



**HB1165- State Procurement - Apprenticeship Program Accountability and Completion
Hearing in the Budget and Taxation Committee, April 1, 2026
Position: Favorable with Amendments**

Dear Chairman Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe, and members of the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee:

My name is Julia Baez, and I serve as the Chief Executive Officer of Baltimore's Promise. We respectfully offer a favorable position with amendments on House Bill 1165, State Procurement – Apprenticeship Program Accountability and Completion.

Baltimore's Promise strongly aligns with the intent of this legislation. We believe that public investments in apprenticeship programs should lead to meaningful, measurable outcomes, specifically completion, credential attainment, and long-term economic mobility. HB1165 reflects an important and necessary shift toward outcomes-based accountability, and we commend the State for advancing this conversation.

This bill connects directly to our work through CareerBound, a citywide workforce initiative that connects young people ages 14 to 26 to high-demand career pathways. These pathways include registered apprenticeships, occupational skills training, industry-recognized credentials, and comprehensive wraparound supports. Our model is designed not just to connect young people to opportunities, but to ensure they are able to persist, complete, and successfully transition into high-growth, high-wage careers.

As Maryland continues its broader push to strengthen apprenticeship quality and accountability, HB1165 reinforces something we see every day in our work: apprenticeship growth cannot be measured by access alone. Rather, it must also be measured by whether programs are structured in a way that allows participants—especially young people—to stay engaged and complete. This means strong employer partnerships, high-quality related instruction, effective supervision, and the wraparound supports necessary for long-term success.

The bill is also clearly situated within Maryland's larger workforce and education agenda. The State has set an ambitious goal of reaching 60,000 registered apprentices by 2030, alongside the Blueprint goal that 45% of public high school graduates complete the high school level of a registered apprenticeship or another industry-recognized credential by graduation. HB1165 is essential to achieving that goal, not just in scale, but in ensuring those apprenticeships lead to completion, credentials, and long-term economic mobility.

CareerBound is operating within, and helping to bring to life this exact policy vision at the local level. In that sense, HB1165 is not an isolated policy change; it is part of a broader shift toward building a more coordinated, accountable, and outcomes-driven apprenticeship ecosystem.

From our perspective, several implications stand out.

To begin with, quality and completion will matter even more. As the State places greater emphasis on completion rates, our focus on youth supports, including case management, school alignment, employer mentorship, and structured training, becomes even more critical.



Completion is not accidental; it is the result of intentional design and sustained support for both students and employers.

In addition, intermediary support becomes increasingly important. Baltimore's Promise serves as the backbone infrastructure aligning public systems, employers, and providers, and tracking outcomes across programs, to ensure this work delivers results at scale. The State's growing investment in intermediary structures, including the Registered Apprenticeship Qualified Intermediary Program, reflects the value of this role in ensuring programs operate as part of a coordinated, results-driven system.

At the same time, this bill reinforces opportunities in nontraditional sectors. The State's focus on expanding apprenticeships in areas like healthcare aligns directly with our work to build pathways in high-growth industries, demonstrating that these efforts are part of a broader statewide strategy.

Equally important, there is a clear advocacy opportunity. As completion becomes a more visible policy priority, CareerBound can help demonstrate what actually drives success for youth apprentices: consistent advising, employer readiness, paid work-based learning, aligned school schedules, and access to wraparound support.

While we support the direction of the bill, we believe several amendments are necessary to ensure it achieves its intended impact without creating unintended consequences.

Most importantly, we recommend differentiating by population served. A single 25% completion threshold, while well-intentioned, may unintentionally disadvantage programs serving opportunity youth and those facing systemic barriers. Programs working with higher-need populations often require additional time and resources to achieve strong outcomes. For this reason, we recommend adopting tiered or contextual benchmarks that reflect the population served, as well as program type and maturity.

Beyond that, accountability must be paired with the supports required for completion. Our data and experience make clear that completion is directly tied to access to transportation, childcare, mental health services, career coaching, housing, and other resources. Without these supports, even well-designed programs will struggle to meet performance thresholds. Accordingly, we recommend incentivizing or requiring wraparound support within apprenticeship models tied to state funding.

Just as critical, the State should prioritize continuous improvement over disqualification. Rigid thresholds will exclude programs serving the young people this policy is intended to reach. Instead, the bill should allow for improvement plans, time-bound performance benchmarks, and access to technical assistance to help programs strengthen over time.

Finally, we recommend strengthening data infrastructure and measurement. Accurate and meaningful accountability depends on the ability to track outcomes across systems. This requires cross-agency data sharing, longitudinal tracking, and investment in systems that support data integration and continuous improvement. Aligning with existing statewide data systems, such as the Maryland Longitudinal Data System, as well as local efforts like the Baltimore City Youth Data Hub, will be critical to ensuring the success of this policy.

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As a backbone organization and intermediary, Baltimore's Promise is uniquely positioned to partner with the State in this work. We can help operationalize accountability frameworks, support providers in improving outcomes, and ensure that young people, particularly those facing the greatest barriers, have equitable access to high-quality career pathways.

HB1165 moves Maryland in the right direction, but its impact will depend on whether it works for the young people who need it most. With the right amendments, this bill can ensure apprenticeship is not just expanded, but that it delivers real outcomes, for Baltimore's youth and for the State as a whole.

This is fully aligned with CareerBound's work. Maryland is raising expectations not just for access, but for quality, completion, and accountability, exactly what is needed to make apprenticeship a credible, scalable pathway to economic mobility.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We respectfully urge a favorable report with amendments.

Sincerely,

Julia Baez
Chief Executive Officer
Baltimore's Promise