



# **Rural Advancement for Maryland Peers (RAMP) Pre-Proposal Conference**

Wednesday, September 10<sup>th</sup>, 2025  
1:00 PM

# PRESENTERS



Casey Tiefenwerth, MSW  
Deputy Director, Office of Strategic Initiatives  
Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning  
Maryland Department of Labor



Anna Whitney, MPH  
Program Manager, Office of Strategic Initiatives  
Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning  
Maryland Department of Labor

# AGENDA

- Welcome and Opening Remarks
- Housekeeping Items
- Background and Partners
- Overview of the RAMP program
- Proposal Format and Submission
- Awards and Timeline
- Reporting Requirements
- Questions

# HOUSEKEEPING ITEMS

- Please keep yourself muted until we are ready to take questions
- If you joined by phone, please include your name and organization in the chat
- Type any questions into the chat, they will be answered at the end of the presentation
- All questions and answers received during this conference will be posted on the RAMP website by the end of next week: [www.labor.maryland.gov/employment/ramp](http://www.labor.maryland.gov/employment/ramp)
- You may continue to submit questions until close of business on Friday, October 10th. We will continue to update the Q&A document on the RAMP website through 10/10/25
- If your organization decides to move forward with developing a proposal, please submit an Intent to Apply notification to Anna Whitney at [anna.whitney@maryland.gov](mailto:anna.whitney@maryland.gov), an informal email is fine
- This presentation will be shared with attendees

# OPENING REMARKS



**Teresa Heath**

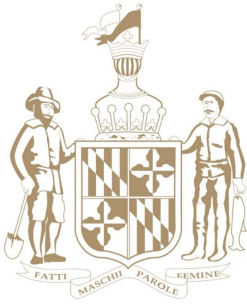
Deputy Director and Chief of Staff

Maryland's Office of Overdose Response

# WHO WE ARE

The Maryland Department of Labor's (MD Labor) Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning (DWDAL)'s Office of Strategic Initiatives (OSI) will oversee the Rural Advancement for Maryland Peers (RAMP) program award from the Maryland Office of Overdose Response's Opioid Restitution Fund.

# PARTNERS



Maryland's Office of  
**Overdose Response**



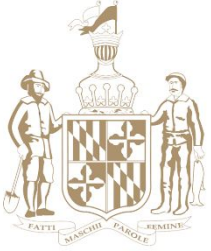
## **Maryland Office of Overdose Response (MOOR)**

Promotes collaboration across all State and local agencies working to address substance use and overdose in the state.

## **Maryland State Office of Rural Health**

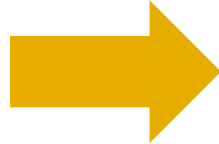
Helps improve the quality of health among rural Marylanders by developing strong partnerships; building local resources; promoting relevant state and national rural health policies; and supporting efforts to expand healthcare access.

# FUNDING



Maryland's Office of  
**Overdose Response**

**Maryland Opioid  
Restitution Fund**



Division of Workforce  
Development and Adult  
Learning (DWDAL)

**Office of Strategic Initiatives**



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# BACKGROUND

## **2017: State of Emergency**

Initial efforts to expand professions addressing the opioid crisis including CPRS

## **2024: Investing in Maryland's Behavioral Health Talent Needs Assessment**

Estimated that 37% of Maryland residents with a behavioral health need did not receive care, and peer capacity has not improved

## **2019: Maryland Behavioral Health Workforce Survey**

68% of agency administrators do not have enough peers

## **2025: Rural Advancement for Maryland Peers**

Labor receives \$2 Million from the Maryland Opioid Restitution Fund to address behavioral health workforce shortage

2019 MD Behavioral Health Workforce Survey: [tinyurl.com/2h6dhn27](https://tinyurl.com/2h6dhn27)

2024 Investing in Maryland's Behavioral Health Talent: [tinyurl.com/bdzejey9](https://tinyurl.com/bdzejey9)

# RURAL ADVANCEMENT FOR MARYLAND PEERS (RAMP)

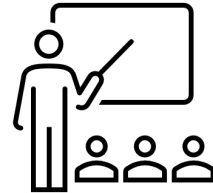
**Purpose:** To alleviate the shortage of Certified Peer Recovery Specialists (CPRS) in rural areas by competitively awarding grant funds to organizations that will offer the necessary training for prospective peer specialists to become certified in the State of Maryland.

**Eligible applicants may apply for up to \$200,000 to promote the growth of CPRS from February 1, 2026 through May 31, 2028**

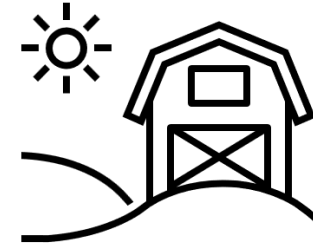
# RAMP KEY COMPONENTS



Increase  
number of CPRS



Prepare current CPRS for  
higher level behavioral  
health roles



Serve rural areas of  
Maryland most severely  
affected by the workforce  
shortages and highest  
opioid-related overdose  
deaths

# ELIGIBILITY & PRIORITY

Applicants **must** be:



Based in or serve participants in rural counties as defined in State statute (Attachment A).

Applicants will receive priority points if they are:



Based in or serving participants from ENOUGH communities (Attachment B).



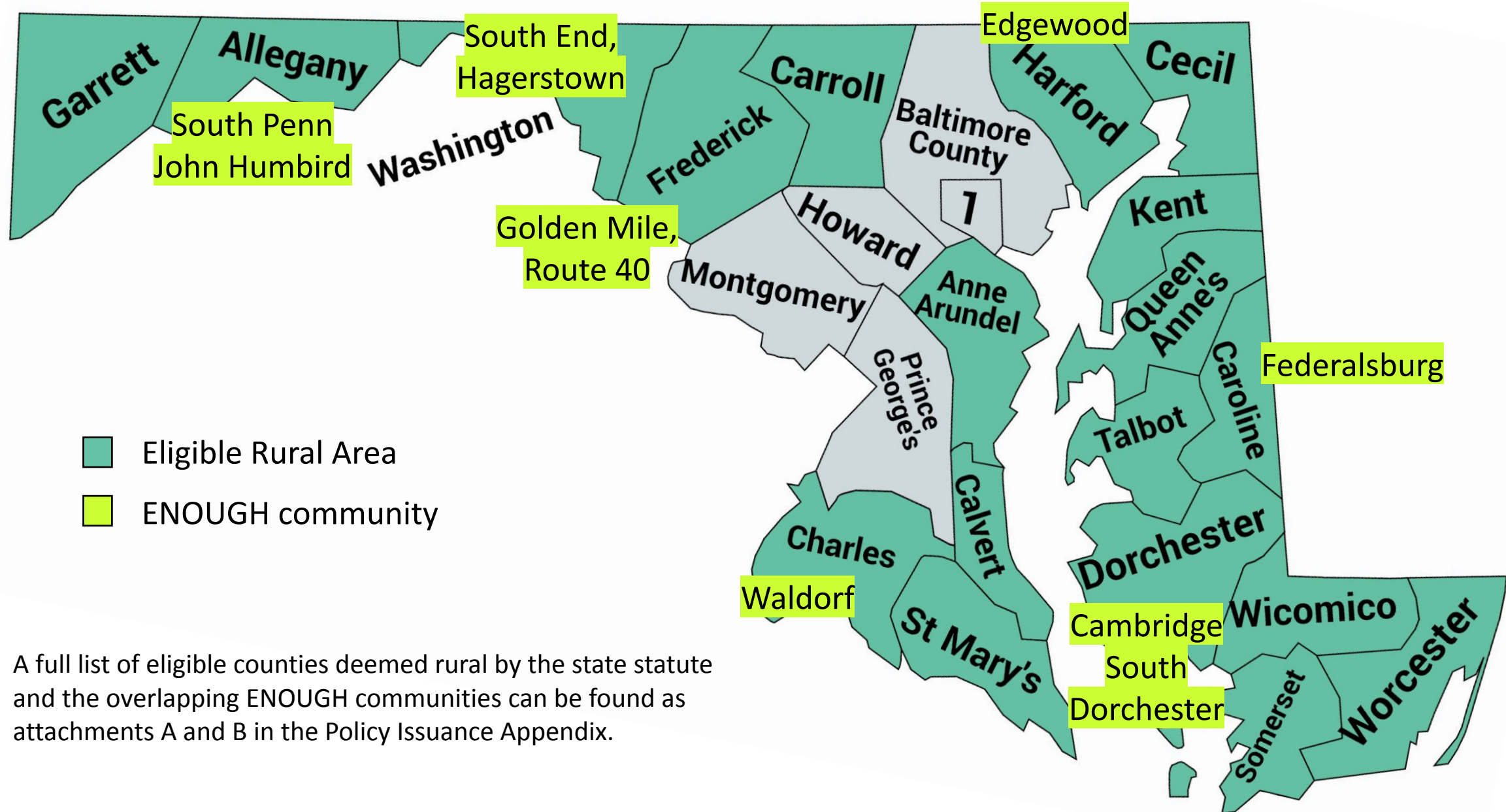
Serving as an approved vendor for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Employment and Training (SNAP E&T) Program, administered by the Maryland Department of Human Services (DHS).

# ENOUGH INITIATIVE

Launched and administered by the Governor's Office for Children, Maryland's ENOUGH initiative aims to reduce the number of children living in poverty through community-led, government-supported solutions. The initiative addresses the root causes of poverty in specific neighborhoods that have been historically left behind and impacted by barriers to economic mobility.



# RURAL & ENOUGH COMMUNITIES



# ELIGIBILITY

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

- Non-profit organizations
- Community-based organizations
- Faith-based organizations
- Local workforce development boards
- Local government agencies
- Registered Apprenticeship sponsors
- Postsecondary education institutions
- Local and regional economic development entities
- Other organizations as deemed allowable by MD Labor

**Applicants must be in good standing with the Maryland State Department of Assessments and Taxation by the start of the grant project.**

# ALLOWABLE ACTIVITIES

Applicants may apply for up to \$200,000 to promote the growth of CPRS. Allowable applicant costs include:

- ✓ Occupational training and education
- ✓ Credentialing and certification costs, including exam and assessment fees
- ✓ Supportive services
- ✓ Staffing
- ✓ Travel
- ✓ Supplies
- ✓ Pre-approved related advertising or promotional activities
- ✓ Other costs as approved by MD Labor

**Funding can be used to begin the implementation of new or support established training programs, but not to supplant existing local, state or federal funds.**



# PROHIBITED COSTS

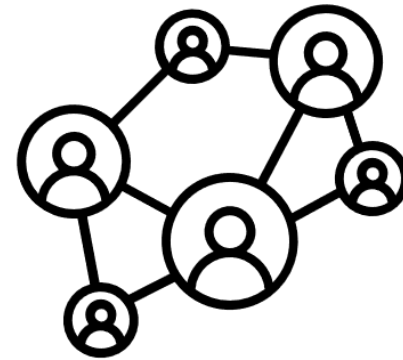
Applicants that include the following in their project design will not be considered:

- ✘ Indirect costs exceeding 15%
- ✘ Building or land purchases
- ✘ Vehicle purchases
- ✘ Research
- ✘ Sales tax for Non-profit and Governmental entities
- ✘ Naloxone and Fentanyl/Xylazine test strips (these are provided at no cost through local health departments and Overdose Response Programs)

# PROJECT COMPONENTS: OUTREACH & RECRUITMENT PARTNERS

Applicants must include letters of commitment from at least **two organizations** who will support with the outreach and recruitment components of the project. Partner organizations may include, but are not limited to:

- Recovery Treatment Programs
- Recovery Wellness Centers
- Recovery Housing Organizations
- Local Health Departments
- Local Workforce Development Boards
- Other community-based organizations



# PROJECT COMPONENTS: EMPLOYER PARTNERS



Applicants also must provide Letters of Commitment or Memoranda of Understanding from at least **three employers** who have committed to provide internships or employment to program participants.

# APPLICATION

Applications must include a project plan with a description of:

1. **Current or projected job openings** for, or relevant labor market information related to, behavioral health professionals served by the project within their county or region;
2. The **geographic service area** and population to be served by the project as wholly defined as rural in State statute;
3. Specific efforts and strategies that the project will undertake to conduct **outreach and recruitment** of unemployed, underemployed, or current Peer Recovery Specialists;
  - a) Applicants must provide at least **two letters of commitment** from partners identified who will support outreach and recruitment efforts including the required letters outlined above.

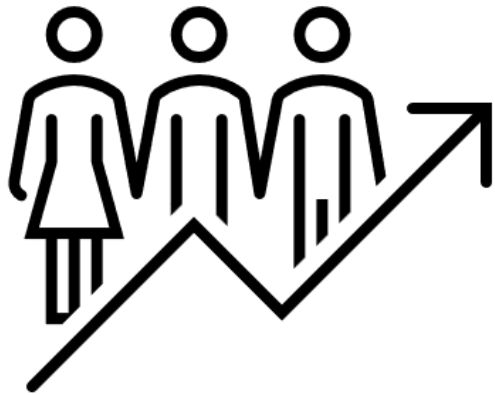
# APPLICATION

4. Specific efforts and strategies that the project will undertake to **reduce barriers** to the recruitment, retention, or advancement of peers;
5. How participants will receive all of the **required training and coursework** during the grant period of performance; and,
6. Partnerships that the applicant has established with **at least three employers** who commit to provide internships, transition work experience, and/or employment to participants. These partnerships should be memorialized through Letters of Commitment and/or Memoranda of Understanding.

## Priority points:

- Serve participants in **ENOUGH** communities
- Approved vendors for the **SNAP E&T** Program

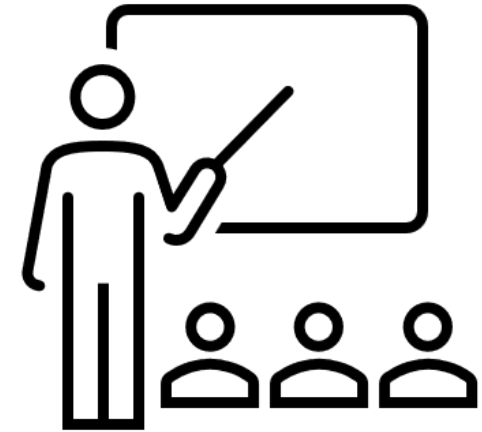
# CPRS CERTIFICATION PROCESS AND EXAMINATION



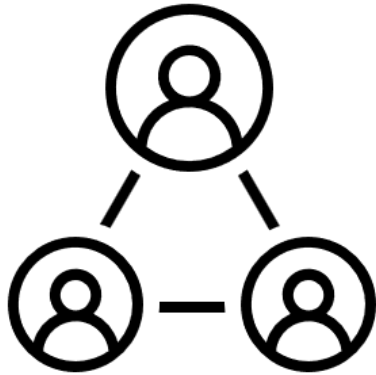
Applicants must demonstrate funding to cover the full cost of the peer certification process including training, materials, and examination fees. Applicants must provide a training plan that outlines how CPRS participants will receive training and the required course materials during the grant period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

# DEVELOPING CAREER PATHWAYS FOR CPRS

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



# SUPPORTIVE SERVICES



Applicants must provide supportive services to participants to ensure their successful completion of the program and employment. Provide information about this plan in the application including partnerships to effectively provide these services



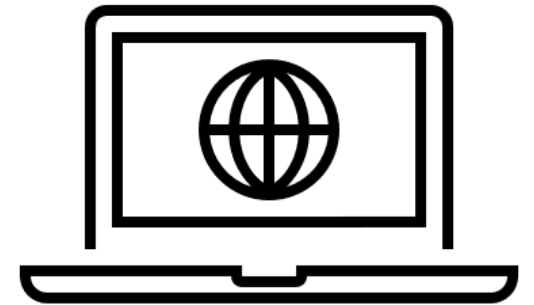
# SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

The following list is not exhaustive. While subgrantees do not need to provide all services mentioned, they do need to ensure program participants receive comprehensive and individualized support to complete the program through services such as:

- Transportation
- Childcare
- Individualized planning for successful program completion
- Identifying or locating potential employment opportunities
- Long term strategies to encourage retention of participants in the behavioral health field
- Other wraparound support measures, as approved by MD Labor in writing

# OTHER CONSIDERATIONS FOR APPLICANTS

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



[www.labor.maryland.gov/employment/train](http://www.labor.maryland.gov/employment/train)

# REVIEW PROCESS

RAMP is a competitive funding opportunity through DWDAL's OSI. To apply for funding, applicants must submit completed application.

Application due date: **Friday, November 21<sup>st</sup>, 2025**

Submit via email to:

Anna Whitney, RAMP Program Manager

**[anna.whitney@maryland.gov](mailto:anna.whitney@maryland.gov)**

- Incomplete applications or those submitted after the due date will not be considered.
- A team of subject matter experts and peers will review the applications.

# APPLICATION APPROVAL AND DENIAL

MD Labor must inform applicants via email of approvals or denials at the conclusion of the review process.

## Approved applications:

- Receive a Grant Award Notification to be signed by the applicant.
- MD Labor shall provide funds to the approved program on a **cost reimbursement basis**, via the quarterly fiscal report and invoice.



## Denied applications:

- Receive a Grant Denial Notification containing feedback on the application.

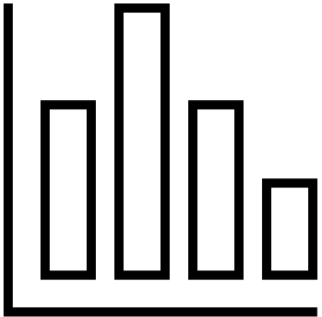
# TIMELINE

Wednesday, September 10	Pre-Proposal Conference
Friday, October 10	Deadline to Submit Application Questions
Friday, November 21	Applications Due
November 2025 - January 2026	Review Period
Week of January 26	Award Decision Notifications Made to Applicants
February 1, 2026 - May 31, 2028	Period of Performance for Grants

# REPORTING AND MONITORING

RAMP Subgrantees will submit quarterly activity and expenditure reports to the MD Labor RAMP Program Manager. As found on pages 5-6 of the application, program deliverables will include:

- Total number of:
  - individuals enrolled in training
    - non-peers enrolled in training
    - CPRS enrolled in training
  - individuals to complete training
  - individuals to obtain a credential or certificate
  - individuals to obtain unsubsidized employment in the behavioral health field
    - individuals to obtain unsubsidized employment as a peer
  - peers to obtain unsubsidized employment in new/ mid-level role
  - individuals who receive peer support from an enrolled participant
- Average hourly wage of employed individuals
- Retention rate six months after employment



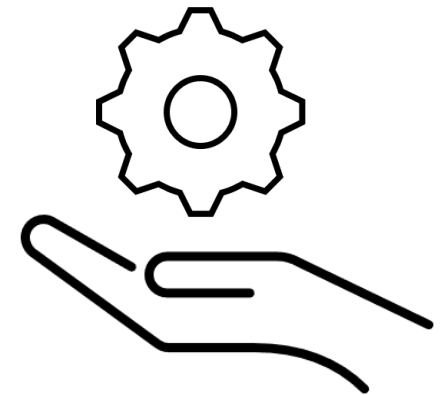
# REPORTING AND MONITORING

To ensure that policies are followed and expectations are met, subgrantees should expect MD Labor to conduct monitoring throughout the performance period. Monitoring will be carried out by the RAMP Program Manager as follows:

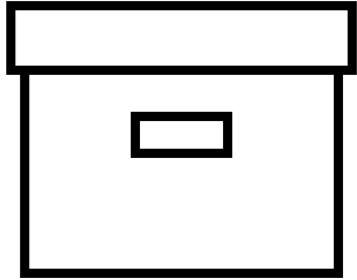
- Meet with each subgrantee monthly and conduct quarterly site visits
- Provide technical assistance as needed by subgrantees

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

- Number of individuals completing the certification
- Completion dates during the grant performance period
- CPRS training contracts
- Reimbursement documentation
- Other documentation or grant deliverables as required by MOOR



# RECORD RETENTION



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

**Please read through the Fair Practices and Accessibility Statement on page 12 of the Policy Issuance.**



# Questions?

**Anna Whitney**

Program Manager, Office of Strategic Initiatives  
Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning  
Maryland Department of Labor  
[Anna.whitney@maryland.gov](mailto:Anna.whitney@maryland.gov)