Workforce Development. The Committee will measure overall system performance goals, including the degree to which training is aligned with demand occupations. This group will also provide a review of annual workforce system budgets to determine the degree to which resources are aligned with goals, including workforce training and education.

G. SUMMARY AND KEY TAKEAWAYS

In both DC and Maryland, while establishing firm performance measures is still very much a work in progress, both jurisdictions plan to incorporate additional measures beyond those explicitly required by WIOA. For example, DC and Maryland’s additional measures on TANF participants, and DC’s additional measures on youth, could potentially provide needed insight into these programs in order to serve more clients more effectively. If these additional measures per each WIOA goal are indeed collected, and programs are re-evaluated accordingly, they would be an excellent supplement to gauge system and program effectiveness.

In terms of data alignment, the Data Vault being developed in DC could be a very promising tool to ensure an efficient process to assess and refer candidates to the programs that best fit their needs. The District should spell out a timeline for completing this, and make it a priority.

In Virginia, each Local Workforce Area (LWIA) must create teams of local workforce partners to meet the needs of local industry, who must develop an MOU for integrated business-driven service delivery and a written communications plan. In addition, the plan requires that each local workforce development board must allocate a minimum of 40 percent of WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker funds to training services that lead to recognized postsecondary education and workforce credentials aligned with in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area or region.

Regarding the performance measures’ impact on future activities and funding, Maryland is the only jurisdiction that lists specific performance targets in order to receive initial and continued eligibility—but only for TANF and ETPs. Otherwise, each of the plans is relatively vague on how meeting the set performance measures will impact programs. As performance benchmarks are set and adjusted over the first two years of implementation, all three jurisdictions should outline the benefits of meeting and the specific consequences for failing to meet the performance goals. This way, providers will have a clear understanding of their requirements and potential consequences.
Module Three:
Sector Partnerships and Career Pathways
**Promising practices in sector partnerships and career pathways include:**

- **Maryland:** The plan includes a specific sector strategy model (EARN). MI-BEST and ACE programs integrate basic education and job training. They also include job placement staff and wraparound services.

- **Virginia:** The plan includes a strong directive to local workforce boards on expectations for high-quality business services. A Career Pathways Workgroup helps develop and coordinate initiatives that involve multiple state agencies and workforce development programs. One example is PluggedInVa, which provides career pathways and Integrated Education and Training (IET) specifically for adult learners through partnerships with community colleges and other post-secondary institutions.

- **DC:** A Career Pathways Task Force has developed a city-wide strategic plan to design and develop career pathways specifically for adult learners. Sector-specific career pathways profiles have been developed through stakeholder engagement, and a Career Pathways Innovation Fund was established through legislation to pilot and scale best practices in career pathways implementation.

WIOA builds on WIA to increase the role of industry in the public workforce development system. Consequently, WIOA requires local workforce boards to “develop, convene or implement” sector partnerships as a local workforce activity. WIOA defines “industry or sector partnership” as a workforce collaborative, convened by or acting in partnership with a state or local board, that organizes key stakeholders in an industry cluster into a working group that focuses on the shared goals and human resources needs of the industry cluster and that includes, at minimum, at the appropriate stage of development of the partnership, representatives from other businesses in the industry cluster, organized labor, and institutions of higher education and/or training. Additional partners can be included as relevant. WIOA requires states to support these efforts. Consistent with its emphasis on the role of employers, WIOA includes as a performance measure “employer engagement.” These priorities are reflected with varying degrees of specificity in the three state plans.

**A. SECTOR PARTNERSHIP MODELS**

Maryland has developed a sector partnership model, the EARN Maryland program (Employment Advancement Right Now), which serves as a fundamental building block of Maryland’s WIOA state plan. In Virginia, the state recently approved a similar sector partnership model called the Virginia Initiative for Growth and Opportunity in Each Region (GO Virginia) which was approved after the release of the plan. The District stated its intention to use its
existing Workforce Intermediary programs in the hospitality and construction industries to support the development of sector partnerships. Subsequent to the submission of the state plan, the District further announced that the Career Pathways Innovation Fund would be used to fund sector partnerships, similar to the Maryland EARN model.75

EARN Maryland involves a competitive grant process to engage groups of businesses to design and build training programs that serve industry needs. EARN Maryland is comprised of 40 Strategic Industry Partnerships (SIPs) that include over 500 businesses and that represent a variety of industries, including health care, manufacturing, construction, and biotechnology. Many of the EARN Maryland SIPs target specific underserved populations, including returning citizens, low-skilled workers, and the long-term unemployed. These participants often have significant barriers to employment, including criminal backgrounds, low levels of literacy, lack of transportation, and disadvantaged backgrounds. Each SIP must be comprised of at least two “diverse partners,” often a non-profit organization or a local workforce board, who have extensive experience in barrier removal.

According to the Maryland state plan, EARN Maryland has provided some important lessons about sector partnerships. Maryland’s Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation (DLLR) has learned that strategic industry partnerships, no matter what form they take, must:

» Be targeted for locally identified industries;
» Be industry-led and employer-driven;
» Be built upon labor market information (LMI);
» Include soft skills training. This is an emerging theme with EARN Maryland workforce training plans, regardless of industry, region, or subset of the workforce;
» Allow participants to obtain industry-recognized credentials;
» Incorporate career pathways, in order to establish a bridge to participation for low-skilled individuals and others with barriers to employment;
» Be incorporated in new business services strategies, to include a business-focused delivery system for workforce needs.

Further, Maryland has made a commitment that industry-based training will be the priority for any available competitively procured and state discretionary funding, and efforts going forward will include investing in partnerships that link to TANF and other government programs serving residents with barriers to employment.

While EARN Maryland currently involves over 500 businesses, Maryland’s state plan notes that the state is home to more than 10,000 businesses,76 and needs both to bring EARN Maryland to scale and engage employers who are not part of a SIP. The state plan describes two components of an employer engagement strategy: 1) The Governor’s Workforce Development Board will establish an Employer Engagement Task Force. The Task Force will be charged with recommending business outreach strategies to the WIOA partners, as well as providing ideas on utilization of LMI, and sharing innovative practices in workforce development. Local boards will need to describe in their respective local plans how they intend to increase business engagement with local workforce services. 2) The Business Services Team at DLLR, which currently exists to support businesses in their efforts to “grow and thrive,” will expand to include more diverse representation to ensure better coordination between economic and workforce development. Representation may include the Maryland Department of Commerce, Department of Human Resources, Maryland State Department of Education, the Maryland Department of Disabilities, local economic development agencies, public libraries, faith-based organizations, community organizations, Chambers of Commerce, industry associations, Maryland businesses, and colleges and universities.

Virginia’s plan includes an expression of intent to pilot at least one sector strategy in each Workforce Development Area (WDA), and a commitment by the state to align resources and provide guidance to local Workforce Development Boards (WDBs) and businesses on the creation of sector partnerships. Ideas for this kind of
alignment and support include development of a “play book” with best practices for recruiting industry partners, and conducting an inventory of economic development, education, and workforce development funds to identify synergies and opportunities for alignment. Sector partnerships in Virginia are intended to benefit from the Governor’s “New Virginia Economy” initiative. This initiative seeks to increase postsecondary education and workforce credentials, secure employment for veterans, align education with the needs of businesses, and diversify the economy.

In Virginia, the Community College system is a key partner in securing the engagement of businesses in workforce development. Virginia’s Community College System and other state agencies also participate in the Career Pathways Workgroup, which includes senior staff from eight state agencies. This workgroup allows officials to better coordinate efforts to meet the needs of employers. Through extensive outreach to businesses statewide, the state identified the need to expand credential attainment and has developed a program to incentivize colleges to offer students credential programs that meet Virginia’s business needs.

In addition, each WDA is required to have a business services team designed to meet the needs of local industry. These teams are charged with driving sector strategies within the locality, providing local employers with human resource solutions, and identifying methods of shrinking regional skills gaps.

Approved after the release of the state WIOA plan, Virginia adopted a regional grant program, GO Virginia, that awards funds for collaborative projects to regional partnerships of employers, educators, and government leaders for collaborative projects that enhance the competitiveness and workforce development opportunities in the region. The program is not exclusive to workforce development initiatives and will support a combination of economic development and workforce investments. The state approved $35.5 million in the two-year budget for a newly established state board to award funds to partnerships partially on a competitive basis and partially on a population basis. The funds are not as clearly sector focused as EARN Maryland, but will encourage regional partnerships between the business community and workforce development providers and to coordinate training opportunities based on the labor needs of the region.

DC’s state plan does not include a comprehensive sector strategy plan, like EARN Maryland, or a sector promoting initiative like GO Virginia. However, its stated goal within the plan was to come up with a sector strategy plan, and it has since announced the development of a grant program modeled on EARN Maryland. It also has the seeds of a sector strategy in its Workforce Intermediary programs housed at the Workforce Investment Council (WIC). The WIC, with the Department of Employment Services (DOES) and the University of the District of Columbia Community College (UDC-CC), has established business advisory committees in the construction and hospitality sectors which provide input and expertise for the Workforce Intermediary Program and broader system efforts. According to the plan, the WIC will convene additional committees for health care, security and law, and business administration and IT. As part of its phased implementation efforts, Phase 3 of the business engagement plan will be to leverage business advisory committees to inform training investments in all high-demand sectors.

Like Virginia, DC’s plan includes a goal to improve business services. The District proposes to create a unified business services strategy to better align outreach efforts to employers and offer more comprehensive services to meet their needs. According to the plan, the Employer Services team at DOES will be incorporated with job development services provided by the Department on Disability Services/Rehabilitation Services Agency and the Department of Human Services. Job developers from different agencies have been sharing information and collaborating on processes such as hiring events, and additional cross-training is planned. Unlike the other two states, however, the District has identified potential performance metrics that will help identify how well it is working with businesses to meet their needs. These include:

» Number/percentage of DC businesses who hire residents from workforce system
All three jurisdictions have a task force or work group dedicated to career pathways, which have played an instrumental role in connecting adult learners to career pathways efforts. WIOA allows jurisdictions to offer a number of additional services, including integrated education and training and career awareness, among others.

In WIOA, Sec. 3 (Def. 7) the term “career pathway” means a combination of rigorous and high-quality education, training, and other services that—

A) aligns with the skill needs of industries in the economy of the State or regional economy involved;

B) prepares an individual to be successful in any of a full range of secondary or postsecondary education options, including apprenticeships registered under the Act of August 16, 1937 (commonly known as the “National Apprenticeship Act”; 50 Stat. 664, chapter 663; 29 U.S.C. 50 et seq.);

C) includes counseling to support an individual in achieving the individual's education and career goals;

D) includes, as appropriate, education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster;

E) organizes education, training, and other services to meet the particular needs of an individual in a manner that accelerates the educational and career advancement of the individual to the extent practicable;

F) enables an individual to attain a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and at least 1 recognized postsecondary credential; and

G) helps an individual enter or advance within a specific occupation or occupational cluster.

DC's plan describes the Career Pathways Task Force, convened in 2014 by the WIC, DC's WDB. The goal of the Task Force is to develop a city-wide strategy for the development and implementation of career pathways programs for adult learners. The Task Force worked with the DC Chamber of Commerce and the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning to engage various stakeholders through focus groups and surveys in order to produce career pathway profiles by sector based on the WIC's high-demand and occupational sector framework. The Task Force also produced a Career Pathways Strategic Plan in early 2016, which lays out the framework for an aligned system and helped inform WIOA planning. Based on the Task Force's efforts and findings, the DC Council passed legislation establishing a Career Pathways Innovation Fund to provide grants to design, pilot, and scale best practices in the implementation of adult career pathways and improve District performance on WIOA-mandated outcomes. The fund will support a sector-initiative similar to EARN Maryland that will require ABE and vocational training providers to collaborate and offer contextualized curriculum, and integrated or concurrent education and training. A Request for Applications was released in January 2017, and grants are expected to be awarded by July.
Additionally, providers in DC who receive funds from OSSE for Adult and Family Education (AFE) are required to engage in activities that connect education with training, including Integrated Education and Training (IET) services. OSSE AFE has provided technical assistance, professional development and support to its current providers regarding the IET model of instruction. While the state plan does not define strategies for supporting linkages between AFE providers and technical training providers or employers, the new grant program should provide that missing link. DC’s plan also requires AFE providers to embed career awareness and IET training towards an industry-recognized certification in one or more of the WIC-approved career sectors. The WIC will be supporting these efforts with a Career Pathways Community of Practice. Additionally, all future AFE providers will be required to provide transition services towards the next step in the educational continuum or employment. DC is also investing in apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeship programs to provide on-ramps to careers for adult learners.

Virginia offers the PluggedInVA career pathways program, which is built on partnerships between adult education providers and community colleges. PluggedInVA is a career pathways program that provides motivated adult learners with a contextualized General Educational Development (GED) curriculum integrated with industry-specific technical training as a means to develop essential workplace skills for entry-level jobs in targeted industries. Central to the PluggedInVA curriculum is the development of digital literacy skills, twenty-first century skills, and professional soft skills to prepare learners for employment in a variety of industries as they complete their GED credential, Career Readiness Certificate (CRC), and industry-recognized certificates. Funds will be utilized to expand the PluggedInVA model to lower literacy levels (K-8).

PluggedInVA is the product of a collaborative planning group in Virginia called the Career Pathways workgroup. Virginia has convened this group since 2008 to provide coordination across workforce development programs and continuity across gubernatorial administrations. The workgroup is chaired by the advisor to the Secretary of Commerce and Trade and consists of senior staff from eight state agencies. Virginia’s state plan expands upon the responsibilities of the workgroup to support the development of career pathways in collaboration with businesses for critical demand occupations and assist the state in developing career pathways map tool for local areas.

Additionally, Virginia's plan includes efforts to better connect adult education services with training services. The plan has a requirement for adult education service providers to include in their applications the extent to which they have engaged in career pathways and sector partnerships, and how students will be assisted in identifying employment and career pathways that both align with their skills and interests and lead to a sustainable wage.

Virginia was also one of four states nationwide to receive a five-year federal Department of Education grant in 2015 to develop and implement a career pathways demonstration project for people with disabilities. The Career Pathways for Individuals with Disabilities (CPID) program was designed to identify and address needed enhancements to Virginia’s existing career pathways programs to ensure access for individuals with disabilities, using industry-recognized credentials, employability skills training, and assistive technology to improve employment outcomes. The project is initially focused on south central Virginia and the Shenandoah Valley.

Maryland has an Adult Learning Advisory Council (MALAC) which advises the Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation and its Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning on program and policy development for adult learners. In this way, the Council seeks to align adult learning with workforce development, and ensure communication and coordination among State agencies that provide education and workforce development services to adults. Council members are appointed by the Secretary of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation, and serve two-year terms.

MALAC and the WIOA Adult Education and Career Pathways Work Group will work to build interest, consensus, and support for the adult education program, provide input on policy development,
and to create and implement a statewide career pathways system to support the progress of adults through an education and employment continuum leading to economic self-sufficiency. In Maryland, workplace adult education and literacy activities will be offered by eligible providers in collaboration with an employer or employee organization at a workplace or an off-site location. (Workplace education activities are an allowable activity for Title I incumbent worker training.) Apprenticeships are also seen as a key strategy for linking adult learners with career pathways that lead to family-supporting wages.

Maryland will also work to establish stronger linkages between adult education and Maryland EARN (Employment Advancement Right Now), the state’s primary sector partnership strategy providing work-based training for adults. Currently, many EARN grantees require adult participants to have obtained a high school diploma or GED. Thus, adult education partners can refer successful candidates for EARN training opportunities. Additionally, the plan states that sector partners, including the EARN grantees, will update adult education partners on labor market and training needs and guide the development of programs that will prepare workers to fill industry skills gaps. Adult education and workforce programs will coordinate initial assessments of literacy, numeracy, and English language skills and selection of testing instruments to facilitate co-enrollment and referrals between programs. Finally, the state and local workforce areas will identify professional development that can be delivered to core partners to promote the development of a statewide career pathways system and build exceptional service delivery systems for customers.

**C. INTEGRATED EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

As WIOA requires adult education programming to offer Integrated Education and Training (IET), all three jurisdictions have made IET a requirement in their WIOA plans.

In DC, all Adult and Family Education grantees are required to embed career awareness or IET towards an industry certification. IET is only mentioned in the DC plan in this context and not in the context of technical training or other post-secondary education.

Virginia's plan generally states that adult education service providers will be encouraged to develop IET programs that align with the needs of the local labor market in consultation with the local workforce development board, employers, and training providers. As PluggedInVA integrates GED preparation with industry-specific technical training, it is both a career pathways and IET initiative in Virginia. The OAEL’s vision is to expand and enhance the PluggedInVA career pathways program to extend across the core partners and the entire workforce system in Virginia. To accomplish this vision, the Virginia Adult Learning Resource Center (VALRC) will be funded to provide technical assistance, training, and the dissemination of resources to implement PluggedInVA to further the purpose of WIOA in transitioning adult learners to postsecondary education, training, employment, and to link with institutions of higher education.

With leadership from DLLR's DWDAL, Maryland piloted the Maryland Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (MI-BEST) program, and the Accelerating Connections to Employment (ACE) initiative, at several community colleges within Maryland. Both programs provided accelerated, integrated learning opportunities for low-skilled jobseekers, including individuals with limited English proficiency and those with low reading, writing, and math skills. MI-BEST and ACE are modeled on Washington state's successful I-BEST program, which provides contextualized adult basic education and vocational training together in an accelerated program. Provision of wraparound support services and job placement assistance are key best practices of MI-BEST and ACE, which have required the engagement of many additional stakeholders. Evaluations of the program are currently underway, and preliminary findings show much promise. Though these pilot programs have already ended, some of the sites...
involved have institutionalized practices from the programs that have increased their effectiveness and efficiency in serving adult learners, placing them in jobs, and connecting them to career ladders. Collaboration between businesses, local workforce and economic development agencies, and adult education providers is essential for the success of such integrated basic education and skills training approaches.

The Maryland plan states that adult education will connect with the Governor’s Workforce Development Board (GWDB), the Office of Workforce Development, local workforce development boards, American Job Centers, state agencies, foundations, and educational organizations to explore funding options to expand the MI-BEST model. The Maryland Adult Learning Advisory Council (MALAC) and the Adult Education and Career Pathways Workgroup will serve in an advisory capacity in expanding this model to all jurisdictions. Professional development and ongoing technical assistance will be provided to local program administrators, teachers and partners on best practices incorporating the experience of the MI-BEST and ACE programs including recruitment, training selection, team teaching, support services, employer participation, outcomes, and data collection. However, while the Maryland plan expresses support for the approach taken by MI-BEST and ACE, these pilot programs were not funded through WIOA/WIA funds, and there is no clear plan for future funding support.

D. SUMMARY AND KEY TAKEAWAYS

The Career Pathways model requires states and local jurisdictions to shift the focus of workforce development activities from getting individuals trained for a job, to working in partnership with industry to develop and build on basic and vocational skills in an accelerated manner, and provide counseling and support services. The goal is to enable individuals to enter and/or advance within a given industry sector. All three jurisdictions have begun to put some of the essential pieces in place, and Maryland and Virginia in particular have models that can be scaled up and expanded to provide multiple entry and exit points for residents with different skills and needs.

While all three state plans have identified business leadership, sector strategies, career pathways, and integrated education and training as important components of their workforce development strategy, only the Maryland state plan includes a specific sector strategy model that it is committed to growing and developing. However, Maryland should develop a strategic plan for career pathways that clearly delineates the roles and activities of various stakeholders. Integrating EARN Maryland, the ACE and MI-BEST pilot programs, and apprenticeship programs will greatly aid in this effort. The WIOA Career Pathways workgroup can oversee this effort.

GO Virginia is inclusive of sector strategies, but does not promote a model as specifically as EARN Maryland. While DC references using its workforce intermediary program to support sector strategy development, and has since committed to using Career Pathway Innovation Funds to support the development of sector-based career pathways modeled after EARN Maryland, the effort so far lacks specificity about how it will be operationalized relative to other WIOA activities. DC’s current approach places the onus for developing career pathways on community-based organizations and schools without having sector partnerships in place and does not press technical training providers to also integrate basic skills. DC’s grant program must address these significant gaps if its career pathway efforts are to succeed. Consistent with best practices identified by the National Skills Coalition, the Maryland plan also addresses the model’s effectiveness in addressing barriers to employment and indicates that the system hopes to learn more from those SIPs that target specific populations and apply those lessons going forward.

The lack of specificity about the partnership models in the Virginia and DC plans makes it difficult to understand the specific roles and activities within the partnerships. This can hamper improvements to business services
since, as the Maryland plan indicates, Maryland is adjusting its business service activities around the opportunities created by the EARN Maryland model. Virginia’s plan, while lacking specific models for industry partnerships, has articulated a range of supports, resources and technical assistance that both the state and localities must make available to businesses, laying the groundwork for a transition to increased business leadership. EARN Maryland should continue to be used as a resource by the region and an opportunity for all jurisdictions to learn from both its strengths and limitations. Maryland and DC should also look to Virginia’s CPID program for best practices in making career pathways accessible to adults with disabilities. Consideration should also be given to whether and how regional industry partnerships might serve the state economies.
Module Four: High-Demand Sectors
Promising practices in high-demand sectors include:

- **Virginia**: The plan specifies that local boards allocate at least 40 percent of Title 1 funds annually on training services for jobseekers that lead to a high-demand industry credential.

- **DC**: Labor market analysis is focused on jobs that provide a living wage and require an associate’s degree or less.

One of the critical ways that WIOA is designed to improve upon WIA is by better aligning the education and training opportunities available in the workforce development system with the labor market needs at the state, regional, and local levels. To realize this goal, WIOA requires states and localities to identify in-demand industries and occupations as part of its state plan and encourages them to target training and services to these sectors, specifically in the form of career pathways with multiple entry points that will lead to industry recognized credentials and higher skill, higher wage jobs.

Virginia, Maryland, and DC all identify target industries, and offer a variety of strategies for directing support to these sectors in their state plans. Many of the strategies that one region employs are not used by the others, however, which presents an excellent opportunity to learn from the creative solutions of the others.

### A. CRITERIA FOR IDENTIFYING HIGH-DEMAND SECTORS

The strategic plans required by WIOA must include an analysis of the economic conditions in the region and identify existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors. This analysis can serve as guidance to local areas as they develop their plans, and to training providers in developing their curricula. WIOA defines in-demand industries and occupations as those with large current or projected employment opportunities that can lead to economic self-sufficiency.

Each of the three areas uses a similar framework for identifying in-demand industries and occupations. They all combine labor market analysis with input from experts and state leaders to identify target sectors. They also identify many of the same industries to focus their education and training opportunities. This overlap of target industries should make each of these industries an area of strength in recruiting employers as they will have a regional pool of workers to recruit. The industries identified by all three plans, include: health care, information technology, and hospitality and tourism.
The plans differ in that Washington DC focused its analysis on job opportunities that can lead to economic self-sufficiency and are accessible to unemployed residents. The DC plan prioritizes job openings that pay at or above the District’s living wage of $13.85 per hour and that require an associate’s degree or less. Maryland and Virginia prioritize industries and occupations based on current and projected employment. Both provide information on the average wages and educational requirements, yet they do not prioritize this information in identifying the state’s target industries and occupations. In consequence, Virginia’s plan does not highlight in-demand occupations with a livable wage. The assessment of skills gaps in the plan identifies “retail salespersons, cashiers, waiters and waitresses, and combined food preparation and serving workers, including fast food workers” as having the largest labor shortages. None of these occupations have a median wage over $13.85 an hour.

By adopting the approach from DC, both Maryland and Virginia could help focus their labor market analysis to identify industries and occupations with sustainable wages and upward mobility.

### B. DISSEMINATION OF LABOR MARKET INFORMATION

Sharing labor market information (LMI) on an ongoing basis with local areas and training providers is important to ensure that education and training opportunities stay aligned with the needs of the labor market as it evolves over time.

To facilitate this, states have created online tools for employers and jobseekers to share real-time LMI in a navigable format.

Maryland, Virginia, and DC each have an online...
Work-based training is an important service for jobseekers as it teaches job-specific skills and can directly connect jobseekers to job opportunities. WIOA emphasizes the importance of work-based training by increasing reimbursement to employers for both on-the-job training and customized training and by requiring 20 percent of the local youth formula be used.
for work experiences. States can also play an important role by using their strategic plans to encourage the use of work-based training such as incumbent worker training, on-the-job training, apprenticeships, and other work-based learning.

Maryland, Virginia, and DC all emphasize work-based learning as a priority in their state plans and identify creative strategies for expanding on-the-job training and apprenticeships. Each area has taken a unique approach to accomplishing this shared mission, and this presents an excellent opportunity for each region to learn from one another in growing their work-based learning opportunities. For example, Virginia and DC have adjusted their eligible trainer policies to make them more inclusive of work-based learning opportunities. Both regions added apprentice-related instruction to eligible trainers for individual training accounts, and DC also included on-the-job training and customized training.

Regions have also identified funding to expand opportunities. Virginia’s governor made it a goal to double the number of registered apprenticeships by 2019 and dedicated financial resources to support employers in establishing new or expanding existing apprenticeship programs in information technology, cybersecurity, and professional business services. Virginia also established a state-funded need-based financial aid program for noncredit workforce training that leads to in-demand industry credentials, called Financial Aid for Noncredit Training leading to Industry Credentials (FANTIC).

In Maryland, industry partnerships within the EARN program have utilized federal funds available through the Job Driven National Emergency Grant (JDNEG) program to provide work-based training for dislocated workers. Maryland’s plan indicates the state will pursue additional JDNEG funds with WIOA partners. Maryland’s governor has dedicated some of the WIOA set-aside funds to support apprenticeship opportunities in non-traditional apprenticeship fields.

Additionally, since submitting the WIOA State Plan, Maryland has been awarded $2 million under the federal ApprenticeshipUSA initiative. These funds will be utilized to grow Registered Apprenticeship opportunities for low income individuals, youth, women, communities of color, and persons with disabilities. Grant funds will provide the necessary staffing, technical, and administrative resources to grow the state’s apprenticeship system. The project will support a series of forums dedicated to increasing awareness of the benefits of apprenticeships to meet industry training needs, and will support an “Apprenticeship Innovation Fund” to invest in programs that support, evaluate and enhance apprenticeship expansion strategies, and a pilot program to create a pipeline for skilled immigrants to reenter jobs in health care. Targeted industries include health care, cybersecurity, construction, manufacturing, hospitality and tourism, and biotechnology. This initiative aims to expand Registered Apprenticeships in the state by 7 percent during the initial 18 months of the grant, including over 9,000 new apprentices.

Partnering with high schools and employers in improving the quality of work-based learning is another strategy that regions have undertaken. Maryland’s general assembly approved a Youth Apprenticeship Advisory Committee with representation from state agencies, high schools, and employers to “engage a new generation of workers and employers.” The DC plan identifies adding business advisory committees for health care, security and law, and business administration, so that all five of their target sectors have a committee. These committees will confirm labor market trends and identify opportunities for customized training, on-the-job-training, and apprenticeships.
Maryland, Virginia, and DC all use a similar framework for identifying in-demand industries and occupations. Each area combines labor market analysis with input from experts and state leaders to identify target sectors. DC takes it a step further by focusing on job opportunities that provide a living wage (currently $13.85 per hour) and those that are more accessible to unemployed residents (by requiring an associate’s degree or less). By adopting the approach from DC, both Maryland and Virginia could help focus their labor market analysis to identify industries and occupations with sustainable wages.

Maryland, Virginia, and DC all direct funding to high-demand occupations or industries using labor market information. Yet they differ in their approach for targeting these funds. Virginia’s plan is the most specific in its requirements. The plan requires each local workforce development board to allocate a minimum of 40 percent of WIOA Title I funds to training services that lead to a postsecondary education or workforce credential aligned with in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area or region. Virginia has also approved a grant program for noncredit training that leads to workforce credentials that must be for in-demand occupations. Both Virginia and Maryland have sought out additional funding for the expansion of apprenticeship programs aligned with high demand industries.
Module Five: Governance and Management of Implementation
Proper governance and management will be paramount in ensuring the smooth transition to and implementation of WIOA. Of particular importance is the level of coordination between implementing partners, and the level and frequency of support and guidance provided by states to local areas, as well as feedback from local areas back to providers of oversight. By opting to submit combined state plans, Maryland and Virginia have included not only the six core programs under WIOA in their planning process, but additional programs that operate as part of their State’s workforce system. Maryland has integrated TANF, the Trade Adjustment Assistance for Workers (TAA) program, the Jobs for Veterans State Grant Program, and the Reintegration of Ex-Offenders program under its combined Plan, while Virginia has also integrated the TAA and JVSG programs, as well as Unemployment Insurance, SNAP E&T, and the Virginia Initiative for Employment Not Welfare (VIEW) programs. Integrating these additional programs into their combined state plans will allow Maryland and Virginia to expand the benefits of cross-program strategic planning, increase alignment among State programs, and improve service integration.

Additionally, it is worth noting that since Maryland and Virginia are states and DC is a single statewide planning region for the purposes of WIOA, their approach to WIOA planning looks different from DC. Maryland and Virginia’s plans focus more on defining local areas’ authority and responsibility to delineate specific activities in their local WIOA plans.

A. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

DC’s implementation plan includes monthly implementation progress meetings among agency heads (DOES, DHS, OSSE, DDS/RSA, and UDC-CC), annual CapStat on the WIOA plan, and quarterly CapStat meetings on progress toward the plan’s goals, Workforce Investment Council (WIC) oversight, and customer feedback, including recurring meetings with advocates and stakeholders, and periodic updates on the progress of implementation. However, since submission of the plan, the monthly agency head meetings have not taken place. These meetings appear to have been replaced by several implementation groups on various WIOA-related issues, and are led by agency staff, who filter information up to director-level for key decisions. Working group summaries are posted on the WIC website.

Promising practices in governance and management of implementation include:

✔ Maryland: The state submitted a combined state plan, which includes a thorough and detailed implementation strategy and oversight structure.

✔ Virginia: The state submitted a combined state plan, which includes a concrete commitment to transparency.

Module Five: Governance and Management of Implementation
The District’s designation as a “High-Risk” partner with the USDOL, is based not only on youth program issues but also on matters related to WIOA implementation steps, and WIC board governance. In order to avoid sanctions, the WIC and Department of Employment Services designed a Corrective Action Plan (CAP), which was approved by the USDOL in March 2016. Some of the CAP conditions have been met, including updating the WIC board’s governing procedures, seating a compliant board, updating bylaws, and providing robust board training. The District’s High-Risk designation will remain until all CAP deliverables have been met, and/or three quarters of positive performance have been documented.

Maryland has a top-down oversight structure for implementation with multiple levels of oversight. The Governor’s Workforce Development Board (GWDB) is responsible for the implementation of WIOA, the necessary coordination of various stakeholders, and keeping the Governor informed of the same. The plan outlines the GWDB’s composition and roles, mission, vision, and functions. Secondly, an Alignment Group was established to oversee implementation of the plan, and will meet monthly to assess progress and opportunities for improvement. It will include key leadership in all of the core and combined programs represented in the Maryland WIOA state plan. Specifically, it will be comprised of representatives from DLLR, DHR, MSDE, GWDB, LWDAs and local WIOA partner programs, and representatives of the community college system of Maryland.

The Alignment Group will provide oversight to WIOA workgroups, and will work to repurpose the workgroups, which were originally developed to aid in developing the WIOA state plan, to focus on the implementation of provisions in the plan. The Alignment Group will convene monthly for at least the first two years of WIOA implementation. The plan also lists additional functions of the Alignment Group. Thirdly, the plan states that DLLR, DHR, MSDE and local partners will work to achieve coordination and alignment of the state’s WIOA program through strategic policy development, coordinated resource sharing through cooperative agreements, collaboration, cross-training employees, sharing resources and data, and co-location of resources whenever possible. The fourth layer of oversight is comprised of nine workgroups focused on WIOA, one of which is focused exclusively on governance. The key goals of the governance workgroup are to review statewide policies and programs to develop recommendations on actions Maryland should take to align core and other partner programs, develop guidance for the implementation and continuous improvement of the workforce system, and revise and implement the Local Workforce Development board certification requirements. It is worth noting that Maryland is striving for WIOA implementation to truly be a cross-agency effort, not one that is driven solely by the DLLR.

Maryland’s plan also mentions several other strategies focused on implementation of WIOA. The plan originally mentioned that one convening would be held in the summer of 2016 with cabinet secretaries representing the WIOA partners, key management from WIOA partners, GWDB representatives, and key local operational representation, where the vision for an integrated system as laid out in the plan would be communicated. This convening was held on July 21, 2016, with the goal of providing support and guidance to local areas as they embark on their local planning processes. DLLR also issued detailed local planning guidance for local partners. DLLR has revised its approach and now plans to hold additional convenings to provide implementation guidance to local partners on specific aspects of WIOA implementation and professional development opportunities. The next convening was held in December 2016, and focused on TANF and serving populations with barriers to employment.

Secondly, the state is seeking to ensure that communication regarding the state’s implementation efforts is not a singular event. The state committed to using mass communication systems to ensure that important messages regarding implementation are continually provided to frontline staff and local providers. The state is also seeking to utilize WIOA implementation funding to provide training and professional development opportunities for local and state staff. Local workforce areas are encouraged to find ways to collaboratively engage their local partners during both the formulation
and implementation of local plans. For jobseekers, the state is seeking to reduce bureaucracy, and provide increased alignment of activities and services across programs. The plan outlines an extensive list of strategies for implementation to ensure that jobseekers, especially those with barriers to employment, are effectively and efficiently served by the system. Additionally, the state is planning to align performance measurement systems across programs in the next few years. Maryland is seeking to replace the current disjointed system with one that includes workflow management, robust business rules engineered to aid in eligibility determination and creating and managing benefit plans, and report performance accountability measures.

It is noted in Virginia’s plan that a key weakness of Virginia’s workforce system is that it is fragmented, with responsibility for the programs under each of the four titles of WIOA split amongst five different state agencies. This has solidified programmatic siloes within agencies and produced duplication of services at higher than desirable rates. Thus, a key objective in Virginia is to build a streamlined approach for workforce services delivery, by aligning strategies, investments, services, data, and systems across programs and providers.

In Virginia, the plan gives oversight authority to the State WDB. The Code of Virginia gives the state Board of Workforce Development the authority to assist the Governor in development, implementation, and modification of the WIOA state plan. Five state agencies have oversight responsibilities for WIOA programs: WIOA Title I is overseen by Virginia Community College System (VCCS), Title II by VDOE and VCCS, Title III by the Virginia Employment Commission (VEC), and Title IV by the Department of Aging and Rehabilitation (DARS) and Department of Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI). Additionally, coordination across programs is assisted by the Career Pathways Workgroup that is comprised of senior staff from eight different state agencies.

Virginia’s Secretary of Commerce and Trade formed the WIOA Implementation Team. The goal of the team is to supplement the work of the Career Pathways Workgroup, and to ensure that WIOA workforce development imperatives are implemented statewide. The team is comprised of representatives from agencies administering the core WIOA programs, as well as those administering the optional partner programs delineated in the plan. Intended to focus on strategic initiatives and sustainability of WIOA implementation, this team was designed to remain active long after the submission and initial implementation of the state plan. Additionally, the Virginia Board of Workforce Development, a business-led board that is appointed by the governor, has established a WIOA committee. This committee is responsible for the service delivery system and is positioned to lead and advocate for reimagining the state’s American Jobs Centers and encouraging more cross-agency partnerships and collaboration, while assessing and improving service delivery for workforce services to jobseekers and employers.

### B. LOCAL AREA OVERSIGHT AUTHORITY

DC’s plan delineates the functions and roles of the WIC, but this is largely the statutory rules per WIOA. The plan also states that WIC meetings “are a prime opportunity to present the board with assessment results to make policy-related changes.” However, the plan does not include any explicit language granting the WIC oversight authority over WIOA implementation. In fact, before listing the WIC’s roles, the plan states that “some of these functions are carried out through coordination with the Department of Employment Services, the WIOA administrative agency and fiscal agent as designated through local law and policies.”

Outside of the plan, however, Mayor Bowser has issued an executive order delineating the role of the WIC, which includes “assisting the Mayor and Deputy Mayor for Greater Economic Opportunity in establishing a process for overseeing and monitoring the progress of the Department of Employment Services in achieving the strategic
goals, initiatives and action items as described in the WIOA state plan and any other goals, initiatives, or action items adopted or approved by the WIC." The complicated lines of authority and oversight would benefit from clarification. The order also states that the WIC will have a standing Implementation Committee, which can include non-WIC members, to 1) serve as a workforce intermediary “to ensure that the work of the WIC is translated into action” and 2) serve as a sounding board and make recommendations on new workforce system initiatives.\textsuperscript{100}

In both Virginia and Maryland’s plans, there is no explicit oversight authority given to local boards, but authority to oversee local activities is implied and expected to be a part of the local plan formulation and implementation.

Virginia’s plan notes that a lack of coordination and inconsistent participation by key local agencies undermines the quality of workforce development efforts in Virginia. As such, the state is seeking to strengthen local workforce boards, particularly in their role as regional conveners of workforce system resources. The local boards in Virginia, to support a demand-driven system, are led by a private sector chairperson and a majority business board. Actionable labor market information is provided to local boards by the Virginia Employment Commission Economic Information System.\textsuperscript{101}

Maryland’s plan recommends that local boards include local representation of the agencies implementing the core WIOA programs as a way to ensure constant communication and alignment of programming at the local level. Local providers of Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education will be required to include in their applications a plan for the integration of activities and services with workforce development activities delivered in the local area. Local areas are expected to play a key role in ensuring that the alignment of activities is achieved through their local planning process prior to submission of applications. Separately, Maryland has issued guidelines to local areas for developing their local plans, within which local boards will describe their roles overseeing implementation of core WIOA programs, TANF, and fiscal, performance, and other functions.\textsuperscript{102}

\section*{C. TIMELINE AND FUNDING FOR IMPLEMENTATION}

DC’s plan has an implementation plan laid out in three phases, but the phases do not have dates or date ranges associated with them.

Virginia’s state plan also does not specify a timeline for WIOA implementation.

In Maryland, there is no concrete implementation timeline, but the Alignment Group (which will oversee the nine workgroups charged with monitoring implementation) will meet once monthly for at least the first two years of implementation. As for performance measures, the WIOA partners seek to dedicate the first two years of WIOA implementation to developing a baseline for performance. During this time, all areas will be considered as “performing successfully” as long as they are demonstrating that they are truly serving individuals with barriers to employment. Specific performance benchmarks will be developed after these baselines are established.

While WIOA funds will be used to support the implementation of WIOA in all three jurisdictions, Maryland’s plan specifies that WIOA funds will also be used to provide training and professional development opportunities for local and state staff. The DC and Virginia plans do not discuss any other specifics pertaining to funding.
D. TRANSPARENCY, PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT, AND PARTICIPATION

In DC, CapStats and “customer feedback” are listed as accountability measures. However, no further details are given. CapStat sessions are closed and non-government representatives are included by invitation only, but in some cases, recordings are made available to the public. For example, the WIC has indicated that an upcoming CapStat session on workforce development vendors will be recorded and made public. The WIC itself is subject to the District’s Open Meetings law, but committees of the WIC generally are not.

The Virginia Board of Workforce Development includes language around transparency in its bylaws and seeks to share information regarding meeting and activities with the public subject to provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act. The board makes available to the public, on a regular basis through open meetings, information regarding the activities of the board, including its work plan, meeting minutes and presentations through www.elevatevirginia.com. In order to comply with Virginia’s “sunshine provisions,” the board and any subcommittee authorized to take official action on behalf of the board must do the following: 1) Take official action and engage in deliberations only at meetings open to the public. 2) Ensure that all meetings are held in an accessible location for the disabled, and that all information is provided in accessible and alternate formats. 3) Give public notice of meetings in accordance with applicable state code provisions, including public notice in advance of any special meeting or rescheduled regular meeting. 4) Ensure that votes of board members be publicly cast and, in the case of roll call votes, recorded.

Additionally, job seeker advisory focus groups will be utilized to gather the input of jobseekers. No other public engagement activities are mentioned in the plan, though the plan encourages local workforce areas to find ways to collaboratively engage their local partners during both the formulation and implementation of local plans. Broadly, the engagement and participation focus of the plan is with jobseekers and businesses, as they are seen as the two key groups of customers to be served by the workforce system. Once Maryland develops performance metrics and benchmarks, it will release performance information on WIOA programs in the format of USDOL’s performance scorecard.

Though Maryland’s plan does not make any specific statements about transparency beyond mass communication to frontline staff and providers, DLLR staff have shared that Maryland has made specific efforts to ensure transparency and public engagement in WIOA implementation. DLLR has created a Maryland WIOA Resource page on its website, has been releasing documents for public comment electronically, and has set up WIOA email distribution lists that have more than 800 people signed up for updates at the time of this writing, for which individuals can sign up through the WIOA Resource page. The page also provides a public meeting calendar, WIOA workgroup overviews and notes, and the ability to submit comments and ideas on WIOA implementation.

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Maryland’s implementation strategy appears to be quite detailed and thorough. Virginia and DC’s strategies are not outlined in as much detail in the WIOA plans. DC and Virginia may be able to use the specific activities Maryland has planned for governance and management of WIOA implementation to strengthen their own implementation and governance strategies. Maryland and Virginia should clearly specify the level to which local boards have oversight authority over local WIOA activities, and where state oversight and local oversight differ. None of the jurisdictions have specified timelines for implementation, though it may be useful to do so for planning and accountability purposes. Virginia’s plan makes the most concrete commitment to transparency, and could help inform efforts to strengthen transparency in Maryland and DC.
End Notes

2. ApprenticeshipUSA State Expansion Grant Summaries.
7. Phone conversation with staff at the Department of Employment Services, November 18, 2016.
8. See Adams, G. S. Spaulding, and C. Heller. 2015. “Bridging the Gap: Exploring the Intersection of Workforce Development and Child Care.” Urban Institute for more information on each of these issues.
10. Under WIOA, WIBs (Workforce Investment Boards) have been renamed WDBs (Workforce Development Boards).
13. DC’s Department of Employment Services provides an hourly stipend for its “earn and learn” programs, which is meant to include transportation assistance. Each jurisdiction also provides some type of transportation services to individuals with disabilities, through their VR agencies. This is discussed in more detail in the Individuals with Disabilities section.
17. For more information, see https://appam.confex.com/appam/2015/webprogram/Session6168.html and http://digital.graphcompubs.com/article/Partnering+For+Career+Readiness%3A+The+ACE+Model/2421111/0/article.html
18. Data provided by Maryland’s Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation.
19. Data provided by Virginia Department of Education. PluggedInVA is currently a strong model for GED students and higher. The state plans to expand its reach to serve adult learners not yet at the secondary skill level. For more information on PluggedInVA, see the module on Sector Partnerships and Career Pathways.
24 https://www.vehiclesforchange.org/
26 http://does.dc.gov/service/project-empowerment-program
27 Phone communication with Brandon Butler, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning, Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation (DLLR), November 14, 2016.
28 http://doc.dc.gov/page/re-entry-services-doc
29 http://www.dcfpi.org/making-a-good-jobs-program-even-better-how-to-strengthen-dcs-project-empowerment
32 For more information on the Data Vault, see the module on Performance Measurement.
33 http://wwwrc.virginia.gov/
34 http://does.dc.gov/service/2016-mayor-marion-s-barry-summer-youth-employment-program
35 https://www.dol.gov/odep/
36 https://www.dllr.state.md.us/employment/appr
39 According to Measure of America of the Social Science Research Institute, as of June 2015, there are 5,527,000 disconnected youth in America today, or one in seven teens and young adults (13.8 percent). http://www.measureofamerica.org/disconnected-youth/
41 http://osse.dc.gov/service/dc-reengagement-center
42 DC WIC Board Meeting Powerpoint Slides, April 12, 2016.
44 http://does.dc.gov/service/pathways-young-adults-0
45 The recommendations put forth by Maryland’s Youth Apprenticeship Advisory Committee are available at: https://www.dllr.state.md.us/aboutdllr/youthapprprep.pdf
46 http://www.ncwd-youth.info/node/342
48 Bird, K., M. Foster, and E. Ganzglass. 2014. “New Opportunities to Improve Economic and Career Success for Low-Income Youth and Adults.” CLASP. pg.11.
49 For more information, see http://economicmobilitycorp.org/index.php?page=implementation-of-the-mi-best-initiative-in-maryland
50 http://www.sbctc.edu/colleges-staff/programs-services/i-best/

55 See https://www.dllr.state.md.us/whatsnews/apprgrant.shtml and http://go.wh.gov/KmmRV7
57 http://webapp.psc.state.md.us/Intranet/aboutus/elecunivsvc_new.cfm
58 http://www1.pgcps.org/masterplan/
59 In Maryland, TANF is called Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA).
60 http://dds.dc.gov/page/youth-transition-programs
61 http://www.dllr.state.md.us/earn/
63 These program-level performance measures are not listed in the WIOA State Plan. They are taken from the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission, 2014. “Report to the Governor and the General Assembly of Virginia: Virginia’s Workforce Development Programs,” Appendix E.
64 WIOA language, see p. 56: https://www.congress.gov/113/bills/hr803/BILLS-113hr803enr.pdf
65 Email from Erin Roth, Policy Director, Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning, Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation (DLLR), November 16, 2016.
66 Phone conversation with Erin Roth, Policy Director, Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning, Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation (DLLR), November 14, 2016. These performance targets were included in the final Maryland WIOA State plan.
67 Implementation timetable retrieved from https://www.dllr.state.md.us/employment/wioa.shtml
68 Benchmarks retrieved from https://www.dllr.state.md.us/employment/wioa.shtml
70 Since the plan has been submitted, the monthly agency head meetings appear to have been replaced by several implementation groups on various WIOA-related issues, and are being led by agency staff, rather than the director. Meeting summaries are posted on the DCWorks website, available at http://dcworks.dc.gov/page/wioa-working-groups.
71 Wilson, B., and DeRenzis, B. 2015. “Realizing Innovation and Opportunity in WIOA.” National Skills Coalition.
72 Wilson, B., and DeRenzis, B. 2015. “Realizing Innovation and Opportunity in WIOA.” National Skills Coalition.
73 http://www.dllr.state.md.us/earn/
74 http://www.govvirginia.org/
76 According to the Maryland state plan, the state is home to over 10,000 businesses, but according to the state’s Department of Commerce, there are nearly 170,000 businesses in Maryland (http://commerce.maryland.gov/about/workforce-and-education). Either way, the point is that there is ample opportunity for EARN Maryland to grow.
78 http://www.govvirginia.org/
80 http://www.pluggedinva.com/
Business Administration and IT is listed twice for Washington DC, because the District combined two industries that were listed separately by Maryland and Virginia.

DC’s living wage was $13.85 per hour for 2016. The wage is adjusted annually per any changes in the Consumer Price Index.

These criteria were used for the five high-demand sectors listed in the state plan. It is unclear whether the same analysis and criteria were utilized to identify the recently added high-demand sector of infrastructure.

Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation. "Hot Jobs Now."

Virginia Board of Workforce Development. “What Is Elevate Virginia?” pg.60

DC Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning & Economic Development. Economic Intelligence Dashboard.

ApprenticeshipUSA State Expansion Grant Summaries: http://go.wh.gov/KmmRV7

CapSTAT is a data-driven performance management tool administered by the Office of Performance Management (OPM) within the District’s Office of the City Administrator. http://oca.dc.gov/page/oca-performance-management


Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation. “Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Local Workforce Plan Guidance—Workforce Development & Adult Learning.”

Phone communication with Erin Roth, Policy Director, Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning, Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation (DLLR), November 16, 2016.