



Wes Moore | Governor
Aruna Miller | Lt. Governor
Harry Coker, Jr. | Secretary of Commerce

DATE: March 5, 2026
BILL NO: Senate Bill 869
BILL TITLE: Economic Development - Maryland Workforce Launch Pilot Program – Establishment
COMMITTEE: Senate Finance
POSITION: INFORMATIONAL ONLY

This bill establishes the Maryland Workforce Launch Pilot Program within the Maryland Department of Commerce (Commerce) to provide customized no-cost workforce training to businesses that do not yet have a presence in the State. The intent of the program is for it to be a businesses attraction tool to recruit qualified businesses in strategic industries to the State. Commerce provides the following information should it be helpful to the Committee in consideration of this legislation.

Commerce currently administers the Partnership for Workforce Quality (PWQ) program. PWQ provides matching training grants and support services targeted to improve the competitive position of Maryland companies. Grants are used to increase the skills of existing workers for new technologies and production processes, improve employee productivity and increase employment stability. Prioritization is given to manufacturing and technology companies. When PWQ was first started in FY 1999 the appropriation was over \$4M. The annual appropriation varied but slowly decreased from then until General Fund appropriations were paused in FY 2010. Funding for PWQ was reinstated in FY 2015 and it has received a \$1M appropriation each year since. From FYs 2021 through 2025 there have been 91 grants provided totaling about \$4.4M.

Commerce previously funded the Maryland WorkSmart Program, a collaboration with the Maryland Association of Community Colleges (MACC), and the Maryland Department of Labor. This was a statewide program run out of Anne Arundel Community College with a part-time Director. Most participants were state agencies and little private businesses. For this reason, the program was dismantled in 2019. There is currently an affinity group out of MACC, the Maryland Community College Association of Continuing Education and Training (MCCACET). MCCACET is a monthly meeting of all 16 community colleges deans and vice presidents along with representatives from Labor, Commerce, and the Maryland Higher Education Commission. These monthly meetings serve to provide updates and feedback and collaboration between the agencies and community colleges. Commerce uses these meetings to coordinate institutions to assist with businesses' workforce training needs.