

The logo features a stylized graphic on the left consisting of a red curved shape at the top, a yellow shape below it, and a black shape at the bottom, all pointing towards the right. To the right of this graphic, the word "MARYLAND" is written in a red, serif, all-caps font. Below it, "Skilled Immigrant" is written in a large, bold, black sans-serif font. At the bottom, "Task Force" is written in a red, italicized, serif font.

MARYLAND Skilled Immigrant *Task Force*



ANNUAL REPORT

Fiscal Year 2024

July 2023 – June 2024

The cover image is of Task Force members attending a networking potluck on November 15, 2023.

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OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

Created in 2016, the Maryland Skilled Immigrant Task Force (Task Force) is a consortium of stakeholders that seek to leverage skills that internationally trained professionals bring to the United States to meet local job market demand.

Skilled immigrants, also known as internationally trained professionals (ITP), are those who have acquired extensive education and/or occupational experience abroad. Many come to Maryland ready to work, offering great benefits to local industry, including global skills, multilingualism, workplace diversity, and cultural knowledge.

Unfortunately, prior to securing employment in their professional fields, skilled immigrants/ITPs may experience significant challenges, including limited English language proficiency, costly credential evaluations of their foreign degrees, complex licensing and recertification processes, lack of professional networks, and lack of knowledge on alternative career pathways.

The Task Force consists of representatives from the Maryland Department of Human Services (DHS), the Maryland Department of Labor (MD Labor), community colleges, refugee resettlement agencies, American Job Centers (AJCs), the Governor’s Office of Community Initiatives, and other immigrant-serving organizations. A full list of Task Force organizational members can be found on page 5.

The Task Force believes that the State of Maryland can lead the way in creating a win-win environment in which immigrants secure jobs matching their professional and educational backgrounds, while helping the business community more readily meet its workforce needs.

This report covers year eight of the Task Force, from July 2023 through June 2024.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Skilled Immigrant Task Force collaborates across organizations to advance workforce system accessibility and career opportunities for foreign-trained individuals in Maryland.

SKILLED IMMIGRANT DEFINITION

A work-authorized foreign-born and foreign-trained worker with at least (2) years of formal or informal education, training, or on-the-job experience that has led to special skills, training, knowledge, and/or abilities for certain types of work.

GOVERNANCE

The Task Force is co-sponsored by two state agencies: DHS and MD Labor.



DHS is Maryland's primary social service provider, serving more than one million residents annually. Through its 24 local departments of social services and other social programs, DHS actively pursues opportunities to assist people in economic need, provides preventive services, and protects vulnerable children and adults. Within DHS' Family Investment Administration is the Maryland Office for Refugees and Asylees (MORA), which provides support and services to federally recognized refugees and other humanitarian immigrants including asylees, certified Victims of Trafficking, Special Immigrant Visa holders from Iraq and Afghanistan, Cuban and Haitian entrants, and certain Amerasians, which are children fathered by a U.S. citizen and born in Vietnam after January 1, 1962, and before January 1, 1976.

MORA has helped more than 40,000 refugees and eligible humanitarian immigrants make Maryland their home through a statewide network of public and private organizations. MORA provides funding for transitional cash assistance, employment services, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes, vocational training, health case management, and other supportive services. MORA partners assist individuals to become independent, contributing members to the national and local economy through several transitional services aimed at helping individuals achieve social and economic self-sufficiency. For more information, visit MORA's website at <https://dhs.maryland.gov/maryland-office-for-refugees-and-asylees/>.



MD Labor is Maryland's job development and protection agency. The mission of the MD Labor is to connect Marylanders to good jobs; protect workers, consumers, and the public; support Maryland businesses; and foster economic growth and competitiveness. MD Labor consists of the Office of Financial Regulation, Division of Occupational and Professional Licensing, Division of Unemployment Insurance, Division of Labor and Industry, Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning (DWDAL), Maryland Racing Commission, and the Family and Medical Leave Insurance. DWDAL's mission is to improve the lives of all Marylanders by implementing innovative, responsive practices that nurture a skilled workforce, connect people to good jobs, and ensure businesses have the skilled workforce they need to compete in the global economy. DWDAL oversees the state's adult education programming (general/family literacy and numeracy, high school diploma pathways, English as a Second Language, and correctional education), the American Job Centers (AJCs), and labor market information. DWDAL is responsible for implementing the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) in Maryland. WIOA was signed into law on July 22, 2014, and took effect July 1, 2015. It addresses the needs of both businesses and jobseekers and establishes a workforce system that relies on strong, cross-sector partnerships. The Maryland WIOA State Plan is available here: <https://www.labor.maryland.gov/wdplan/>.

MEMBERSHIP

The Task Force is a robust network of multi-sector stakeholders, including service providers, educators, and both the public and private sector. Eighth-year membership included representation from the following local, state, and national organizations:

- AFRICANS FOR MENTAL HEALTH
- ALLEGANY COLLEGE
- ANNE ARUNDEL COMMUNITY COLLEGE
- ANNE ARUNDEL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
- ASIAN AMERICAN CENTER OF FREDERICK
- ASYLUMWORKS
- A WIDER CIRCLE
- BALTIMORE ALLIANCE FOR CAREERS IN HEALTHCARE
- BALTIMORE CITY COMMUNITY COLLEGE
- BALTIMORE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
- CARROLL COMMUNITY COLLEGE
- CARROLL COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
- CASH CAMPAIGN OF MARYLAND
- CENTRO DE APOYO FAMILIAR
- CENTRO HISPANO OF FREDERICK
- CHESAPEAKE MULTICULTURAL RESOURCE CENTER
- CHIN UP GLOBAL
- CLASSROOM 2 COMMUNITY
- COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF BALTIMORE COUNTY
- COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION GROUP
- DENICOLO CONSULTING LLC
- DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES (STATE OF MARYLAND)
- DEPARTMENT OF LABOR (STATE OF MARYLAND)
- EMMA'S TORCH
- EMPLOY PRINCE GEORGE'S INC.
- ESPERANZA CENTER
- ETHIOPIAN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL
- FREDERICK COUNTY WORKFORCE SERVICES
- GLOBAL REFUGE
- GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF COMMUNITY INITIATIVES (STATE OF MARYLAND)
- GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF IMMIGRANT AFFAIRS
- HAGERSTOWN COMMUNITY COLLEGE
- HOMES NOT BORDERS
- HOWARD COMMUNITY COLLEGE

- HOWARD COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM PROJECT LITERACY
- HOWARD COUNTY OFFICE OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
- IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE OUTREACH CENTER
- INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE
- LASOS (LINKING ALL SO OTHERS SUCCEED)
- LATINO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CENTER
- LOWER SHORE WORKFORCE ALLIANCE
- LUMINUS NETWORK FOR NEW AMERICANS
- LUTHERAN SOCIAL SERVICES OF THE NATIONAL CAPITAL AREA
- MARYLAND INFORMATION NETWORK
- MARYLAND STATE LIBRARY AGENCY
- MARYLAND STATE LIBRARY RESOURCE CENTER
- MAYOR'S OFFICE OF EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT
- MAYOR'S OFFICE OF IMMIGRANT AFFAIRS
- MONTGOMERY COALITION FOR ADULT ENGLISH LITERACY
- MONTGOMERY COLLEGE
- MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
- MONTGOMERY COUNTY GILCHRIST IMMIGRANT RESOURCE CENTER
- MONTGOMERY COUNTY OFFICE OF COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS
- MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS HEADSTART PROGRAM
- NEW AMERICAN CAREERS
- OFFICE OF THE BALTIMORE COUNTY EXECUTIVE JOHNNY A. OLSZWESKI, JR.
- PATHFINDERS
- PRINCE GEORGE'S COMMUNITY COLLEGE
- PRINCE GEORGE'S DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
- REFUGEE WELCOME NETWORK
- SOLUTIONS IN HOMETOWN CONNECTIONS
- STREETWISE PARTNERS
- UPPERSHORE WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD
- UPWARDLY GLOBAL
- WELCOME BACK CENTER OF SUBURBAN MARYLAND
- WESTERN MARYLAND CONSORTIUM
- WORLD EDUCATION SERVICES GLOBAL TALENT BRIDGE
- WORKSOURCE MONTGOMERY

STRUCTURE

Task Force members meet monthly either virtually or in-person, on the fourth Wednesday of the month, for stakeholder organizations to continue building relationships, sharing ideas, and discussing best practices. The meetings also highlight the resources of non-Task Force member organizations in Maryland and nationally to continue enhancing the knowledge of Task Force members to support their work with ITPs.

In addition to monthly meetings, workgroups consisting of small groups of members work on tackling specific issues. Workgroups are temporary and active for a predetermined window of time so that participants can gauge their availability based on workload at their primary organization. Deliverables and group goals are clearly outlined on a schedule that is feasible, and the groups are intentionally staffed with appropriate representation from relevant member organizations to ensure that the group can effectively accomplish its task. Workgroups are determined through group discussion during monthly Task Force meetings.

YEAR EIGHT IN REVIEW

OVERVIEW

In year eight (July 2023 – June 2024), monthly meetings were held virtually and in-person to continue working on immigrant integration and inclusion. Twelve meetings were held with nine virtually and three in-person.

In year eight, action items from year seven were continued and/or accomplished with the workgroups established in that year.

GOALS AND ACTION ITEMS

To adhere to the above mission and in accordance with the insights of Task Force members, the following three goals continued to guide the Task Force in year eight:

1. *Partnerships and Visibility*
Strengthen partnerships and increase visibility of the Task Force and of the challenges facing internationally trained professionals.
2. *Resource Documents and Barrier Reduction*
Develop tangible tools and resources that service providers or jobseekers can use to reduce or remove barriers to employment for internationally trained professionals.
3. *Business Engagement*
Explore and conceptualize business engagement opportunities that will benefit internationally trained professionals and Maryland's business community.

Each goal listed above is related to a menu of suggested action items. The Task Force continued the action items from year seven with the already established workgroups and the table below details the goal, potential action items tied to each goal, and accomplishments.

Action items highlighted in **red** indicate progress or completion on that specific item, and those in *italics* indicate a workgroup was created to address that item.

Goal	Potential Action Items	Accomplishments
<p><i>Goal #1: Partnerships and Visibility</i></p>	<p><i>1. Create a Roadshow presentation about the Task Force to highlight our work locally and nationally.</i></p> <p><i>2. Expand Task Force membership generally.</i></p> <p><i>3. Continue in-person meetings to expand connections among Task Force members and at other relevant organizations to bolster partnerships and referrals.</i></p> <p><i>4. Learn about best practices in other states and see how to incorporate these into Maryland.</i></p> <p>Additional items suggested from year seven for future tasks:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create a short commercial or announcement about the Task Force. 2. Partner with the Maryland Chapter of the Society for Human Resource Management. 3. Launch a marketing campaign to highlight internationally trained professionals in Maryland. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Roadshow Presentation Workgroup created a presentation and began submitting workshop proposals at various local conferences/engagements. ● The Task Force continued to welcome new members. ● Three in-person meetings were held which allowed attendees to meet other Task Force members and learn more about each other to aid in building relationships. ● Participation in the Office of New Americans (ONA) Network and the Skilled Immigrant Integration Program (SIIP) continued to contribute MD’s insights and to learn about best practices from other New American initiatives around the U.S.
<p><i>Goal #2: Resource Documents and Barrier Reduction</i></p>	<p><i>1. Create a career pathway guide for a specific occupation based on employment data/immigrant needs and disseminate guide accordingly.</i></p> <p><i>2. Explore the possibility of hosting career or resource fairs for immigrants.</i></p> <p><i>3. Partner with the local AJCs to guide them on ensuring job fairs are accessible to the immigrant and refugee community.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Career Pathway Guide Workgroup continued the work to create the six healthcare guides. ● The Job Fair Workgroup collaborated with a community organization to host a <i>Community Resource and Job Fair</i>. ● The Entrepreneurship Guide Workgroup began meeting.

	<p><i>4. Create an entrepreneurship guide for new Americans.</i></p> <p>5. Review and update existing resources.</p> <p>Additional items suggested from year seven for future tasks:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Host a job board on the Task Force’s website. 2. Facilitate a resource sharing event. 3. Garner a renewed focus on apprenticeship. 	
<p><i>Goal #3: Business Engagement</i></p>	<p><i>1. Create a presentation about the benefits of hiring internationally trained professionals and ways to connect with the population and present it at local chambers of commerce and workforce boards.</i></p> <p>Additional items suggested from year seven for future tasks:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Survey apprenticeship sponsors for hiring needs to strengthen the immigrant/refugee to apprenticeship pipeline. 2. Promote workforce programs to employers to increase the visibility of programming. 3. Develop a program to recognize employers who hire internationally trained professionals. 4. Host a webinar by employers who are employing internationally trained professionals for employers interested in hiring internationally trained professionals. 5. Host a webinar for employers from the US Dept of Justice’s Immigrant and Employee Rights section on common work authorization documents and laws regarding I-9 verification. 6. Create a business/entrepreneur network group with regular meetings. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Business Engagement Workgroup created the presentation and began outreach with local Workforce Development Boards and Chambers of Commerce.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Many of the accomplishments of the Task Force's eighth year were related to specific action items tied to the three goals, and the following are further details of these accomplishments.

Partnerships and Visibility

In year seven, the Task Force established a Roadshow Presentation Workgroup. This group was charged with creating a presentation about the Task Force that both highlights the challenges ITPs face when integrating into the workforce and presents the ways the Task Force works to support ITPs by creating resources and connections for successful integration. The presentation was completed in year eight and five proposals were submitted to event organizers of which four were accepted. The presentation was delivered at the:

- DWDAL Office of Adult Education and Literacy Services' Virtual Training Institute (VTI) 8.0;
- Maryland Community College Association of Continuing Education & Training (MCCACET) Professional Development Day;
- Maryland Association for Adult, Community and Continuing Education (MAACCE) Annual Conference; and
- 2024 Baltimore Immigration Summit.

The presentations resulted in approximately 80+ attendees, with 32 attendees requesting to be added to the Task Force weekly newsletter, and two new members joining the Task Force.

Membership expansion continued through word of mouth and referrals, and the Task Force welcomed approximately 46 new members in year eight and now has 149 members from 68 organizations. These members bring with them a wealth of experience and knowledge that will continue to enhance the Task Force's efforts toward attaining their mission.



To allow members to increase their engagement with one another and continue building relationships, three in-person meetings were held. These included a site visit to the Lutheran Social Services of the National Capital Area (LSSNCA) Greenbelt office to learn about their programming; a networking potluck with space provided by Howard Community College Workforce, Career, and Community Education, pictured to the left; and a site visit to Global Refugee's headquarters to learn about their programming.

The New Americans Initiative Coordinator within DWDAL and co-lead of the Task Force continued to attend the monthly Office of New Americans (ONA) State Network and the World Education Services Skilled Immigrant Integration Program (SIIP) meetings to continue learning about the new American initiatives around the U.S. in order to identify possible strategies/programs to implement in Maryland. Additionally, information about Maryland's initiatives were also shared such as the work of SITF has highlighted in this report.

Resource Documents and Barrier Reduction

The Career Pathways Guide Workgroup continues to work on revising and finalizing the six guides for the occupations of Medical Assistant, Pharmacy Technician, Occupational Therapy Assistant, Registered Nurse, Physician Assistant, and Pharmacist. This work will continue into year nine, as well as updating the [Engineering Career Pathways Guide](#) created in 2018.



In year seven, the Job Fair Workgroup collaborated with the Interethnic Community Outreach team of the Lutheran Church of Saint Andrew in Silver Spring, Maryland to host the Community Resource and Job Fair in October of 2022. In 2023, the Job Fair Workgroup collaborated with them again to host a Community Resource and Career Fair in October of 2023. The Task Force has been honored to collaborate with the team, and the flyer was translated into Amharic and Spanish. The job fair was open to the public and provided on-site activities for children so that more parents could attend. The joint efforts resulted in 34 employers and service providers attending the job fair to provide information to 220 community members. The Interethnic

Community Outreach team would like to make this an annual event, and as such the Task Force will look forward to collaborating with them for future events.

Additionally, the Entrepreneurship Guide Workgroup, formed in year seven, was charged with creating an *Entrepreneurship Guide for New Americans*. In year eight, the workgroup began generating ideas on what types of information would be needed in the guide and set out to meet with various resources/services providers to learn more about their offerings. The meetings were scheduled either during the biweekly workgroup meeting or at a mutually agreed upon time with the resource/service providers. The workgroup met with representatives from the Small Business Development Centers (SBDC), SCORE, higher education institutions, Restaurant Association of Maryland, and new American entrepreneurs, among others. The meetings provided insights into how the resource/service providers supported entrepreneurs and allowed the workgroup to ask specific questions on how they engaged with the new American population. This workgroup will begin drafting the guide in year nine.

Business Engagement

The Business Engagement Workgroup was charged with developing a presentation highlighting the benefits of hiring ITPs and ways to engage with the ITP talent pool. The goal is to connect employers with Task Force members engaged in employment services for their clients. The workgroup developed the presentation and updated the [International One-pager](#) created in year four. Updates included current data points and a list of Task Force members to include only those who were engaged in employment services for their organization. Also added were contact points with accompanying email addresses. This will allow employers to connect directly with those listed to establish partnerships and advertise their job opportunities. All members on the International Talent One-pager volunteered to be listed. Workgroup members then began to

connect with local chambers of commerce and local workforce development boards to request an opportunity to present at an engagement. Four presentations were completed in year eight to the Greater Bethesda Chamber of Commerce, and the Workforce Development Boards of Montgomery County, Frederick County, and the Upper Shore. Currently the workgroup is actively engaged with securing a presentation opportunity with the Workforce Development Boards of Anne Arundel County, Baltimore City, and Howard County. This Workgroup will continue into year nine to connect with the remaining seven workforce development boards and additional chambers of commerce.

LOOKING AHEAD TO YEAR NINE

Looking ahead, the Task Force will continue the work detailed above to include:

- Presenting at local and national events about the Task Force’s work;
- Publishing the career pathway guides in healthcare;
- Publishing the entrepreneurship guide; and
- Connecting with local chambers of commerce and workforce boards to highlight internationally trained professionals as an untapped talent solution to address their workforce needs.

The Task Force will continue to conduct site visits to provide additional opportunities for Task Force members to network, build relationships, and increase partnerships.

In addition, Maryland will continue its work with the ONA State Network and the SIIP Alumni Network to stay informed of best practices in other states and to contribute the best practices from Maryland to the national dialogue. .