MARYLAND
GOVERNOR'S WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD

DRAFT SECTOR STRATEGIES POLICY FRAMEWORK
SEPTEMBER 2012

INTRODUCTION

Like most states, Maryland is in the middle of an economic recovery; yet there are thousands of Marylanders who are unemployed, underemployed, or in need of skills training to enhance their employment opportunities. Additionally, while Maryland boasts a highly educated workforce, significant skill shortages exist in many industry sectors. This whitepaper proposes the development of a regional sector strategy initiative to mitigate these shortages, while increasing opportunities for Marylanders to succeed in the workplace. The Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation (DLLR) and the Governor's Workforce Investment Board (GWIB) will provide the policy framework and leadership that builds on existing workforce investment system strengths and resources within Maryland to implement a regional sector strategy initiative that addresses worker skills attainment.

Building off of the Pennsylvania model, Maryland's sector strategy initiative, with policy guidance provided by DLLR and the GWIB, will allow local areas to develop focused programs in targeted industry sectors that support economic growth throughout the State.

PROPOSED POLICY FRAMEWORK

Maryland will implement a sector strategy initiative that will be regional in scope, yet locally driven. The initiative will be operated as a competitive grant process focusing on state identified high-growth industries and/or occupations. At least 25% of the initiatives will be targeted to low-income or low-wage workers. Individual sector strategies will require regional collaboration, leveraging of resources, and coordination of activities between local WIBS, industry partners, community colleges, and other key stakeholders.

The following measurable outcomes are expected as a result of implementing regional sector strategies:

1. High-growth industry sectors will be supplied with skilled workers to meet critical workforce shortages, thereby strengthening their economic competitiveness; and
2. Workers will receive the training needed to enhance their employment opportunities; thereby strengthening their economic standing in the community.

EXAMPLES OF SECTOR STRATEGY INITIATIVES

- Establishment of regional workforce training centers focused on one or more industry sectors;
- Development and promotion of sector-specific competency models to prepare workers for high-growth occupations;
- Development and adaption of career ladder/lattices for targeted industry sectors;
- Development of sector-specific curriculum; and/or
- Establishment of sector specific credential or certification programs.

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