

## **MWA Members**

### **Anne Arundel County**

Anne Arundel Workforce  
Development Corporation  
*Kirkland Murray, Executive Director*

### **Baltimore City**

Mayor's Office of Employment  
Development  
*MacKenzie Garvin, Director*

### **Baltimore County**

Baltimore County Department of  
Economic and Workforce  
Development  
*Jonathan Sachs, Director*

### **Carroll County**

Carroll County Workforce  
Development  
*Heather Lee Powell, Manager*

### **Frederick County**

Frederick County Workforce  
Services  
*Michelle Day, Director*

### **Howard County**

Howard County Office of Workforce  
Development  
*Stephanie Adibe, Director*

### **Lower Shore**

Lower Shore Workforce Alliance  
(Somerset, Wicomico, & Worcester,  
Counties)  
*Leslie Porter-Cabell, Workforce  
Director*

### **Montgomery County**

WorkSource Montgomery, Inc.  
*Anthony Featherstone, Executive  
Director*

### **Prince George's County**

Prince George's County Workforce  
Development Board  
*Jeffrey Swilley, Interim Executive  
Director*

### **Southern Maryland**

Southern Maryland Job Source  
(Calvert, Charles, & St. Mary's  
Counties)  
*Ruthy Davis, Director*

### **Susquehanna Region**

Susquehanna Workforce Network,  
Inc. (Cecil & Harford Counties)  
*Kimberly Justus, Executive Director*

### **Upper Shore**

Upper Shore Workforce Investment  
Board (Caroline, Dorchester, Kent,  
Queen Anne's, & Talbot Counties)  
*Ellen LaFrankie, Executive Director*

### **Western Maryland**

Western Maryland Consortium  
(Allegany, Garrett &  
Washington Counties)  
*Stacey Ferrare, Executive Director*

The Honorable Melissa Wells, Chair  
Government, Labor, and Elections Committee  
145 Lowe House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Chair Wells and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Maryland Workforce Association and Maryland's 13 Local Workforce Development Boards, I write to express strong support for House Bill 1358. Maryland's local workforce boards serve as the front line of the State's workforce system. When layoffs occur, industries shift, or employers expand, it is the local system that responds directly to workers and businesses. HB 1358 strengthens that local response capacity in several important ways.

First, ensuring that, in the event funding from the Hospital Employees Retraining Fund is needed, local workforce development boards are at the table, so that when a hospital closes or downsizes, retraining funds move quickly to the communities experiencing displacement. Healthcare closures have regional ripple effects. Local boards are best positioned to assess skill gaps, coordinate retraining, and align impacted workers with in-demand occupations.

Second, strengthening the Quick Response Program by allowing funding to flow directly to local boards, who already have the responsibility of administering federal Rapid Response activities, enhances speed and accountability. Rapid response is most effective when decisions are made close to the labor market, in coordination with employers, economic development partners, and training providers.

Third, leveraging local boards to administer apprenticeship-related employer grants under the ACTION framework expands access to work-based learning, particularly in high-poverty communities. Apprenticeship remains one of the most reliable pathways to family-sustaining wages. Local boards already convene employers, community colleges, and training providers and can deploy these funds strategically.

It is also important to recognize the broader funding context. The largest source of workforce development funding is the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). In recent years, federal allocations have shifted, creating increased pressure on local systems to stretch limited dollars while maintaining service levels. Local workforce boards are often asked to do more with less, even as employer demand for talent and worker need for training continues to grow.

HB 1358 helps address that reality. The bill allows State workforce development resources to be leveraged through the existing local infrastructure. If Maryland is investing State funds in workforce development, those dollars should be accessible to the locally designated workforce development boards that are already accountable under federal law, embedded in their communities, and directly responsible for serving workers and businesses.

These boards are the State's local experts in workforce development. They understand regional labor markets, employer demand, and the needs of jobseekers. Ensuring they are eligible to receive and administer State workforce resources strengthens alignment, reduces duplication, and maximizes return on investment.

HB 1358 reinforces a core principle of workforce development: statewide strategy paired with local implementation. For these reasons, the Maryland Workforce Association respectfully urges a favorable report on House Bill 1358.

Sincerely,  
Kirkland Murray  
Maryland Workforce Association