



House Bill 851: PWQ Program

February 14, 2020

SUPPORT

The Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation (MCEDC) supports HB 851, which expands the accessibility of funding through the Partnership for Workforce Quality (PWQ) program in ways that will support our local economy.

The bill will allow county employers to access PWQ funds for newly hired employees. By allowing the reimbursement of costs related to training new employees, employers may be incentivized to hire workers who might otherwise not be qualified due to a skills gap.

In addition, the program will increase the percentage of funds reserved for small businesses, while simultaneously increasing the size of eligible businesses from 150 to 500 employees. MCEDC supports this change to encourage larger businesses, particularly those with more consistent budgetary resources for workforce development, to participate in the program as private partners to upskill our local workforce.

While we encourage the program's evolution to be accessible to larger companies, we support any efforts to simplify the application process and ensure that compliance requirements are not overly burdensome, particularly for smaller companies that lack the administrative resources or HR capacity of larger companies.

Overall, the PWQ program is an important element of our business expansion and recruitment strategies in technology and advanced/small-scale manufacturing. This well-regarded program can help to diversify Maryland's economy while increasing the competitiveness of our labor pool. For these reasons, we support HB 851.

The Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation (MCEDC) is the official public-private economic development organization representing Montgomery County, MD. MCEDC was created in 2016 to help businesses start, grow and exceed expectations by helping them gain access to top talent, business and market intelligence and prime locations.