

**MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION/MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF
LABOR
ADULT HIGH SCHOOL PILOT PROGRAM
Solicitation for Proposals
Fourth Release**

Questions & Answers

Submitted prior to Pre-Proposal Webinar:

- 1. Q: If students complete but do not pass the required MD Comprehensive Assessments in Algebra, Science, English, or Government, will the graduation requirement for students in this area be met?**

A: Students only need to take the assessment. They do not need to pass it. As long as learners sit for the assessment, and schools are able to provide proof of that, then the students have met that requirement.

Also, learners may have taken some assessments while they were enrolled in high school. As long as their high school assessments match the assessments that are presently administered for the current graduation requirements, those will also count. So, if a student took the Algebra assessment when they were in high school, and it matches the Algebra assessment for the current graduation requirements, then they will not need to retake it once they enroll in adult high school. That requirement would be satisfied.

- 2. Q: If we have not yet identified a school location, should we indicate that it is TBD or should we indicate the general location in which we are looking? Or are we required to have identified a school location before we submit the application?**

A: Applicants must be registered non-profits in the State of Maryland. Conditional approval may be granted for applicants who do not yet have a physical location at the time of proposal submission; however, this conditional approval is contingent upon obtaining a physical location.

- 3. Q: What is meant by the requirement that an applicant “operate from a physical location”?**

A: “Operate from a physical location” means that the operator has an actual address, a “brick and mortar” location where learners can attend and can take classes.

It is required that the opportunity exists for learners to have a “brick and mortar” facility to attend classes. That does not preclude online coursework, but it is required that there is that physical location for learners to attend classes.

- 4. Q: Does the applicant have to be an entity that was formed in Maryland, or can the applicant be an entity that was formed in another state but is registered to do business in Maryland?**

A: The applicant can be an entity that was formed in another state but registered to do business in Maryland. The entity must be a nonprofit organization that is registered in the State of Maryland.

- 5. Q: Does the “Advisory Board” for the pilot have to be the actual governing board of the corporation (or other legal entity) that is operating the pilot or can it be a committee of the governing board of the corporation which committee has been given governance authority over the pilot by the governing board of the corporation?**

A: The latter. The solicitation notes certain members outside of the operator who are required members of the Board. For instance, a designee of the Maryland Department of Labor and a designee of the Maryland State Department of Education must be on the Board. So, an applicant would be constructing that amalgamation of not necessarily their own operating board or governing board, but one whose membership has been established by the governing board of the organization.

- 6. Page 2, Section 1 of the Application - How do we obtain a “School Number”? What happens if we cannot secure a number to include in the application?**

A: A school number is not required. Some pilot programs have obtained a school number, specifically in order to be able to administer the MCAP, and it depends on the location of a pilot program on whether the pilot would need those types of measures set up in order to administer the MCAP. It would vary depending on the location, but a school number is not a requirement in order to apply to become a pilot program.

- 7. Page 4, Section 2E of the Application- For positions that are vacant and to be hired, can the credentials and experience section in Appendix B say "NA"; Should this list include administrative positions like HR, finance, IT, legal, Marketing, and other "back of the house" support positions or would those be included in indirect expenses?**

A: Yes, please note any key roles that are yet to be hired. Typically, what we are looking for in the key staff qualifications chart are those key leadership, instructional, and support roles. For example, school director, principal, or manager, registrar, instructors, life coaches, and academic counselors, to name a few. Any other administrative roles, such as HR, financial, legal, or IT can be identified within indirect expenses.

- 8. Page 6, Section 3E of the Application- The Goodwill Excel Center model does not include a community service requirement, and we will apply for a waiver. How should this section be completed?**

A: Within 30 days of acceptance, applicants may submit a waiver of the community service requirement directly to the Maryland State Board of Education. In that case, within the waivers section of the application, applicants should indicate why they are seeking a waiver, why such a requirement would be a hindrance to their program, why offering the service learning would be an issue for the school, etc.

Ultimately, the waiver will be approved or not approved by the Maryland State Board of Education. Approved applicants have 30 days to submit the waiver letter directly to the State Board.

9. Page 8, section 1.9.5 of the Solicitation- What is the specific grant and corresponding website link that “is intended to support the operating costs”?

A: Approved programs can access and submit the grant application for \$250,000, which will be located on MSDE’s [website](#). This grant is intended to support the school’s operating costs. Please visit the MSDE Grants Programs [website](#) for additional information.

10. Page 10, section 3.1.2 of the Solicitation- what are the definitions and/or business rules associated with the 10 metrics that must be reported at the top of page 10? Included in the required report criteria to the state is “graduation rate.” How is the graduation rate being defined and calculated here?

A: The graduation rate is a calculation of a variety of factors as defined on our interim and final progress report for approved pilots. Timely submission of these progress reports are a requirement for schools to remain in good standing. Report templates and directions, along with definitions, will be provided to approved programs.

The progress reports track numbers of students who have, through a variety of metrics, fulfilled all of the requirements to graduate. There is a rate calculation on the report that is associated with graduates respective to student enrollment, for example. Additional details regarding specific definitions will be forthcoming with instructions for progress report submission.

11. Can you share what waivers have already been provided to the existing pilot schools?

A: Currently, service learning waivers are the only waivers that have been approved by the Maryland State Board of Education.

12. We currently oversee a school where transcript audits are completed within a week. What should we expect the timeline to be for transcript audits to be completed for graduates?

A: Transcript audits typically happen at the program level. School-level registrar and other intake staff obtain and review student transcripts, and these staff members evaluate and determine what credits incoming students still need to complete.

Once a review is completed, schools can contact MSDE with specific questions. MSDE consults with its panel of content experts to deliver feedback on transcript and curriculum-related questions. These experts at MSDE decide whether credits are approvable or not, for those case-by-case inquiries. As a practice, however, transcript reviews generally happen at the school-level.

Submitted during the Pre-Proposal Webinar (September 11, 2024):

- 1. Q: Are you able to submit a proposal if you did not submit a notice of Intent to apply?**

A: Yes, you can still submit a proposal even if you did not submit a notice of intent to apply.

- 2. Q: Is the State of Maryland planning to move to per pupil funding for the Adult High School Program over time?**

A: The funding is \$250,000 per year, flat. Presently, there are no plans to move to per pupil funding for the Adult High School Program.

- 3. Q: How do you sign up for classes?**

A: Learners can contact the adult high schools directly to sign up for classes. At present, the two adult high schools in Maryland are:

- a. [The Excel Center](#)
- b. [South Baltimore Adult High School](#)

- 4. Q: Is it okay if I have a number or email to fill out paperwork to attend class please?**

A: Learners can contact the adult high schools directly to sign up for classes. Contact information for each school is listed below:

- a. [The Excel Center](#) - Phone: 443-870-5050; Email: info@excelcentermd.org
- b. [South Baltimore Adult High School](#) - Phone: 443-682-9403; Email: sturner@elev8baltimore.org

- 5. Q: Is there planning for additional funding to sustain the program over time? Is there a minimum number of learners per cohort in pilot?**

A: Presently, funding is granted at \$250,000 per school. Based on legislation, it is expected that programs can maintain fiscal responsibilities to maintain their program. There is no minimum number of learners per cohort. That is a decision for each school, based on the needs of their learners.

6. Q: Would there be night classes in person or online? Maybe both online and in person?

A: Depending on the class schedules for each school, classes may be offered online or in person at various times throughout the day and week. It is expected that schools offer classes at minimum in person with online classes as optional for schools.

7. Q: It was our interpretation that a specific building location was not required in the application so clarification on this requirement is critical for our application.

A: Applicants must be registered non-profits in the State of Maryland. Conditional approval may be granted for applicants who do not yet have a physical location at the time of proposal submission; however, this conditional approval is contingent upon obtaining a physical location.

8. Q: We are interested in how long it will take MSDE and DOL [sic] to approve graduation for each student after submission of all required graduation requirements.

A: As long as the student has met all graduation requirements and all documents have been submitted to MSDE/MD Labor, the turnaround is approximately 30-60 days.

Submitted after the Pre-Proposal Webinar:

1. Q: Can my program get an extension to the submission deadline of Tuesday, October 15, 2024?

A: Unfortunately, due to the already existing timeline for solicitation reviews and consensus meetings, we will be unable to offer any extensions to the submission deadline of October 15. We do, however, encourage programs to submit proposals with the understanding that we will work with them on addressing any areas that need additional support or explanation.

We plan to issue solicitations annually until we have reached our maximum number of high schools permitted by law (4 in urban locations, 2 in rural areas), so there will be ongoing opportunities to apply, as well.