# FY 24 Competitive Grant Application Overview

## Name of Program

Consolidated Adult Education and Family Literacy Services, administered by the Maryland Department of Labor (MD Labor), Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning (DWDAL), Adult Education and Literacy Services (AELS), Office of Adult Instructional Services (AIS).

## Authorization

**Federal**

* Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA−P.L. 113-128), Title II: the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act

**State**

* Annotated Code of Maryland, Labor and Employment Article, Title 11 Division of Employment and Training, Subtitle 8 Adult Education and Literacy Services
* COMAR Title 09.37.01.20 Maryland Adult External High School Program

**Grant Period**

July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2027

## Dissemination Date

January 17, 2023

**Notice of Intent to Apply**

February 17, 2023

## Submission Deadline

March 6, 2023 by 4:00 P.M.

**Technical Assistance Webinar**

February 3, 2023 from 10:00 A.M.-12:00 P.M.

**Eligibility Determination**

March 10, 2023

## The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

The Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) is Title II of WIOA. Programs authorized under this Act are core partners in the workforce system. AEFLA reflects the evolving goals of the adult education field that have refocused with changes in the labor market. A worker in today’s job market will require education and training beyond the high school level in order to access employment opportunities that provide sustainable wages. AEFLA supports businesses that struggle to fill positions with workers who have the necessary skills to meet the demands of a rapidly changing labor market.

WIOA recognizes that low-income adults and youth who have limited skills face significant barriers in achieving their goals. It seeks to mitigate this disparity by providing access to education and training focused to support employment and personal goals. This will better prepare individuals for employment opportunities that lead to economic self-sufficiency. To achieve this, the law requires that core partners align services to implement innovative strategies to improve the quality of service delivery, to leverage resources, and to prioritize those most in need.

WIOA Title II continues to emphasize literacy skills; however, the result of program participation must demonstrate that participants have met employment goals. The law creates opportunities for workforce preparation, integrated education and training, career pathways, concurrent enrollment and transition activities.

## Maryland’s Goals and Priorities

This FY 2024 Competitive Grant Application follows the goals established in Maryland’s WIOA State Plan to implement the *Benchmarks of Success for Maryland’s Workforce System*, which reflects a shared vision of excellence for the State’s workforce system and its clients. Adult Education and Literacy Services within DWDAL contributes significantly to Maryland’s goals of maximizing access to employment, credentialing, and life management skills by providing basic education, English language skills, high school credential preparation, and foundational competencies promoting successful transitions to employment and postsecondary education.

While considering federal and State priorities, prospective providers must demonstrate innovative strategies to improve coordination across programs which support learners in attaining their goals.

Content and program design may vary among jurisdictions. All providers will be selected based on their performance history and projections for increasing the literacy skills of eligible adults. Additional selection priority will be given to grant applications that promote the common vision of success for adult learners and emphasize the following program elements:

* Collaboration and alignment across systems to support a comprehensive adult learning system leading to transition to postsecondary education and employment
* Co-enrollment in adult education and workforce programs
* Program accountability and outcomes that contribute to Maryland’s WIOA goals
* Coordinated service delivery and resource utilization among local providers and partners to ensure that learners have the support necessary to achieve their goals as family members, citizens, and workers.

**Adult Instructional Services’ Focus**

MD Labor will promote improved learner outcomes through:

* Increased instructional quality and accountability
* Increased awareness and opportunities for improved adult learners' digital literacy in conjunction with blended and distance learning programming
* Data analysis and data driven decision making
* Coordination of State and local professional development efforts, organized within Maryland’s Adult Literacy Priorities and Focus Areas. (More detail is available under Consideration 9 of this Overview.)

## Purpose

This Competitive Grant Application seeks providers of Adult Education and Family Literacy Services who will enter into a subaward granted by the MD Labor in order to carry out the purpose of WIOA Title II:

1. Assist adults to become literate and obtain the knowledge and skills, and credentials necessary to attain employment and economic self-sufficiency;
2. Assist adults who are parents or family members to obtain the educational skills necessary to become full partners in the educational development of their children and lead to sustainable improvements in the economic opportunities for their families;
3. Assist adults in attaining a secondary school diploma and in the transition to post- secondary education and training, including through career pathways; and
4. Assist immigrants and other individuals who are English language learners to improve reading, writing, speaking and comprehension and mathematics skills and acquire understanding of the American system of government, individual freedom, and the responsibilities of citizenship.

## Adult Education Services Definition

In accordance with WIOA Sec. 203(1), the term ‘adult education’ means "academic instruction and education services below the postsecondary level that increases an individual’s ability to:

* Read, write, and/or speak in English and perform mathematics or other activities necessary for attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent;
* Transition to postsecondary education, training; and
* Obtain employment.”

## Adult Education Activities

In accordance with WIOA Sec. 203(2), programs, activities and services should include:

* Adult education and literacy services;
* Workplace adult education;
* Family literacy activities;
* English language acquisition activities;
* Integrated English literacy and civics education;
* Workforce preparation activities; or
* Integrated education and training.

**Integrated Education and Training (IET)**

Applicants are encouraged to propose activities that align adult education and career goals. Integrated Education and Training (IET), connects instruction in reading, writing, mathematics, English language and workforce preparation with training for a specific industry or industry cluster for the purpose of educational and career advancement. IET has demonstrated success in accelerating learning, increasing learner persistence, and condensing the time required to meet learner goals.

The IET must be part of a career pathway. The training proposed must meet local or regional industry needs identified in the local workforce plan. MD Labor strongly recommends that adult education providers plan these activities with the participation of other core program partners, certified training providers, and businesses to develop programs that will meet the needs of a high-demand industry. IET programs should be a component in a comprehensive Career Pathway program.

In response to public comment on 34 CFR Part 463.36, the Department of Education acknowledges “reserving Title II funds for the provision of adult education and literacy activities, including workforce preparation, and utilizing another source of funding, as appropriate, to provide the workforce training component can extend the availability of much-needed adult education and literacy services.” Strong partnerships with Title I programs are encouraged, as well as “effective co-enrollment strategies between Title II and Title I training services, in order to maximize resources when delivering integrated education and training.”

Required components of the IET program are as follows:

1. Adult education and literacy activities,
2. Workforce preparation activities, and
3. Workforce training.

Programs should support the State and Local Workforce Development Boards’ WIOA Plans.

These components must be provided contextually and concurrently for a specific occupation or occupation cluster for the purpose of educational and career advancement. The instruction must be aligned with the College and Career Readiness (CCR) standards and integrate workforce preparation activities.

**Career Pathway**

Career pathway programming is a successful workforce strategy for unemployed or under-employed adults and career changers. It supports individuals to move through the various levels of employment on a specific career ladder within an in-demand industry or industry cluster.

WIOA Sec. 3(7) states that career pathway means a combination of rigorous and high-quality education, training and other services that:

* aligns with the skill needs of industries in the economy of the State or regional economy involved;
* prepares an individual to be successful in any of a full range of secondary or postsecondary education options, including apprenticeships;
* includes counseling to support an individual in achieving the individual’s education and career goals;
* 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;
* 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;
* enables an individual to attain a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent and at least 1 recognized postsecondary credential; and
* helps an individual enter or advance within a specific occupation or occupational cluster.

Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDB) are charged with leading efforts to develop and implement career pathway programs. MD Labor requires that all adult education providers responding to this Competitive Grant Application propose to participate in career pathway planning and implementation.

## Eligible Individual

According to WIOA Sec. 203(4), the term eligible individual means an individual:

* Has attained 18 years of age

*(Note: Maryland Compulsory Attendance Law requires learners to be enrolled in school until age 18. Grant funds may only serve learners above these age limits.)*;

* Is not enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under State law

*(Note: Maryland Compulsory Attendance Law requires learners to be enrolled in school until age 18. Grant funds may only serve learners above these age limits.)*; and

* Is unable to compute or solve problems, or read, write or speak English at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual’s family, or in society;
* Does not have a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and has not achieved an equivalent level of education; or
* Is an English language learner.

## Eligible Provider

In accordance with WIOA Sec. 203(5), an eligible provider means an organization that has demonstrated effectiveness in providing adult education and literacy activities that may include:

* Local education agency
* Community-based organization or faith-based organization
* Volunteer literacy organization
* Institution of higher education
* Public or private nonprofit agency
* Library
* Public housing authority
* Nonprofit institution, not described above, that has the ability to provide literacy services to adults and families
* Consortium of agencies, organizations, institutions, libraries, or authorities described above
* Partnership between an employer and an entity described above

Only applications that are determined to be from eligible providers of demonstrated effectiveness are forwarded for review, scoring, and consideration for funding.

**Applicants currently funded for WIOA Title II Services by MD Labor**

An applicant that is currently funded for WIOA Title II Services by MD Labor must provide performance data to demonstrate its past effectiveness in serving basic skills deficient eligible individuals during FY 20-22, including evidence of its success in achieving outcomes for participants related to 1) employment, 2) attainment of secondary school diplomas or its recognized equivalent, and 3) transition to postsecondary education and training.

These metrics in this chart are based upon the number of individual participants that have a valid pre-test score and at least 12 hours of attendance for their first period of participation. Do not provide data based upon all periods of participation for a fiscal year. The Measurable Skill Gains data can be found in NRS Table 4.

Complete the charts on page 5 of the application only. Do NOT complete the charts on page 6.

**Consortium Applications**

In the case of applicants applying as a consortium, demonstrated effectiveness data from each member of a consortium, including the fiscal agent, is evaluated to determine if each member is an eligible provider of demonstrated effectiveness. All consortium members must be determined to be an eligible provider of demonstrated effectiveness in order for the consortium application to be forwarded for review, scoring, and consideration for funding.

**Applicants NOT currently funded for Title II Services by MD Labor**

An applicant that has **not** been currently funded for Title II Services by MD Labor must provide performance data to demonstrate its past effectiveness in serving basic skills deficient eligible individuals, including evidence of its success in achieving outcomes for participants related to 1) employment, 2) attainment of secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and 3) transition to postsecondary education and training.

The charts for Demonstrated Effectiveness in each content domain are found in the document titled FY 24 MD Labor-AELS-Application on page 6.

## Considerations

In accordance with WIOA Sec. 231, MD Labor shall consider all of the following when awarding grants:

1. The degree to which the eligible provider would be responsive to regional needs as identified in the local plan under WIOA Sec. 108 and serving individuals in the community who were identified as most in need, including individuals who have low levels of literacy skills or are English language learners;
2. The ability of the eligible provider to serve eligible individuals, including individuals with learning disabilities;
3. The past effectiveness of the eligible provider in improving the literacy of eligible individuals to meet State-adjusted levels of performance for the primary indicators of performance WIOA Sec. 116 especially for individuals with low levels of literacy;
4. The extent to which the eligible provider demonstrates alignment between the proposed activities and services and the strategy and goals of the local plan under WIOA Sec. 108, as well as the activities and services of the one-stop partners;
5. Whether or not the program
6. is of sufficient intensity and quality, and based on the most rigorous research available so that participants achieve substantial learning gains, and
7. uses instructional practices that include the essential components of reading instruction;
8. Whether the eligible provider’s activities including whether reading, writing, speaking, mathematics, and English language acquisition instruction delivered by the eligible provider, are based on the best practices derived from the most rigorous research available and appropriate, including scientifically valid research and effective educational practice;
9. Whether the activities effectively use technology, services, and delivery systems, including distance education in a manner sufficient to increase the amount and quality of learning and how such technology, services and systems lead to improved performance;
10. Whether the activities provide learning in real life contexts, including through integrated education and training, so that an individual acquires the skills needed to transition to and complete postsecondary education and training programs, obtain and advance in employment leading to economic self-sufficiency, and to exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship;
11. Whether the activities are delivered by well-trained instructors, counselors and administrators who meet the minimum qualifications established by the State, where applicable, and who have access to high quality professional development, including through electronic means;
12. Whether the activities coordinate with other available resources in the community, such as by establishing strong links with elementary schools and secondary schools, postsecondary educational institutions, institutions of higher education, local workforce development boards, one-stop centers, job training programs, and social service agencies, business, industry, labor organizations, community-based organizations, nonprofit organizations, and intermediaries, for the development of career pathways;
13. Whether the activities offer flexible schedules and coordination with federal, State, and local support services (such as child care, transportation, mental health services, and career planning) that are necessary to enable individuals, including individuals with disabilities or other special needs, to attend and complete programs;
14. Whether the eligible provider maintains a high-quality information management system that has the capacity to report measurable participant outcomes (consistent with Section 116) and to monitor program performance; and
15. Whether the local areas in which the eligible provider is located have a demonstrated need for additional English language acquisition programs and civics education programs.

## Local Applications

In accordance with WIOA Sec. 232, each eligible provider desiring a grant shall submit an application to MD Labor (as the eligible agency) containing such information and assurances as the eligible agency may require, including:

* Description of how funds awarded will be spent and a description of any cooperative arrangements the eligible provider has with other agencies, institutions, or organizations for the delivery of adult education and literacy activities;
* Description of how the eligible provider will provide services in alignment with the local plan under WIOA Sec. 108, including how such provider will promote concurrent enrollment in programs and activities under WIOA Title I, as appropriate;
* Description of how the provider will meet the State adjusted levels of performance described in WIOA Sec. 116(b)(3), including how the provider will collect data to report on performance indicators;
* Description of how the provider will fulfill one-stop partner responsibilities as described in WIOA Sec. 121(b)(1)(A);
  + A description of how the eligible provider will fulfill, as appropriate, required one-stop partner responsibilities to—
    - (i) Provide access through the one-stop delivery system to adult education and literacy activities;
    - (ii) Use a portion of the funds made available under WIOA to maintain the one-stop delivery system, including payment of the infrastructure costs for the one-stop centers, in accordance with the methods agreed upon by the Local Board and described in the memorandum of understanding or the determination of the Governor regarding State one-stop infrastructure funding;
    - (iii) Enter into a local memorandum of understanding with the Local Board, relating to the operations of the one-stop system;
    - (iv) Participate in the operation of the one-stop system consistent with the terms of the memorandum of understanding, and the requirements of the Act; and
    - (v) Provide representation to the State board;
* Description of how the provider will provide services in a manner that meets the needs of eligible individuals;
* Information that addresses the considerations described in WIOA Sec.231(e) (found on pages 6 and 7 of this document); and
* Documentation of the activities required to determine if the application is aligned with the WIOA Local Plan.

## Local Administrative Cost Limits

In accordance with WIOA Sec. 232, of the amount made available to local providers under this Competitive Grant Application, not less than 95% shall be expended for carrying out adult education and literacy activities.

The remaining amount, not to exceed 5%, can include the following activities found in 34 CFR 463.26:

* Planning
* Administration, including carrying out performance accountability requirements
* Professional development
* Providing adult education and literacy services in alignment with local workforce plans, including promoting co-enrollment in programs and activities under WIOA Title I as appropriate, and
* Carrying out the one-stop partner responsibilities described in 20 CFR 678.420, including contributing to the infrastructure costs of the one-stop delivery system.

(*Special Rule: In cases where the cost limits described are too restrictive to allow for adequate planning, administration, professional development, and interagency coordination, the eligible provider shall negotiate with eligible agency in order to determine an adequate level of funds to be used for non-instructional purposes.*)

The purpose of the Consolidated Adult Education and Family Literacy Grants is to support an instructional program for adults defined as eligible under WIOA Title II. It is assumed that applicants have infrastructure in place to house and support the instructional program. Federal administrative cost limits will be strictly monitored.

Additional exceptions for spending are outlined in the Budget Instructions document.

**Infrastructure Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) and Resource Sharing Agreement (RSA) Expectations**

WIOA Title II Labor funded programs are required to contribute to the shared costs of operations and key services of the local American Job Center (AJC) in their local workforce area. The contribution can be cash, non-cash, third-party in-kind, or a combination. All required WIOA partners, including WIOA Title II, shall negotiate RSAs that are equitable and proportionate. Each partner’s contributions to these costs may vary, as these contributions are based on the proportionate use and relative benefit received, consistent with the partner programs’ authorizing laws and regulations and the Uniform Guidance at 2 CFR part 200.

All partners must work together to integrate shared services and leverage each other’s resources to effectively and efficiently serve common customers of the local workforce. Refer to DWDAL’s Policy PI 2021-04 *WIOA Memoranda of Understanding & Resource Sharing Agreements (April 26, 2021)* for specific information about the infrastructure MOU and RSA requirements and implementation which can be found here: <https://www.labor.maryland.gov/employment/mpi/mpi4-21.pdf>

## Supplement Not Supplant

In accordance with WIOA Sec. 241, funds made available for adult education and literacy activities under this RFP shall supplement and not supplant other State or local public funds expended for adult education and literacy activities.

## The General Education Provisions Act (GEPA), WIOA Sec. 427

Applicants must develop and describe the steps they propose to take to ensure equitable access to, and equitable participation in, this project for those learners, teachers, and other program beneficiaries with special needs. This statute is not intended to duplicate the requirements of civil rights statutes, but rather to ensure that federally funded projects address statutory barriers (gender, race, national origin, color, disability, age) and any locally identified barriers to access. The description may also refer to other sections of the grant application, which address a plan to remove barriers.

## Grant Duration

In accordance with WIOA Sec. 231, MD Labor shall award multi-year grants under this competition. Funding awards to selected providers will cover the period that **begins** **July 1, 2023 and concludes June 30, 2027.**

Selected providers are required to complete non-competitive application documents in order to receive subsequent year funding. Continuation year funding levels will be calculated based on Federal and State funds available.

## National Reporting System

The National Reporting System for Adult Education (NRS) is a mandatory, outcome-based reporting system for the State-administered, federally funded adult education program, developed by the

U. S. Department of Education’s Division Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE). Statesare responsible for meeting federal guidelines for implementing NRS measures, methods, and requirements, and for ensuring that outcomes are reported for the WIOA Performance Accountability provisions in WIOA Sec. 116. Maryland utilizes the Literacy, Adult, and Community Information System (LACES) for NRS reporting. Local providers are responsible for allocating sufficient resources to collect NRS measures and report them to LACES, meeting all requirements for data collection, data entry, data verification, and accountability. For brevity, this Competitive Grant Application refers to LACES whenever referencing the data reporting system. Should LACES be replaced by a different system during this grant's duration, all program responsibilities and expectations to LACES will apply to that new system as well. To ensure accurate and timely data, all program enrollment, assessment, or other follow up activity data must be entered into LACES on a monthly basis, at minimum. Failure to do so could result in the withholding of funds.

To allow the U.S. Department of Education to assess the quality of NRS data, States must comply with the *Data Quality Standards* *(DQS)* of the NRS. These standards clarify procedures for learner entry and assessment, data collection and verification, data analysis and reporting, and professional development related to data. States are required to complete and submit the NRS *Data Quality Checklist* with their annual NRS data report, along with a signed certification as to the validity and quality level of the State’s data. Maryland is currently proficient at the Exemplary Level, the highest level of data quality. All local providers must complete and submit to MD Labor with their annual application documents, the *Data Quality Checklist,* and certification of compliance with the DQS.

According to *NRS Technical Assistance Guide* (<https://nrsweb.org/policy-data/nrs-ta-guide>), data collectors are local program staff. States can improve quality in three ways: training local staff, improving local data collection, and local monitoring and data audits. Maryland will utilize all of three of these methods of ensuring Exemplary quality data.

## Assessment Policy

According to *NRS Technical Assistance Guide* (<https://nrsweb.org/policy-data/nrs-ta-guide>), the State has discretion to establish the standardized learner assessment method used within the State, as well as procedures for progress assessment, and must develop a written Statewide assessment policy. Only NRS approved assessments are approved for measuring the Educational Functioning Levels of learners, and procedures must conform to standard psychometric criteria for validity and reliability as defined by the Division of Adult Education and Literacy (DAEL).

The 34 CFR 462.40(b) requires each State to submit its assessment policy for review and approval at the time the NRS statistical report is submitted. Labor submitted the *Basic Skills and English Language Assessment Policy,* for implementation during FY24, to OCTAE’s Division of Adult Education and Literacy (DAEL) on December 30, 2022, and it is pending approval. All funded providers must comply with Maryland’s assessment policy, which is available for reference on the *LWIS Home Page.* <http://www.labor.maryland.gov/employment/mpi/mpi9-19.pdf>

## Performance Accountability Provisions

In accordance with WIOA Sections 212 and 116, MD Labor must meet accountability measures that apply across all core programs including the following:

* The percentage of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter and fourth quarters after exit from the program;
* The median earnings of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program;
* The percentage of program participants who obtain a recognized postsecondary credential or a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent during participation in or within one year after exit from the program (Note: Participants must also be employed or enrolled in postsecondary education within one year following exit from the program in order to be counted for this indicator);
* The percentage of program participants who, during a program year, are in an education or training programs that lead to a recognized postsecondary credential or employment and who are achieving measurable skill gains toward such credentials or employment; and
* The indicators of effectiveness in serving employers.

MD Labor has agreed with DAEL, during annual performance measure negotiations, to meet the following performance levels for the Measurable Skill Gain (MSG) Indicator for each program year. Each local program must meet performance levels that will contribute to Maryland’s success. WIOA performance measures will be revised in continuation years. Detailed information about the NRS Educational Functioning Levels (EFLs) listed below is included in the document titled “Resources” on pages 10 – 21.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Educational Functioning Level (EFL)** | **Percentage of Learners who increase their EFL based on NRS Approved Assessment** |
| Adult Basic Education (ABE) Level 1 | 35% |
| Adult Basic Education (ABE) Level 2 | 34% |
| Adult Basic Education (ABE) Level 3 | 35% |
| Adult Basic Education (ABE) Level 4 | 34% |
| Adult Basic Education (ABE) Level 5 | 40% |
| Adult Basic Education (ABE) Level 6 | 31% |
| English as a Second Language (ESL) Level 1 | 36.5% |
| English as a Second Language (ESL) Level 2 | 35.5% |
| English as a Second Language (ESL) Level 3 | 35% |
| English as a Second Language (ESL) Level 4 | 33% |
| English as a Second Language (ESL) Level 5 | 25% |
| English as a Second Language (ESL) Level 6 | 25% |
| **Totals** |  |
| ABE | 34.7% |
| ESL | 29.7% |
| **Overall Total** | 32% |

Performance indicators table.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Performance Indicators** | **PY 2023 Negotiated Level** |
| Employment (Second Quarter After Exit) | 33.6% |
| Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit) | 38.4% |
| Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit) | $5476.00 |
| Credential Attainment Rate | 38.0% |

## Fund Use

Programs requesting funds will be required to meet the performance measures of each population to be served.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **FEDERAL FUNDS** | |
| **Fund Name** | **Services/Activities** |
| **ABE/ESL** | Adult Basic Education (ABE) instructional services for learners at the ABE 1 through 4 NRS levels, and/or English as a Second Language (ESL) instructional services for learners at the ESL 1 through 6 NRS levels (*see* NRS Level Descriptors *Resources, pages 10-15 and 19-21)* |
| **ASE** | Adult Secondary Education (ASE) instructional services for learners at the ABE 5 through 6 NRS levels (s*ee* NRS Level Descriptors *Resources, pages 16-18***)** |
| **Local Institutionalized\*** | Instructional services in local correctional facilities and other institutions (including any prison, jail, reformatory, work farm, detention center, halfway house, community-based rehabilitation center, or other similar institution for the confinement or rehabilitation of criminal offenders) for learners at any of the ABE, ASE, and ESL NRS levels. |
| **Family Literacy** | Adult education instruction, partner program coordination, and parent education (s*ee* Family Literacy definition *in the LACES Data Definition Dictionary on the LWIS Home Page:*<http://www.labor.maryland.gov/lwis/>) |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **STATE FUNDS** | |
| **Fund Name** | **Services/Activities** |
| **Literacy Works** | **1st priority**−Local accountability and data reporting to LACES  **2nd priority**−Direct instructional services to augment the services described for ABE/ESL, ASE, NEDP, IELCE (NRS Levels)  **3rd priority**–Locally developed and accepted State required Professional Development activities for staff |
| **AGE** | Adult General Education (AGE) funds are **only available to local public school systems** and designated for instructional services to learners at the ABE 5-6 levels (s*ee* NRS Level Descriptors *Resources, pages 15-18***)** |
| **ADDITIONAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES** | |
| **Fund Name** | **Services/Activities** |
| **IELCE (federal)** | Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE) prepares adults who are English language learners, and places such adults in, unsubsidized employment in high-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self- sufficiency. Programs must integrate with the local workforce development system and its functions to carry out the activities of the program. |
| **NEDP (State and federal)** | National External Diploma Program (NEDP) is an applied performance assessment system high school diploma option (*see* Assurances Section for the Maryland National External Diploma Program) |

\* Each eligible agency using funds provided under Programs for Corrections Education and Education of Other Institutionalized Individuals to carry out a program for learners within a correctional institution must give priority to programs serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within five years of participation in the program.

Funds under Programs for Corrections Education and the Education of Other Institutionalized Individuals may be used to support educational programs for transition to re-entry initiatives and other post-release services with the goal of reducing recidivism. Such use of funds may include educational counseling or case work to support incarcerated individuals' transition to re-entry and other post-release services. Examples include assisting incarcerated individuals to develop plans for post-release education program participation, assisting learners in identifying and applying for participation in post-release programs, and performing direct outreach to community-based program providers on behalf of re-entering learners. Such funds may not be used for costs for participation in post-release programs or services.

## Funding Limitations

The following limitations, established by MD Labor, apply to all federal and State funds available through this Competitive Grant Application:

1. No one under age 18 may receive services funded with federal, State, or matching funds committed to this grant. Maryland law requires attendance in public school until an individual reaches age 18. Services may not be provided for individuals enrolled in the K-12 system or required to be enrolled in secondary school, including homeschool instruction, under State law. For Family Literacy partnerships, the partner program must support children’s services and interactive literacy component.
2. If an eligible provider plans to subcontract/subaward any part of services, all subcontracts/subawards must receive approval prior to application. A copy of the subcontract/subaward document, including details of the funds proposed to be paid, must be included with the grant application submission. The eligible recipient shall be responsible for the performance of subcontractors/subawardees and for ensuring the subcontractor’s/subawardee’s compliance with this Competitive Grant Application.
3. Grantees must monitor, track, and expend grant funds in the timeframe specified by the grant notice. Federal and State grant funds have a limited timeframe. State funds must be expended by June 30 of the fiscal year, or returned to MD Labor. Federal funds must be encumbered by June 30and paid by September 30,or returned to MD Labor. While there are several factors that contribute to grant recipients not spending all awarded funds, recipients are required to provide a **Notice of** **Projected Under-Expended Funds** by April 1 of the fiscal year, if applicable.
4. Funded programs may not use any WIOA Title II funds to support membership dues for any organization engaged in advocacy activities.
5. Program revenue and any interest earned in conjunction with the revenues must be spent during the grant fiscal year on allowable activities under the grant. Auditable records must be maintained on all revenue generated and expended. The proposed expenditure of anticipated revenues must be shown in the budget submitted under this Competitive Grant Application.
6. If a consortium of eligible recipients apply for a grant, one recipient must be designated as the fiscal agent, with clearly identified goals and responsibilities for each partner.
7. MD Labor will consider grant applications to use a portion of grant funds for support services for eligible learners (e.g., childcare, transportation) and paid preparation time for qualified teachers under this Competitive Grant Application.
8. MD Labor will not approve the expenditure of grant funds for any out of State activities or travel.
9. Programs may not use any WIOA Title II funds to purchase equipment, except for MIS functions and assessments that require computer test administration. In consultation with the program’s Adult Education Specialist, MD Labor may grant reasonable requests for the purchase of technology for instructional purposes. The federal definition for *equipment* includes tangible personal property (including information technology systems) having a useful life more than one year and a per-unit acquisition cost which equals or exceeds the lesser of the capitalization level established by the non-federal entity for financial statement purposes, or $5,000.
10. MD Labor will not approve the expenditure of grant funds for the cost of renting space.

## Estimated Funds Available by Jurisdiction: July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024

Allocations in the following table were determined based upon need and prior demand.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Jurisdiction** | **Federal** | | | | | | | **State** | | | |
| **ABE/ESL** | **ASE** | **Family Literacy (1)** | **Local Inst. (2)** | **NEDP (Federal)** | **CE** | **IELCE/IET** | | **Literacy Works** | **AGE (3)** | **NEDP (State)** |
| **Allegany** | $60,225 | $15,468 |  |  |  |  |  | | $151,460 |  |  |
| **Anne Arundel** | $191,625 | $40,731 |  |  |  |  |  | | $358,650 |  |  |
| **Baltimore City** | $744,600 | $78,369 |  |  |  |  |  | | $1,211,680 |  |  |
| **Baltimore County** | $563,925 | $56,199 |  |  |  |  |  | | $681,570 |  |  |
| **Calvert** | $26,280 | $8,249 |  |  |  |  |  | | $113,779 |  |  |
| **Caroline** | $47,085 | $6,032 |  |  |  |  |  | | $124,507 |  |  |
| **Carroll** | $81,578 | $20,623 |  |  |  |  |  | | $106,022 |  |  |
| **Cecil** | $65,700 | $18,045 |  |  |  |  |  | | $90,876 |  |  |
| **Charles** | $70,080 | $11,343 |  |  |  |  |  | | $229,335 |  |  |
| **Dorchester** | $39,420 | $4,692 |  |  |  |  |  | | $95,730 |  |  |
| **Frederick** | $240,900 | $24,232 |  |  |  |  |  | | $411,661 |  |  |
| **Garrett** | $38,325 | $9,796 |  |  |  |  |  | | $52,827 |  |  |
| **Harford** | $186,150 | $30,419 |  |  |  |  |  | | $215,055 |  |  |
| **Howard** | $412,268 | $25,264 |  |  |  |  |  | | $454,380 |  |  |
| **Kent** | $20,258 | $4,073 |  |  |  |  |  | | $63,923 |  |  |
| **Montgomery** | $1,407,075 | $46,403 |  |  |  |  |  | | $1,387,410 |  |  |
| **Prince George’s** | $782,925 | $51,558 |  |  |  |  |  | | $984,490 |  |  |
| **Queen Anne’s** | $33,398 | $4,743 |  |  |  |  |  | | $92,701 |  |  |
| **St. Mary’s** | $87,600 | $10,312 |  |  |  |  |  | | $171,460 |  |  |
| **Somerset** | $27,101 | $4,228 |  |  |  |  |  | | $60,274 | $72,441 |  |
| **Talbot** | $32,850 | $4,537 |  |  |  |  |  | | $94,215 |  |  |
| **Washington** | $114,975 | $21,087 |  |  |  |  |  | | $180,201 |  |  |
| **Wicomico** | $120,450 | $11,291 |  |  |  |  |  | | $130,411 |  |  |
| **Worcester** | $54,750 | $8,198 |  |  |  |  |  | | $80,876 | $85,040 |  |
| **TOTAL** | $5,449,543 | $515,892 | $390,000 | $180,709 | $381,670 | $475,000 | $1,747,397 | | $7,543,493 | $157,481 | $270,000 |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| (1) | Providers will be selected on the basis of their ability to deliver Family Literacy in a cost effective manner. |
| (2) | Providers will be selected on the basis of their ability to serve the locally incarcerated population. |
| (3) | State AGE funds are available only to local public school systems and must be used for instructional service to ASE level learners. |

## Estimated Number of Grants to be Awarded

The number of grants will be determined by this competitive process, ensuring that services are available to eligible populations in every jurisdiction.

## Estimated Average Grant Award

Funds are available for competition up to the amount available within a jurisdiction. The actual grant amount will be determined when grant awards are finalized.

**Grant Matching Requirement**

In order to receive a grant under this competition, MD Labor requires the recipient to provide a matching contribution in an amount equal to 20% of the total amount of funds expended on the allowable activities under the grant.

NOTE: Total amount of funds expended equals the total amount of Title II funds requested from the grant plus your total match contribution. In order to calculate your total match based on only the funds requested, you need to multiply the funds requested by 25%.

Use the following formula to calculate the match based on funds requested:

**MD Labor requested amount x .25 = Match Contribution**

An example:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Calculating match based on Title II funds requested | Fund requested = $80,000 | $80,000 x .25 = **$20,000** |
| Verifying that the match is 20% of total expended funds ($80,000 for Title II funds + $20,000 for match) | Fund expended (Requested + Match) = $80,000 + $20,000 = $100,000 | $100,000 x .20 = **$20,000** |

A minimum of 35% of the matching contribution must be in-cash, and the remaining amount, up to 65%, may be an in-kind contribution. Matching funds may not be other federal funds, program revenue, or resources that support a separate project.

## Maintenance of Effort

MD Labor requires that the full and actual dollar amount of matching resources, including in-kind, committed for the initial grant award period must be maintained through all subsequent continuation years of the grant duration.

## Minimum Learners Served

MD Labor encourages grant applicants to serve a minimum of 300 learners. For jurisdictions where enrollment is characteristically low, please explain why serving 300 learners may not be possible.

**Cost per Learner**

The cost per learner is calculated as follows: total requested grant award divided by total number of learners anticipated to be enrolled.

## Maryland’s Adult Education and Family Literacy Standards and Requirements

All applicants are subject to the following standards and requirements established by the Office of Adult Instructional Services at MD Labor:

1. **Consolidated Delivery of Services:** MD Labor encourages grant applicants to provide consolidated delivery of services to the eligible population. If feasible and appropriate, applicants should provide a variety of services, e.g., ABE, ESL, Family Literacy, IELCE, and/or NEDP. Applicantswho serve fewer than 100 learners are encouraged to form a consortium. In the case of applicants applying as a consortium, demonstrated effectiveness data from each member of a consortium, including the fiscal agent, is evaluated to determine if each member is an eligible provider of demonstrated effectiveness. All consortium members must be determined to be an eligible provider of demonstrated effectiveness in order for the consortium application to be forwarded for review, scoring, and consideration for funding.
2. **Programmatic Changes**

Throughout the grant year, a program may deem it necessary to make changes to their program delivery based on variety of factors both planned and unplanned. Labor recognizes that such changes are a natural part of delivering an adult education program.

In the event there are programmatic changes, local programs are required to notify their Adult Education Program Specialist. Examples of such changes include, but are not limited to:

* Addition/removal of Family Literacy partnerships
* Addition/deletion of IELCE/IET Career Pathways
* Reduction/elimination of a funding line (i.e. no longer serving Institutional)
* Budget changes (see Budget Amendment Documents for additional details)
* Personnel changes (see number 5 below)
* Anything else that changes the overall scope of work of a local program

The Adult Education Program Specialist needs to be notified in writing in advance of any programmatic changes. Notifying Labor of these changes allows the Adult Education Program Specialist and local program staff to make any necessary adjustments in a timely manner.

1. **Opportunity to Learn Standards:** The following standards must be followed for programs providing classroom instruction.
   1. **Learner Fees:** Grantees shall not charge any fees to ABE levels 1 – 4 or ESL levels 1- 5 for instructional services, however a program may charge a nominal fee for consumable and instructional materials that eventually become the property of the learner. Books shall be available at no cost for all learners at every level. A program may also charge individuals who do not qualify for adult education services and other non-participants for adult education services such as High School Equivalency (HSE) practice tests. Reasonable fees are customary and appropriate for learners enrolled in the NEDP and other ASE level services. NEDP fees shall not exceed $225. Grantees must report all fees as revenues to MD Labor annually.
   2. **Curriculum:** Applicants shall deliver instruction based on a comprehensive curriculum that is clearly articulated with the College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education and the Maryland Content Standards for Adult ESL/ESOL, and is ”based on the most rigorous research available and appropriate, including scientifically-valid research and effective educational practice” (WIOA Sec. 231). The curriculum should be designed to enable learners to acquire the skills needed to increase their literacy levels and to achieve their goals.
   3. **Duration and Intensity of Instructional Programs:**
      1. Classes must be of sufficient intensity to allow for improvement in literacy skills and educational functional level (EFL) increases. Research indicates that 100 hours of instruction is the point at which adult learners are likely to show measurable progress (Comings 2007). Providers should also consider the minimum hours of instruction required between pretest and post-test in designing a class schedule (CASAS 40 hours, TABE 40 hours, BEST Plus 60 hours). MD Labor recognizes that some programs are able to meet the necessary intensity for EFL increases with a series of shorter classes rather than two or more sustained sessions during a program year. If programs are able to demonstrate that duration and intensity will be sufficient for learner gain, this type of schedule may be considered.
      2. Classes must provide sufficient intensity for learners to meet their goals for enrollment in the program.
      3. Classes should be offered year round with no more than 30 days between sessions and should offer flexible scheduling to include day, evening, and weekend classes unless there is a viable reason why this is not feasible.
      4. MD Labor requires that all programs implement a managed enrollment. This must include intake (orientation, assessment, and goal setting) and counseling to establish reasonable goals to transition learners to other education, training, or employment.
   4. **Attendance Policy:** The NRS requires that programs have a clearly stated attendance policy and maintain attendance files. The policy should define for learners the learner’s responsibility to attend a certain number or percentage of the classes, or be withdrawn from enrollment. Any learner who does not receive services for 90 calendar days will be exited/withdrawn. Learner records can be reactivated if they return for services.
   5. **Documentation of Attendance:** Programs must have documentation of learner’s attendance which includes learner printed name and signature, date, name of class and learner arrival and departure time, or comparable documentation for distance learning.
   6. **Waitlist Policy:** Programs shall *establish* and *document* *waitlists* when the recommended maximum class enrollment size has been reached. Programs shall have a clearly defined policy and procedure for management of the waitlist and be able to report on the number waiting for services and length of time on the list.
   7. **Additional Maryland Standards/Framework:** In addition to the College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education and the Maryland Content Standards for Adult ESL/ESOL, ESL Quality Program Standards, Professional Standards for Teachers in Adult Education, Digital Literacy Framework, and Adult Education Program Standards must be implemented in program delivery. (See *Resources–*Maryland Adult Education Standards/Framework.)
2. **MD Labor Recommended Standards for Class Sizes:** Applicants must specify class sizes by level. Grant funds may not be used to support classes that start with fewer than five (5) enrolled learners. The table below illustrates standards for proposed class sizes. On data reports, you will be asked to explain any classes with class size outside the minimum and maximum enrollment.

In adult learning classrooms, research shows class size as an important factor in influencing learner experience and learning. The following ranges are based in part on the Wilson Reading System® class size recommendations and an extensive examination of peer-reviewed academic sources.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ESL Level 1 | 8 learners **maximum** |
| ABE Levels 1-2 or ESL Levels 2-3 | 10 learners **maximum** |
| ABE Levels 3-4 or ESL Levels 4-5 | 12 learners **maximum** |
| ABE Levels 5-6 or ESL Level 6 | 15 learners **maximum** |

1. **Personnel Requirements:** Staff must have the experience and training to effectively assist the target population to achieve their goals, improve their learner’s educational skills, and support the program in meeting their performance goals. MD Labor will support the following positions for each funded program:
   1. **Program Administrator:** The Program Administrator must have knowledge of and experience in Adult Education, program development, supervision, grants management, and fiscal program management.
   2. **Program Specialists:** Each grantee shall employ three Program Specialists. Specialists shall be hired during the first two months of the grant award and are expected to participate in State initiatives.
      1. The *Intake/Assessment Specialist (IAS)* shall provide leadership for appropriate intake, assessment, and goal setting of learners.
      2. The *Instructional Specialist (IS)* shall provide leadership for instructors; identify or develop and deliver instructional professional development; and serve as a resource for all instructional staff.
      3. The *Management Information Systems Specialist (MIS)* shall provide leadership for the program’s data entry, data analysis, and data reporting.
   3. **Instructional Staff:** Teachers must have a minimum of a Bachelor’s Degree, with a Master’s Degree preferred; training and experience in adult education are required.Paid tutors must meet the educational degree standard for teachers.

MD Labor requires that the Program Administrator and Specialists work as a team to deliver effective local program services which result in learner achievement. The Program Administrator and Specialists will attend all State-required trainings.

(See *Resources pages 3-9* – Job Descriptions for State Required Key Staff)

1. **Professional Development (PD):** The Program Administrator shall actively support and be involved in the PD process. This individual should foster collaborative discussion amongst leadership staff so that PD activities reflect multiple perspectives and are directly related to programmatic gaps. The IS (with the support of the leadership team) will perform classroom observations, survey instructors to inform WIOA-related training topics, and analyze program data to determine necessary PD activities.

All instructional staff and NEDP advisors/assessors are required to participate in a minimum of 10 hours of PD annually. Within 30 days of activity completion, attendance and participation surveys must be uploaded to the program’s Google Drive.

Professional Development must be planned and delivered within the context of Maryland’s Adult Literacy Priority Areas. This ensures that staff and instructors are equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to contribute positively to Maryland’s goals. The Priority and Focus Areas are discussed in Consideration 9 later in this Overview.

New teachers and NEDP advisors/assessors are required to receive assessment (*CASAS* and/or TABE and/or *BEST/BEST Plus*) and HSE preparation (if instructing HSE preparation classes) foundational training within two months of hire. Assessors must also remain compliant with recertification policies set by each assessment.

Programs may utilize their professional development funding to support instructional activities which are directly connected to learner outcomes. This includes face-to-face, virtual, and hybrid training offerings; coaching/mentoring; and other direct feedback activities which are designed to support instruction. All activities must be submitted to their Program Specialist at MD Labor at the beginning of each fiscal year. Activities may be adjusted throughout the year as programmatic needs change. MD Labor should be notified in advance of activity adjustment. Attendance, feedback, and activity outlines should be updated to Google within 30 days of activity completion.

Activities necessary for the program but not directly related to instruction will not be supported by PD funding. Other funding lines may be allocated as budget allows. Examples of these trainings include: Title IX, FERPA, sexual harassment, non-instructional orientations, etc.

1. **Leadership Activities**

MD Labor provides State sponsored meetings and professional development activities. Ensure that sufficient time and funds are available for leadership staff to participate in Statewide grant meetings, calls, and webinars. Programs should consider travel expenses for these events as well as compensation for part-time employees when planning the budget for face-to-face meetings.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Annual Meetings** | **Target Participants** |
| State Leadership Meeting | All Administrators, IS, IAS, and MIS |
| LACES training | All MIS |
| NEDP Statewide Meeting | All NEDP Advisors and Assessors |
| **Additional Trainings** | **Target Participants** |
| Administrator’s Community of Practice | All Administrators |
| IS Community of Practice | All IS |
| IAS Community of Practice | All IAS |
| MIS Community of Practice | All MIS |
| Transition Community of Practice | All Transition Specialists or staff assigned to transitioning learners to employment or post-secondary education |
| IELCE/IET Community of Practice | All IELCE/IET key staff |
| Professional Development (not an exhaustive list)   * State offerings * Digital literacy * Instructional standards * Assessment | All appropriate staff |

**Required WIOA Trainings**

All MD Labor Title II funded employees on your leadership team (Program Administrator, Instructional Specialist, Intake/Assessment Specialist, and Management Information Systems Specialist) are required to complete the Maryland Department of Labor's WIOA Training Series webinars. Recipients of the training are required to complete the training within 2 months of receiving. MD Labor monitors completion of the trainings.

1. **Instructions for Personnel Changes for State Required Key Staff**

Adult education programs must report personnel changes to MD Labor within 2 weeks of the grantee agency having knowledge of the vacancy or change.

**Vacancy Notification:**

Send notification of key staff vacancies to your Adult Education Program Specialist and Lakisha Hill at [lakisha.hill@maryland.gov](mailto:lakisha.hill@maryland.gov):

1. Position being left vacant
2. Notice sent within 2 weeks of the grantee agency having knowledge of the vacancy
3. Plan identifying coverage of responsibilities (who, what, and how)
4. Plan for hire within 6 months

**To report changes:**

Send changes to your Adult Education Program Specialist and Lakisha Hill at [lakisha.hill@maryland.gov](mailto:lakisha.hill@maryland.gov):

1. Full name to add and/or remove
2. Institution/Organization full name
3. Contact information (email, telephone, address) to add and/or remove
4. Key Staff position

Adult education programs must notify MD Labor upon hiring of any key staff member. **Send a copy of the resume of the new hire to your Adult Education Program Specialist.**

## Reporting Requirements

Grantees must submit the following:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Report** | **Due Date** |
| Mid-Year Progress Report | January 31, 2024 |
| Mid-Year Financial Report | January 31, 2024 |
| Notice of Projected Under Expended Funds, if applicable | April 1, 2024 |
| Annual Program Narrative/Evaluation Report | September 30, 2024 |
| Annual Final Financial Report  (must include revenue and local match) | September 30, 2024 |
| LACES data | Monthly and according to schedule posted on the LWIS Home Page |
| Administrator’s Data Review | October 18, January 18, April 17, July 17 |
| Ad-hoc Reports as requested by MD Labor | Throughout the entire grant period |
| Documentation of professional development activities | Within one month of completion |

## Monitoring and Evaluation

All programs will be monitored by the assigned MD Labor Adult Education Program Specialist and the MD Labor Monitoring and Compliance Unit in order to determine compliance with the standards and the extent to which progress is being made toward achieving the stated goals and objectives. Both desk and onsite monitoring are used. The Data Validation Policy can be found at <https://labor.maryland.gov/employment/mpi/mpi1-22.pdf>

**Enrollment Verification**

The Monitoring and Compliance Unit conducts the enrollment verification annually. Learner enrollment data is verified at the end of every fiscal year by comparing individual learner information generated from the LACES database with supporting documentation provided by the grantee.

DWDAL uses annual learner enrollment in determining the amount of general funds allocated to grantees in subsequent grant awards. DWDAL verifies grantees’ self-reported data annually for accuracy.

The primary objectives of the annual enrollment verification are to:

* Ensure the collection and reporting of valid and reliable data consistent with the current State and federal guidelines and the data quality standards provided in the Maryland Data Quality Checklist
* Identify technical assistance and professional development needs of local program staff in the areas of data collection, management and reporting for performance improvement, quality assurance, and compliance.

Programs will be provided with feedback. If concerns are found, the program may be required to submit a corrective action plan. The Adult Education Program Apecialist assigned to that program will work with the program’s Leadership Team to resolve any issues.

**Fiscal Monitoring**

MD Labor will conduct an official site visit once every 4 years or more frequently, if needed. The fiscal monitoring will be conducted virtually, in person, or a combination of both.

The DWDAL fiscal monitor will notify the program administrator and schedule the monitoring visit. Programs will complete questionnaires in preparation of the visit. The fiscal monitor will review financial related documents. Programs will be provided with feedback. If concerns are found, the program may be required to submit a corrective action plan. The Adult Education Program Specialist assigned to that program will work with the program’s Leadership Team to resolve any issues.

**Monthly Cash Requisitions**

Programs will receive a template for completing their Monthly Cash Requisition (MCR) with processing instructions in July or August for that fiscal year. MCRs are due by the 11th of the month or the next business day if the 11th falls on a weekend or holiday. For ease of monitoring and processing the MCRs, you are required to submit an MCR each month even if no funds are being requested for that month. You must have an approved budget prior to receiving funds requested on your MCR.

You are strongly encouraged to spend your State funds as soon as possible. Programs must expend State funds by June 30. State funds must be requested by June 30 to meet our payment processing deadline. Failure to request State funds by June 30 will result in forfeiture of the State funds not requested by the due date.

Federal funds must be encumbered by June 30and paid by September 30,or returned to MD Labor. Federal funds must be requested by August 30 to meet our payment processing deadline. Failure to request federal funds by August 30 will result in forfeiture of the federal funds not requested by the due date.

**Site Visits (Official)**

MD Labor will conduct an official MD Labor Team site visit at least once every 4 years or more frequently, if needed. The site visit will be conducted virtually, in person, or a combination of both. During the visit, there will be instructor/class observations and personnel interviews. Interviews with key staff (i.e., IS, IAS, and MIS) will be coordinated by members of the AIS team. Programs will be provided with feedback and will have an opportunity to discuss the results. If concerns are found, the program may be required to submit a corrective action plan. The Adult Education Program Specialist assigned to that program will work with the program’s Leadership Team to resolve any issues.

**Desk Monitoring**

MD Labor conducts desk monitoring on the local programs. The Adult Education Program Specialists review and document financial/budget, program, and technical assistance activities for the local programs for the following:

* Data Reporting
* Monthly Cash Requisitions
* Final Financial Funding Expenditures
* Professional Development
* Enrollment Verification
* Fiscal Monitoring

**Risk Assessment**

Risk assessment analysis is used to select adult education providers for specific monitoring strategies and to evaluate variables associated with the grants’ level of risk to MD Labor. Examples of risk factors considered include the following:

* Amount of funds allocated to grantee
* Percentage of funds expended by the end of the fiscal year
* Submission of required financial and programmatic reports in a timely manner
* Meeting projected level of performance benchmarks
* Changes in grantee organization
* Program management
* History of audit findings
* Adhere to all applicable State and federal laws

In accepting funds, all programs agree to adhere to the following:

* Attendance in all scheduled meetings and conference calls
* Ensuring timely data entry
* Fulfilling all grant requirements including meeting all grant deadline for document submission and reporting
* Maintaining appropriate and accurate grant records
* Meeting performance objectives
* Submitting to MD Labor any product or report of an activity funded through AELS funds no later than documented financial reporting deadlines
* Reporting on the status of any unfinished project funded through MD Labor

## Notice of Intent to Apply

All organizations that plan to apply for grant funds are requested to complete and return to MD Labor the *Notice of Intent to Apply* form included on page 28 of this section.

## Technical/Formatting Submission Requirements

**Signatures**

Signatures on the application must be in *blue ink*.

**Electronic Signatures**

MD Labor recognizes the value and efficiency of utilizing e-signatures (electronic signatures). Therefore, an applicant may utilize e-signatures for any location within these solicitation documents that asks for a signature in blue ink.

According to the Maryland Uniform Electronic Transactions Act (UETA), an e-signature includes an electronic sound, symbol, or process attached to or logically associated with particular information and executed or adopted by a person with intent to sign. There are numerous commercial products that can be used, such as DocuSign and Adobe Sign. Unacceptable e-signatures would include merely typing in a name in the signature block using word processing software such as Microsoft Word or Google Docs or spreadsheet software such as Microsoft Excel or Google Sheets.

**Sections**

The submission must consist of three separate sections, with the possibility of two additional optional sections:

Section 1: Considerations and Required Documentation

Section 2: Budget

Section 3: Professional Development

Section 4: Assurances and Certifications

Section 5: IELCE-IET Application (Optional)

Section 6: NEDP Application (Optional)

Place all application items in the order specified in the **Application Checklist** in the FY24 Competitive Grant Application. There are instructions provided for each of the above sections.

Any documents or materials attached not asked for will not be considered.

## Submission Requirements

Submission of all parts of the CGA will be done electronically. Submissions must be in Adobe PDF format **in color**. It is recommended that the PDF file size be no larger than 25MB. If you need to submit multiple files, please give the files descriptive filenames indicated below and end each filename with "Part X of X" to ensure that MD Labor knows how many files to anticipate in your submission.

The following filenames are provided as an example:

County College 2024 CGA Section 1: Considerations Part 1 of 3.pdf

County College 2024 CGA Section 1: Considerations Part 2 of 3.pdf

County College 2024 CGA Section 1: Considerations Part 3 of 3.pdf

County College 2024 CGA Section 2: Budget Part 1 of 1.pdf

County College 2024 CGA Section 2: Admin Cost & Match Worksheet Part 1 of 1.pdf

County College 2024 CGA Section 3: Professional Development Plan Part 1 of 1.pdf

County College 2024 CGA Section 4: Assurances and Certifications Part 1 of 1.pdf

Submit all parts of your application to [aels.labor@maryland.gov](mailto:aels.labor@maryland.gov) by March 6, 2023 at 4:00 P.M.

## Required Components

Applications must be completed in form and content as specified. The initial Professional Development Plan must be submitted as Section 3 with the full grant application. Once the Notice of Grant Award is received, a final professional development plan must be submitted within 30 days.

## Technical Assistance Briefing

A technical assistance webinar is scheduled on February 3, 2023 from 10:00 A.M. - 12:00 P.M. to discuss and explain grant priorities and the application packet. In addition, MD Labor will attempt to incorporate responses to all questions received by e-mail to Doug Weimer at [aels.labor@maryland.gov](mailto:aels.labor@maryland.gov) by 4:00 P.M. on Monday, January 30, 2023. Remaining and additional questions will be incorporated into the technical assistance response on the MD Labor website. To register for the technical assistance webinar, use the following link by January 31, 2023. <https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_PfX-foIrQFqCKKAXbY-j-g>

If you need further assistance with registration, contact Lakisha Hill at [lakisha.hill@maryland.gov](mailto:lakisha.hill@maryland.gov) or call 410-767-0530.

## 

## Technical Assistance Contact

Questions regarding this Competitive Grant Application may be e-mailed to Douglas Weimer at [aels.labor@maryland.gov](mailto:aels.labor@maryland.gov) **until February 21, 2023 at 4:00 P.M.** All questions and responses will be posted on the MD Labor website.

**Application Formatting**

* The application has been pre-formatted with page and section breaks.
* Page numbers and headers will adjust automatically.
* The font and type size are also pre-formatted. **Please do not substitute another font or font size.**
* All responses are to be single-spaced.
* For all tables, add or delete rows as needed. All table cells will allow word wrapping.

## Competitive Grant Application Review Process

The review of grant applications includes the following process:

1. Written grant applications will be pre-screened to verify inclusion of all required components in the order specified in the Competitive Grant Application. Applications will be screened to ensure applicants have met demonstrated effectiveness, which is an eligibility requirement. Grant applications not meeting all pre-screen requirements will not be read.
2. The application will be forwarded to the appropriate Local Workforce Development Board. The Local Workforce Development Board will review for alignment of adult education services with Local Workforce Development Plans. See Timeline on page 28.
3. A review panel established by MD Labor will evaluate the written grant applications. The panel will be composed of individuals with expertise in adult education and literacy, representatives from external organizations, and MD Labor personnel. Reviewers will rate all grant applications and assign numerical scores. The review panel will recommend grant applications to receive awards and funding levels.
4. A scoring rubric is included in the Resources section of this Competitive Grant Application.

**Awarding of Points**

All grant readers are not current employees of the MD Labor-Adult Education Division. They will award points for each consideration and budget components based on how thoroughly, effectively, and completely the program answered the prompt. The rubric they will use is located in the Resources document.

\*For programs applying for IELCE funds, the IELCE section has a maximum of 5 points. If the program is awarded 1 or 2 points, the program will be disqualified from receiving IELCE funding. If the program is awarded 3 to 5 points, the program will receive IELCE funding.

\*\*For programs applying for NEDP funds, the NEDP section has a maximum of 5 points. If the program is awarded 1 or 2 points, the program will be disqualified from receiving NEDP funding. If the program is awarded 3 to 5 points, the program will receive NEDP funding.

\*\*\*Points awarded for IELCE and NEDP do not contribute to the overall grant point total.

**Pre-Screening Notification**

Applicants who do not meet the pre-screening qualifications of demonstrating effectiveness and/or submit an application without all required components in the order specified in the Competitive Grant Application will be notified of ineligibility by March 17, 2023.

Only applicants who do not meet the pre-screening qualifications will receive this notification.

## Award Notification

All applicants will be notified in writing of their award status by May 30, 2023.

In the event an applicant’s grant application is not approved, the applicant may send a *Letter of Appeal* to the Director, Office of Adult Education & Literacy Services within 10 calendar days from the date of notification. The letter must provide a thorough justification for the appeal. The Secretary of the Maryland Department of Labor, and the Assistant Secretary for the Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning, will make the final determination regarding the appeal. A response will be mailed to the appellant within 10 calendar days of the date the appeal letter was received. All appeal decisions will be final.

## Non-Discrimination Statement

MD Labor is an equal opportunity program. It is the policy of MD Labor that all persons have equal opportunity and access to employment opportunities, services, and facilities without regard to race, religion, color, sex, age, national origin or ancestry, marital status, parental status, sexual orientation, gender identification, disability, or political opinion or affiliation. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.

**Timeline**

January 17 Competitive Grant Application Release

February 3 Technical Assistance Webinar

February 17 Notice of Intent to Apply Form due

March 6 Applications due to MD Labor

March 13 Send applications to Competitive Grant Application reviewers

March 13 Send applications to the Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) for review of alignment

April 21 Review period ends for LWDB and outside readers

May 22 Grant award decision/Applicant notifications mailed

June 30 Letter of Intent to Fund issued

## Notice of Intent to Apply Form

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| --- | --- |
| MD Labor will be able to develop and implement an efficient process for reviewing grant applications if it has an understanding of how many organizations intend to apply. | |
| The organization named below intends to respond to the FY 2024 Competitive Grant Application for Consolidated Adult Education Services. | |
| **Organization Name** |  |
| **Contact Person** |  |
| **Address, Line 1** |  |
| **Address, Line 2 if applicable** |  |
| **City/Town/State/Zip Code** |  |
| **Telephone Number** |  |
| **E-Mail Address** |  |
| **Type of Organization. Please check the appropriate box.** | |
| ☐ Local Education Agency | |
| ☐ Community Based or Faith-Based Organization | |
| ☐ Volunteer Literacy Organization | |
| ☐ Institution of Higher Education | |
| ☐ Public or Private Nonprofit Agency | |
| ☐ Library | |
| ☐ Public Housing Authority | |
| ☐ Nonprofit Organization, not described above, that has the ability to provide literacy services to adults and families | |
| ☐ Consortium of agencies, organizations, institutions, libraries, or authorities described above | |
| ☐ Partnership between employer and an organization described above | |
| ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | |

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| --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  |
| **Superintendent of Schools/CEO of Applicant Organization** |  | **Date** |

**Please return this completed, signed, scanned document in pdf format by 4:00 P.M. on February 17, 2023.**

Return to: [aels.labor@maryland.gov](mailto:aels.labor@maryland.gov)

**APPLICATION SECTIONS**

**Application**

**Cover Page**

Provide the information for all items requested on the Cover Page. The head of grantee agency must sign the original with ***blue ink***. Calculate the “Cost per Learner” by dividing the “Total Amount Requested (A)” by the “Number of Learners to be Served (B).” (For “Number of Learners to be Served,” refer to the “Total Projected to be Served” on the *FY 24 MD Labor-AELS-Class Schedule* chart.)

**Application Review Checklist**

Include the Application Review Checklist in your Application. It provides the order in which your documents are to be placed in your grant application. This serves as a guide for programs to ensure inclusion of all required components.

**Determination of Eligibility**

Check the box that best defines your organization. If your organization cannot be defined by one of the listed options, click “Other” and type in the description that would best define your organization.

**Demonstrated Effectiveness**

All applicants must complete the “Demonstrated Effectiveness” chart.

For applicants applying as a consortium, each member of the consortium must complete the chart for their agency. Copy and paste the appropriate number of copies of the chart into the application. Each agency will be reviewed separately for demonstrated effectiveness.

**Jurisdiction(s)**

Indicate the jurisdiction(s) for which you are applying. Check all that apply.

**Consideration 1: Indicators of Regional Need and Population Type**

Answer the prompts within the preset text boxes.

**Consideration 2: Serving Individuals with Disabilities**

Answer the prompts within the preset text boxes.

**Consideration 3: Program Competency and Past Effectiveness**

Answer the prompts within the preset text boxes.

**Consideration 4: Alignment with Local Workforce Plan**

Answer the prompts within the preset text boxes.

**Consideration 5: Program Intensity and Quality**

Answer the prompts within the preset text boxes. Programs may attach citations as a separate document. Attach after consideration 13.

**ABE and ESL Class Sites:** Complete the Class Schedule Excel Workbook. Each column’s heading indicates the information requested. Add or delete rows as needed.

Delete the Tutored Learners row if it does not apply. Complete the Tutored Learners row *only* if your program has learners who receive instruction from a tutor *separately* from a scheduled class *and* your program enters tutored learners in LACES.

**IELCE**: Complete the table for classes specifically funded by IELCE, if applying for IELCE funding.

**NEDP Sites:** Complete the table, if applying for NEDP funding.

Attach the ABE & ESL class schedule after consideration 13. Attach the IELCE class schedule with your IELCE application, if applicable. Attach the NEDP site schedule with your NEDP application, if applicable.

**Consideration 6: Research Based Instructional Practices**

Answer the prompts within the preset text boxes. Programs may attach citations as a separate document. Attach after consideration 13.

**Consideration 7: Technology**

Adult education programs should provide learners the opportunity to participate in blended and distance learning, use educational technology, and improve digital literacy skills as part of their instructional program.

Answer the prompts within the preset text boxes.

**Consideration 8: Learning in Context/Integrated Education & Training for Transition**

Answer the prompts within the preset text boxes.

**Consideration 9: Quality of Staff and Professional Development**

Complete the Qualification of Personnel Chart.

1. State Required Key Staff
2. Time on project: “Number of Hours per Week” and “Number of Weeks” should only reflect hours spent on adult education grant activities.
3. If a State required key staff position is vacant, type VACANT in the appropriate cell as well as the date the program anticipates filling the position.
4. The IAS and/or IS positions may be shared by two persons provided their assigned Specialist time is in direct proportion to the percentage of ABE and ESL populations projected to be served. If this will be the program’s structure, insert additional IAS and/or IS rows. Be certain to complete the Time on Project column to reflect the appropriate ABE and ESL proportions.
5. Append resumes for all State required key staff and attach after Consideration 13.
6. Additional Key Staff
   1. Some programs have additional key staff committed to the grant, i.e., Coordinator. You may delete this table if it does not apply.
7. Teachers, Volunteers, and other Staff
   1. Provide the information for the items requested.

**NOTE**: Teachers must have a minimum of a Bachelor’s Degree, with a Master’s Degree preferred. Sufficient training and experience in adult education are required for effective instruction. **Paid** tutors must meet the educational degree standard for teachers. Learners cannot be a tutor.

The initial Professional Development Plan must be submitted as Section 3 with the full grant application. Once the Notice of Grant Award is received, a final professional development plan must be submitted within 30 days. Programs should not expend professional development funds without approval of the final plan by MD Labor.

**Maryland’s Adult Literacy Priorities**

In an ongoing effort to drive continuous program improvement and assist local grantees in their professional development efforts, the AELS has identified three areas of top priority that will drive State professional development efforts. These priorities will serve as a guidepost for professional development at both the State and local levels, and all discussions, documentation, and planning will be considered within the scope of how they contribute to these priorities.

Within each Priority, there are numerous Focus Areas. These Focus Areas represent some of the components that contribute to program success within that Priority. AELS will identify specific focus areas for which the State will provide targeted professional development opportunities that grantees are encouraged to utilize within their own Professional Development Plan. In this way, the State and local grantees will maximize efforts by sharing responsibilities to keep Maryland on the course to meeting Priorities

The 3 Adult Literacy Priorities and corresponding Focus Areas are as follows:

1. Quality Instruction – Quality Instruction is the backbone of adult literacy programs. This priority focuses on activities that contribute directly to the academic success of adult learners. Focus areas in this priority include:
   1. Lesson Planning
   2. Level-Appropriate Instruction
   3. Differentiated Instruction
   4. Evidence-based Instruction
   5. Contextualized Instruction
   6. Standards Alignments (CCR, etc.)
   7. Student-Centered Instruction
2. Learner Persistence – Unlike compulsory education, adult learners enroll in literacy courses of free will, having to overcome numerous barriers to education in their daily lives while also balancing employment, families, and other priorities. Focus areas in this priority include:
   1. Goal Setting
   2. Student Intake Processes
   3. Drop-Out Interventions
   4. Student/Program Communication
   5. Building Adult Learning Communities
   6. Barrier Reduction Strategies
   7. Maintenance of Engagement
3. Educational Access – The traditional brick and mortar classroom is no longer the norm to the modern adult learner. As life requires adults to navigate online job applications and work environment, access healthcare via telehealth, track children’s grades online, and utilize other services virtually, so, too does the delivery of adult literacy education. Focus area in this priority include:
   1. Distance Education
   2. Hybrid/Hyflex Learning
   3. Self-Directed Online Instructions
   4. Digital Literacy Skills
   5. Access to Broadband and Digital Tools

For each year of the grant cycle, MD Labor will identify State Focus Areas, which will drive Labor’s plans for delivery of professional development at the State Level. Local grantees can plan on Labor providing several professional development opportunities throughout the year that will target leadership staff and/or instructors within the focus areas. Since the State will be investing time and money in these Focus Areas, it is the intention that this will free up local grantees to concentrate on professional development in areas other than the State-identified Focus Areas. Local grantees may choose to utilize State-delivered PD and then implement additional training, modeling, and classroom observation as needed to ensure application of the skills learned.

**Professional Development Plan**

MD Labor requires the following minimum level of commitment to *continuous improvement* *in documented learner achievement* through program and professional development. Each program should budget for a minimum of 10 hours of professional development for all instructors. The program’s Leadership Team and teachers will analyze data, learner outcomes, program surveys, observation forms, and other information to determine the topic and type of professional development is needed. Professional development activities should align with the program’s goals, meet teachers’ professional development needs, and improve learning outcomes. The grantee should plan professional development opportunities for all staff based on the data reviewed. Professional development activities should be a collaborative, coordinated effort led by the Instructional Specialist.

Professional development activities offered by the local program should engage staff in the type of training designed to increase program effectiveness; focus on the teachers as central to learning; reflect the best available research and practices in adult instruction and learning; enable teachers to develop further expertise in subject content, teaching strategies, technologies, and other elements in teaching to high standards; and is evaluated ultimately on the basis of its impact on teacher effectiveness and learning outcomes.

*Your professional development plan must include professional development opportunities for NEDP assessors (if applicable).*

**Professional Development Approaches**

Professional development funding can support any approach listed below:

* Workshop/Presentation: Participation in singular or sequential training workshops, conferences, seminars, and summer institutes either in-house or by external subject matter expert(s).
* Coaching/Mentoring: Participation in peer-mentoring or coaching to improve a specified skill or topical understanding. This should provide staff with direct feedback and growth in an area as identified by direct observation or instructor request**.**
* Inquiry/Research:Any process that seeks to answer a question or solve a problem, with results used to improve program services. Reflect upon questions regarding daily practices in a systematic, intentional manner, over time. Involves many different types of practitioner-led activities, including study circles, action research, and case studies.
* Product/Program Development: Any process implemented to produce a product for program improvement (e.g., curriculum development, lesson plan development, program policy/procedures, program design, or the redesign and enhancement of program quality).
* Virtual Learning:Synchronous and Asynchronous course work, webinars, video.

**Cost**

Detail the total cost for the activity. Estimated cost must reflect budget projections for professional development on the budget pages.

For MD Labor to authorize the expenditure of grant funds, your program must upload the following verification and evaluation items to your FY24 Professional Development folder in the MD Labor Google Team Drive within 30 days of the professional development activity and notify your assigned Adult Education Program Specialist of completion.

**Consideration 10: Coordination with Other Education, Training, and Social Service Resources in the Community**

Answer the prompts within the preset text boxes.

**Consideration 11: Flexible Scheduling and Coordination**

Answer the prompts within the preset text boxes.

**Consideration 12: Management Information Systems and Measurable Outcomes**

Answer the prompts within the preset text boxes. Complete the Data Quality Checklist provided in this consideration. Do not fill in the grayed out cells.

**Consideration 13: English Language Acquisition and Civics Education (5 Points)**

Answer the prompts within the preset text boxes.

**Family Literacy Partnership Expectations (If Applicable)**

*Delete or leave this exhibit blank if not applying for Family Literacy Services funding.*

1. Complete the yellow highlighted areas as indicated.
2. Complete the tables in Part II. Add or delete rows as needed. Rows will expand vertically (will wrap text) to accommodate all text.
3. In Part II, descriptions for Parent Education (table 2, column 1) and Interactive Literacy Activities (table 3, column 1) must include (1) how the activity will be accomplished, (2) the schedule, and (3) the amount of time spent on the activity per month.
4. Obtain the required signatures and dates signed with *blue ink*. Signatures 3 and 4 are provided for organizations that require additional signatures.

**Budget**

Complete the narrative and summary budget pages for each funding line requested. You will not have to obtain the required signatures and dates until final budget numbers have been determined. Complete the Admin Cost and Match Worksheet.

**General Assurances and Certifications**

Complete General Assurances and Certifications by acquiring the appropriate signature and date in *blue ink*.