



MAXIMIZING WIOA'S POTENTIAL:

A Regional Analysis of the State Plans of
Maryland, Virginia, and Washington, DC

SUMMARY REPORT

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. It was authored by:



THE
COMMONWEALTH
INSTITUTE
*Building a Prosperous
Virginia for All*

Chris Duncombe, Policy Analyst, The Commonwealth Institute for Fiscal Analysis

Chris leads TCI's analytical work on public education and workforce training. His analysis on the funding trends in public education in Virginia has earned headlines across the state. Before joining the Institute, Chris worked for Virginia's Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission, the General Assembly's program evaluation agency, where he investigated workforce development programs

and looked for opportunities for schools and local governments to partner in providing services. His prior studies and travel have taken him from Mexico to New Zealand. He has a Master's degree in Public Administration from the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University, and a B.A. from Dickinson College.

Judy Berman, Deputy Director, DC Appleseed

Judy directs DC Appleseed's work to improve economic security for low-income working families, as well as their child support, special education, and children's health projects. Before joining DC Appleseed in 2006, Judy worked with the Center for Effective Public Policy, a DC-based non-profit organization that focuses on national criminal justice policy, where she conducted research, wrote reports, and provided training and technical assistance on women offenders, sex offenders, offender re-entry, and collaboration within the criminal justice system. Previously, Judy's career focused on violence against women policy and advocacy. She received her Ph.D. in English with a concentration in American Studies and Gender Studies from the University of California, Berkeley, and her B.A. from Brown University.



DC APPLESEED
Solving DC Problems



Ilana Boivie, Senior Policy Analyst, DC Fiscal Policy Institute

Ilana Boivie focuses on strengthening job training and adult education as well as improving working conditions for people employed in the District of Columbia. Previously, she worked as a Research Economist for the Communications Workers of America, where she served as the subject matter expert on retirement policy, and provided bargaining and policy support on health care issues. Prior to that, she served

as Director of Programs for the National Institute on Retirement Security, where she conducted original research and analysis of national retirement issues, frequently spoke on retirement and economic matters, and testified before policymakers regarding her research. She holds an M.A. in Economics from New Mexico State University and a B.A. in English from Binghamton University, where she graduated Magna Cum Laude.

**Lavanya Madhusudan, Policy Research Analyst,
Job Opportunities Task Force**



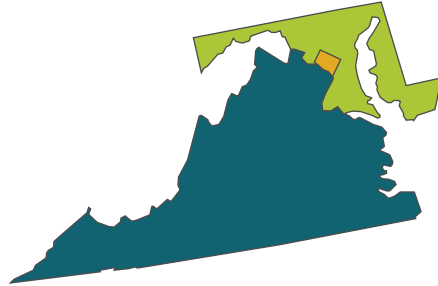
Lavanya leads JOTF's research efforts to inform the organization's policy and program agenda. She focuses on the areas of adult education, job training and workforce access, promoting the successful reentry and employment of people with a criminal record, and improving job quality, especially for low-wage workers. Prior to joining JOTF, Lavanya worked with various nonprofit organizations globally, studying best practices in the development and empowerment of marginalized communities. She has worked extensively at the grassroots level, and is also an experienced researcher, having published and presented to academic and community audiences globally. She holds a B.A. in Health and Society from the University of Pennsylvania, a Master's in Public Health from Johns Hopkins University, and a Master's in Social Work from the University of Maryland.



Christopher Meyer, Research Analyst, Maryland Center on Economic Policy

Christopher joined MDCEP in July 2016 as a research analyst. He works in multiple policy areas including school finance, job training, labor standards, and tax policy. Before joining MDCEP, Christopher worked as a college aide at the Metropolitan

Transportation Authority of New York and as a graduate research assistant at Baruch College, City University of New York. He holds a masters in public administration from Baruch College.



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Authored by:

The Commonwealth Institute for Fiscal Analysis ■ DC Appleseed
DC Fiscal Policy Institute ■ Job Opportunities Task Force
Maryland Center on Economic Policy

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Summary Report

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.

PROMISING PRACTICES

IN EACH JURISDICTION



VULNERABLE SUBPOPULATIONS: BARRIER REMEDIATION

Infrastructure

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.

Child Care

DC DC’s plan identifies federal funding resources to be utilized.

DC’s plan includes strategies to make subsidies more accessible.

VULNERABLE SUBPOPULATIONS: SUBPOPULATIONS OF INTEREST

Adult Learners

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.

English Language Learners

MD Since submitting the WIOA plan, Maryland has begun two new initiatives 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 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.

Low-Income Individuals

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

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

Performance Measures

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

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

Sector Partnerships and Career Pathways

MD 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.

VA 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.

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.

High-Demand
Sectors

VA 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.

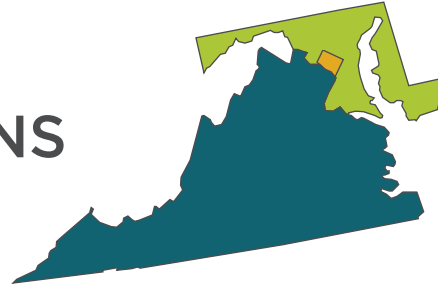
DC DC's Labor Market Information focuses on jobs that provide a living wage and require an associate's degree or less.

Governance &
Management of
Implementation

MD Maryland submitted a combined WIOA plan that includes a thorough and detailed implementation strategy and oversight structure.

VA Virginia submitted a combined WIOA plan that includes a concrete commitment to transparency.

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

Infrastructure

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.

Child Care

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.

VA 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

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.

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 *cont* 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.

Returning Citizens

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

VA 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 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.

Individuals with Disabilities

MD 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.

VA 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.

DC 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

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.

Youth

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.

English Language Learners

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.

Low-Income Individuals

MD 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.

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

Performance Measures

MD 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.

VA 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 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.

Sector Partnerships and Career Pathways

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.

High-Demand Sectors

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.

Governance & Management of Implementation

VA *cont.* 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 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.

MD Maryland should outline a specific timeline for implementation.

VA 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 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. ■



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