
MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF LABOR TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 612

TO: Government, Labor, and Elections Committee Members
FROM: Maryland Department of Labor (MD Labor)
DATE: February 19, 2026
BILL: Correctional Education and Workforce Skills Training Programs - State Correctional Ombudsman and Certified Peer Recovery Specialist Training Program for Incarcerated Individuals

MD LABOR POSITION: INFORMATION

HB612 would 1) require the Maryland Department of Labor (MD Labor)'s Director of Correctional Education to consult with the State's Correctional Ombudsman (or their designee) on the operation of the State's correctional education programs and 2) require the Department to establish a Certified Peer Recovery Program Specialist Training Program ("Program") for incarcerated individuals (IIs) in the Department.

MD Labor's Office of Correctional Education (OCE), which is responsible for basic academic (including English language classes and GED preparation), occupational, and transitional program support for IIs, would be responsible for administering this Program.

OCE administers an already existing program to train IIs to become Certified Peer Recovery Specialists (CPRS), funded by a grant from the Maryland Office of Overdose Response (MOOR). The current CPRS program operates in 11 correctional facilities and is an incredibly **successful program**; during FY26, 26 out of 27 students enrolled in the CPRS program passed the Board exam to earn a CPRS certification.

For the most recent award period (July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2026), MD Labor received \$131,287.45 from MOOR. Of that total, only \$56,000 is spent on staff costs (for one staff member); the rest is dedicated to program services. The Program outlined in SB612 requires *two* staff members to service the program.

MD Labor reapplies annually to MOOR for funds to continue the program through a competitive application process, meaning that funding is never guaranteed. **Should this Program not be funded in the annual budget and the Department not receive funding from MOOR, there would be no funds to support the CPRS Program outlined in the bill.**

However, should the Department receive funding from both MOOR and the State budget, MD Labor would expand the program to allow more IIs to take advantage of this successful job training program.

MD Labor encourages conversations about successful programs to improve educational and workforce outcomes for IIs and respectfully requests the Committee consider this information as they evaluate HB612. For questions, please contact Andrew Fulginiti at Andrew.Fulginiti@maryland.gov.