Direct Care Workforce Innovation Program

Pre-Proposal Conference
Wednesday, February 5, 2025 | 10:00AM-11:00AM

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*Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning*
Maryland Department of Labor

Agenda

- Welcome

- Housekeeping Items

- Overview of the Direct Care Workforce Innovation Program

- Definitions

- Changes to CNA Licensure

- Eligible Applicants

- Program Parameters

- Application Submission

- Application Format

- Reporting Requirements

- Awards and Timeline

- Questions
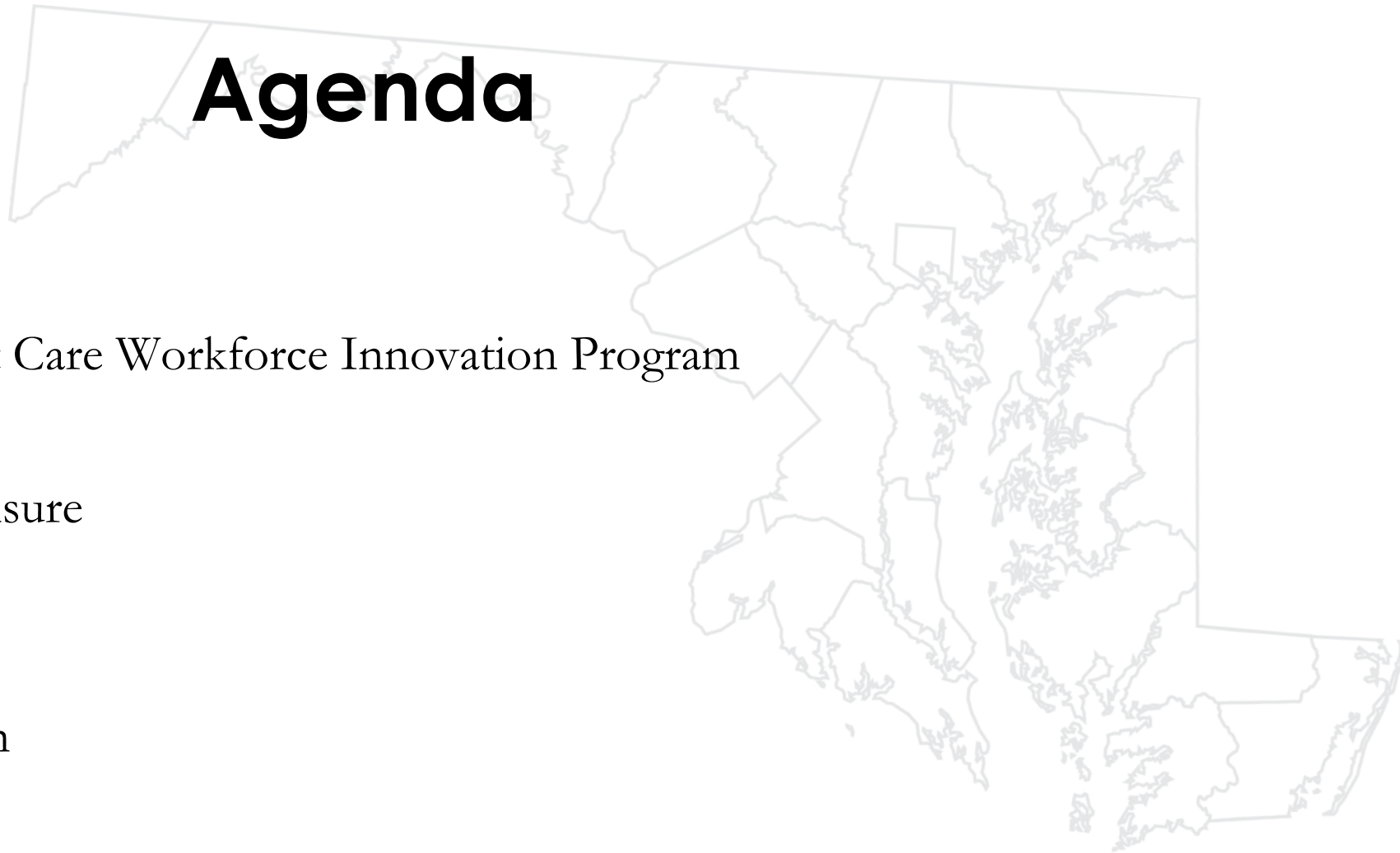
Housekeeping Items

- Please keep yourself muted until we are ready to take questions.

- Please include your name and organization in the chat.

- You may type any questions into the chat. They will be answered at the end of the presentation.

- All questions and answers received during this conference will be posted on the Direct Care Workforce Innovation Program's website by next Wednesday, February 12, 2025: https://www.labor.maryland.gov/employment/wddirectcare.shtml

- If your organization decides to move forward with developing a proposal, please submit an Intent to Apply notification to Casey Tiefenwerth (casey.tiefenwerth1@maryland.gov) - an informal email is fine.

- If you choose **not** to submit an application and want to provide feedback as to your decision for the purposes of improvement toward future grant opportunities developed by Labor, please email Casey Tiefenwerth.

- This presentation will be shared with attendees via email after the conference.

Direct Care Workforce Innovation Program

- In 2021, the Maryland General Assembly established the Direct Care Workforce Innovation Program within the Maryland Department of Labor.

- Purpose: to provide matching grants that create and expand upon successful recruitment and retention strategies that address the range of potential barriers to increase the number and availability of direct care workers across the state.

    - Applicants must use at least 5% of grant funds to provide direct financial support to participants, such as supportive services.

- Annual allotment of **$250,000** to disperse as matching grants, contingent upon state appropriation.

- Grants are capped at **$50,000** and will last up to three years.

- If there are more eligible applicants than funding allows, MD Labor will make awards on a pro-rata basis.

Definitions

For the purposes of this program, "Direct Care Worker" includes the following occupations:

- Geriatic Nursing Assistant (GNA)
- Home Health Aide
- Nursing Assistant
- Personal Aide
- Psychiatric Aide

A detailed description of each eligible occupation can be found on pages 4-5 of the [Direct Care Workforce Innovation Program Policy](#).

Changes to CNA Licensure

- On May 16, 2024, Maryland Governor Wes Moore signed HB1125/SB0999 (the "CNA Bill") into law. The bill goes into effect October 1, 2025.
- General Overview of the bill:
    - Creates two types of CNA: CNA-I and CNA-II. The CNA-I is the new name for what is currently called a CNA/GNA. The CNA-II is the new name for what is currently called CNA.
    - All current categories of CNA, including GNA, School Health, Home Health, Development Disabilities, will no longer exist.
- Effective October 1, 2025, an applicant for certification as CNA can only apply for certification as a CNA-I. Applicants will not be able to apply for certification as CNA-II.
    - Only individuals who hold a CNA certificate as of September 30, 2025, can be certified as a CNA-II.

Changes to CNA Licensure:
Considerations for DCWIP Application

- If you intend to train CNAs, your application should reflect the impending change to CNA licensure.
  - Applications which state they will train GNAs or School Health, Home Health, or Developmental Disabilities CNAs will be returned for clarification during the technical review.

More information about the changes to CNA licensure can be found on the Maryland Board of Nursing website: https://health.maryland.gov/mbon/Pages/default.aspx.

Eligible Applicants

The following entities are eligible to apply for funds through DCWIP:

- Non-profit organizations;
- Labor organizations;
- Direct care employers; and,
- Entities with shared labor-management oversight.

Additionally, in order to be eligible, the above entities must:

- Have an established record of providing training to direct care workers; or,
- Establish a training program in consultation with an organization with an established record or providing training to direct care workers.

Program Parameters

Projects awarded funding must:

- Develop and implement a strategy for the recruitment, retention, and/or advancement of direct care workers;

- Provide compensation to each direct care worker for any training received;
    - "Compensation" is defined as a stipend that cannot exceed $25 per week per participant.

- Use **no more than 5% of grant funds on administrative costs**.

- Use **at least 5% of grant funds to provide direct financial support**, such as supportive services, to participants; and,

- Be used to supplement, not supplant, the amount of funds that would be available absent the grant award.

Application Submission

Applicants must include a project plan with a description of:

- Current or projected job openings for, or relevant LMI related to, direct care workers in the region to be served by the project;

- Specific efforts and strategies that the project will undertake to reduce barriers to the recruitment, retention, or advancement of direct care workers;

  - And, if applicable, any other innovative models or processes the eligible entity will implement to support the retention of direct care workers.

- The supportive services and benefits to be provided to direct care workers to support their retention;

- How the eligible entity will make use of career planning to support the identification of advancement opportunities and career pathways for direct care workers in the region to be served by the project;

Application Submission

Applicants must include a project plan with a description of:

- An assurance that any benefit or service provided under the project will be provided at no cost to direct care workers;

- How the eligible entity will consult with direct care workers, representatives of direct care workers, individuals assisted by direct care workers, and the families of individuals assisted by direct care workers throughout the project;

- The methods the eligible entity will use to inform participants in the project about their rights as direct care workers; and,

- Outreach efforts to individuals for participation on the project, including targeted outreach efforts to:

    - Individuals who are recipients of, or eligible for, assistance under a State program funded under Part A of Title IV of the Social Security Act; and,

    - Individuals who have barriers to employment.

Application Format

To be considered for grant funds, applications <u>must</u>:

- Respond thoroughly to each application question;

- Provide a signed letter of support from any partners with whom they will be working.

- Non-profits (unless applying as an employer of Direct Care Workers), labor organizations, and/or entities with labor-management oversight must also provide **at least two letters of support and/or MOUs from employer or industry partners**;

- Provide a signed W9 form; and,

- Provide a Certificate of Good Standing.

Optional Documents:

- Additional letter(s) of support from partners; Sample program curriculum; Program promotional materials

Application Format

Direct Care Workforce Innovation Program Budget:

- Requests for funding should not exceed $50,000.

- Applying organizations should only complete sections of the budget template that apply to their organization. For areas that do not apply, please leave blank.

- The required match of funds should be shown in the budget along with **submitting required documentation.**

- Program budgets should be submitted as an Excel Sheet.

Completed applications should be submitted to Casey Tiefenwerth at casey.tiefenwerth1@maryland.gov by 11:59 PM on April 4, 2025, and include all required documents in a single email.

Reporting Requirements

- Grantees will be required to track the ongoing progress of the training program on a **monthly** basis.

- Monthly reports will consist of the following:

  - Narrative Report (programmatic)

  - Invoice and Expenditure Report (fiscal)

- Monthly narrative reports will require projects awarded funding to report on the following metrics:

  - Number of participants recruited
  - Number of participants served
  - Number of participants who completed training
  - Number of participants to earn an industry-recognized credential

  - Median earnings of all participants who were placed in employment
  - Number of participants placed into unsubsidized employment as a direct care worker

  - Total number of individuals or families assisted by direct care workers via the program
  - Percentage of employer satisfaction
  - Total number of individuals who achieved a measurable skill gain

- A final report will be due to the Department twelve (12) months after the grantee completes the project.

Awards and Timeline

Event	Date(s)
Application Released	January 21, 2025
Pre-Proposal Conference	February 5, 2025
Applications due to MD Labor	April 4, 2025
Review Process	April - May 2025
Awards Announced	May 2025
Grants Start	June 1, 2025
Period of Performance	June 1, 2025 - May 31, 2028

Thank you!

Questions about the Direct Care Workforce Innovation Program will be accepted via email through **Wednesday, March 19, 2025.**

Casey Tiefenwerth

casey.tiefenwerth1@maryland.gov