



# **House Bill 1000**

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**Economic Matters Committee  
Maryland House of Delegates**

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Chair Wilson, Vice Chair Crosby, and committee members,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on behalf of Opportunity Solutions Project (OSP), a non-profit dedicated to advancing policies that remove barriers to work. OSP supports House Bill 1000 because it creates an alternative pathway to licensure for certain occupations.

The typical licensing model requires individuals to pay an institution to train for a career. The upfront investment in time and money can be a challenge for many people, especially for those lower on the economic ladder.<sup>1</sup> Maryland can diverge from this model by allowing workers to earn their state license through federally approved apprenticeships.<sup>2</sup>

Under HB 1000, applicants would be issued a license if they complete a government-approved apprenticeship program and pass requisite state-level exams. Background checks and licensing fees would still apply.

Some trades already utilize the apprenticeship model as a pathway to credentials. HB 1000 applies the earn-and-learn framework to other jobs with state licensing requirements, providing more people the opportunity to take home a paycheck while working toward their license.

For example, hearing aid dispenser is a licensed occupation covered by HB 1000, with an average salary in Maryland of \$45,780 a year.<sup>3</sup> Currently, a person must invest two years to become a credentialed hearing aid dispenser in Maryland.<sup>4</sup> HB 1000 would make it possible to cut that time in half under a federally approved apprenticeship.<sup>5</sup>

Right now, Maryland has more than 200,000 open jobs.<sup>6</sup> States like Iowa, Tennessee, Idaho, Missouri, and Arkansas have made it easier for businesses to fill open jobs with this policy, and Maryland should follow suit by advancing HB 1000.

Haley Holik, *Visiting Fellow*

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<sup>1</sup> Jared Meyer, "How Occupational Licensing Inhibits Economic Opportunity," Foundation for Government Accountability (2017), <https://thefga.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/How-Occupational-Licensing-Inhibits-Economic-Opportunity-10-23-17.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> Jonathan Bain et al., "Expanded Apprenticeships: The Untapped Potential in the Pathway to Work," Foundation for Government Accountability (2018), <https://thefga.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Expanded-Apprenticeships-The-Untapped-Potential-in-the-Pathway-to-Work.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> Bureau of Labor Statistics, "May 2020 State Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates: Maryland," U.S. Department of Labor (2020), [https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes\\_md.htm#00-0000](https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_md.htm#00-0000).

<sup>4</sup> Maryland.Gov, "Hearing Aid Dispensers: Qualifications for Licensure," Maryland Department of Health (2022), <https://health.maryland.gov/boardsahs/Pages/hearinqual.aspx>.

<sup>5</sup> Apprenticeship.Gov, "Hearing Aid Specialist," U.S. Department of Labor (2022), <https://www.apprenticeship.gov/apprenticeship-occupations/listings?occupationCode=29-2092.00>.

<sup>6</sup> U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Job openings levels and rates for total nonfarm by state, seasonally adjusted," U.S. Department of Labor (2022), [https://www.bls.gov/news.release/jltst.t01.htm#jltst\\_tbl1.f.p](https://www.bls.gov/news.release/jltst.t01.htm#jltst_tbl1.f.p).