

## **Project Narrative**

### **Section 1: Project Description and Overview**

A) *Maryland Works for Wind (MWW)* is a regional consortium committed to establishing Maryland as the country's premiere destination for Offshore Wind (OSW) training, fabrication, and employment. The project, spearheaded by the Maryland Department of Labor (MD Labor), includes a robust sectoral partnership inclusive of employers, unions, workforce boards, business alliances, training providers, and State agencies. Collaboratively, the partners will design, implement, and execute a pipeline of skilled talent to support the emerging OSW clean energy industry. *MWW* will drive economic development, connect underrepresented populations to good-paying careers, and build upon existing investments.

Historically, U.S. OSW projects have been dependent on European organizations to foster the workforce required to support OSW, but companies like *US Wind, Inc.* and *Ørsted* recognize the importance of training and growing a strong talent pipeline in Maryland to fill these needs. Maryland has diverse resources to support this emerging industry, including a strategic industrial complex at Tradepoint Atlantic in Baltimore County, an international waterway in the Chesapeake Bay and Port of Baltimore, proximity to OSW lease areas in the Atlantic Ocean, and proven training providers.

MD Labor will coordinate *MWW* to further develop this valuable sectoral partnership through an equity lens, ensuring that those negatively impacted by the pandemic, individuals with barriers to employment, and traditionally underserved populations have equal opportunity to launch careers in this lucrative field. With this application, MD Labor requests \$24,715,775 to train 4,370 individuals to prepare the workforce and establish Maryland and the mid-Atlantic region as the country's OSW training hub.

B) MD Labor is the "System Lead Entity" for the *MWW* regional workforce training system which will:

- Create over 5,800 new OSW jobs in Central Maryland and on the Eastern Shore;
- Train or upskill 4,370 hard-to-serve Marylanders in competitive, good paying careers;
- Yield \$2,972,895,500 in total economic output over the next 20 years for Baltimore/Central Maryland alone;
- Strategically leverage \$30,000,000 in State and employer resources; and
- Foster meaningful economic activity in 18 of the State's 24 jurisdictions.

Under the leadership of Governor Larry Hogan and Secretary Tiffany Robinson, MD Labor embodies all the characteristics of an effective system lead. As an executive-level agency, the Department has convening power, a legislative voice, and direct access to the State's elected officials who already recognize the positive economic impact of OSW growth. In October 2020, the Hogan administration demonstrated its commitment to this emerging industry by establishing the Southeast and Mid-Atlantic Regional Transformative Partnership for Offshore Wind Energy Resources (SMART-POWER) with Virginia and North Carolina (See attached for MOU). Governor Hogan has stated, "Offshore wind presents a once in a generation opportunity for the

State of Maryland to grow and diversify our economy and energy portfolio. The job creation potential and associated economic benefits for the broader supply chain of offshore wind development is an absolute game changer.” (See attached Letter of Support from the Governor).

In addition to strong support with leveraged resources from the State’s chief executive and the Maryland General Assembly, MD Labor’s Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning (DWDAL) fulfills critical project leadership components. DWDAL oversees implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) for the State of Maryland. With federal WIOA funds totaling \$60,429,460 across Titles I, II, and III, DWDAL has experience and credibility with employers, local workforce boards, training providers, and Registered Apprenticeship sponsors. The Division employs over 450 staff working to advance career and education opportunities across Maryland’s five identified workforce regions. In Program Year 2020, Maryland exceeded all 18 WIOA performance measures for Title I and Title III reporting. These outstanding outcomes on WIOA performance metrics speak to MD Labor’s demonstrated success at helping underserved populations access and retain meaningful employment opportunities through barrier removal, occupational training, and individualized supportive services.

DWDAL boasts an excellent track record of coordinating sector partnerships, the most impressive example being the Employment Advancement Right Now (EARN) Maryland program, which Harvard University recognized as a top 25 program in the 2018 Innovations in American Government Award competition. EARN currently funds 63 “Strategic Industry Partnerships” (SIPs) across in-demand sectors (cyber security, healthcare, manufacturing, etc.). With MD Labor support, these SIPS effectively facilitate relationships between employers, training providers, and local workforce boards. EARN grantees are especially skilled at translating the needs, skills gaps, or concerns of business partners to training providers (such as community colleges) to ensure the needs of both industry and jobseekers are simultaneously addressed.

MD Labor will hire a Program Manager to serve as the intermediary for the project duration. While DWDAL does not engage in fundraising activities, the Division has a demonstrated track record of securing grant funds through competitive opportunities and is adept at strategically braiding funding to meet the needs of businesses and jobseekers. MD Labor estimates that it brings close to \$30 million in leveraged resources for the *MWW* project through the agency alone (see additional details in Section 4c).

## **Section 2A: Employer Leadership and Commitments**

*US Wind, Inc.*, and *Ørsted* are committed to working with MD Labor and eager to hire qualified participants who complete training opportunities offered through the consortium.

The *MWW* collaborative is made up of a team of business, workforce development, state executives, labor unions, and other training leaders who will collaborate to create and expand the OSW industry opportunities in Maryland, including the development of a pipeline of entry-level workers and a concerted effort to advance the skills of Registered Apprentices who will work in this space. The *MWW* initiative leverages the experience of existing EARN grantees who have documented success delivering holistic programming to meet the needs of both jobseekers with

significant barriers to employment and employer partners. In order to participate in EARN, training providers must receive buy-in from multiple employer and industry partners that the training they offer is relevant and meets their needs. As evidenced in the letters of support, employers currently involved in EARN SIPs expect to experience a growing demand of workers who possess skills specific to the OSW industry. Through the *MWW* initiative, these employers will have a qualified pipeline of workers, which, in turn, will allow for the growth and expansion of Maryland businesses. Similarly, as a training mechanism, Registered Apprenticeship requires that businesses and industry experts stand at the forefront of curriculum development. Training is built around the needs of the business. Maryland plans to include *Business Network for Offshore Wind* and *Clean Energy States Alliance* in the initial project development process as industry subject matter experts, with the former presenting hundreds of OSW business stakeholders. Additionally, seven unions (listed in Section 2B) who are partnered with employers such as *US Wind, Inc.* and *Ørsted* through a Project Labor Agreement, have committed to training and hiring thousands of participants through the Registered Apprenticeship model.

Maryland's existing efforts in OSW have already paid significant dividends. *Ørsted*, the world's most sustainable energy company three years running according to the Corporate Knights Global 100 Index, has invested heavily in growing Maryland's OSW chain as part of its *Skipjack Wind* project. They recently partnered with minority-owned Crystal Steel (Federalsburg, MD) to manufacture nearly \$70 million in steel parts on the Eastern Shore and are opening a zero-emissions, \$20 million operations and maintenance facility in West Ocean City. Additionally, they announced plans to bring GE Renewables and Hellenic Cables to Maryland to establish new manufacturing centers, which will create another 500 jobs. The State's other offshore wind developer, *US Wind, Inc.*, has pledged up to \$150 million to develop Sparrows Point Steel, Maryland's first manufacturing facility developed to create OSW monopole foundations. The company is also hiring executives focused exclusively on local minority business outreach.

While MD Labor has key employers who are already strongly committed to hiring graduates of *MWW* training funded through this proposal, the agency also recognizes that supply chain employers and others will create new opportunities within this massive, emerging industry that simply do not currently exist. (Participating labor unions *alone* will put 2,330 individuals to work in this industry over the project period). To be responsive to employers' evolving needs within the budding OSW industry, MD Labor has secured firm commitment from premiere business alliances, like the MD Chamber of Commerce and the Greater Salisbury Committee, who play a key role in network building and advocacy for the business community. By strategically working with alliances like these, MD Labor will ensure that its OSW sectoral partnerships can bring in new employers and grow beyond the rich landscape of careers that is known today.

## **Section 2B: Other Stakeholders and Partnerships**

*MWW* includes seven unique partner types (depicted in the Exhibit A graphic on the final page of the Project Narrative), each with their own roles and responsibilities within the OSW sectoral partnership.

1. **The System Lead** will convene program partners, oversee budgetary activities, and serve as the primary point of contact for *MWW*. As noted, *MD Labor* will serve in this capacity.

2. **Business Alliances** will serve as industry experts and heavily support the implementation portion of the *MWW* initiative through peer learning exchanges. Project partners include the *Business Network for Offshore Wind (BNOW)*, the *Clean Energy States Alliance (CESA)*, and the *Maryland Chamber of Commerce*.
3. **Employers** will hire program participants and further expand regional activities, attracting additional commerce opportunities to Maryland and the mid-Atlantic. Two key hiring partners include *US Wind, Inc.* and *Ørsted*. Additionally, the labor organizations and training providers listed below have associated employers poised to hire.
4. **Local Workforce Development Boards** will recruit and refer jobseekers to training and Registered Apprenticeship opportunities. Additionally, where appropriate, they will provide wraparound services and co-enrollment in WIOA Title I programming. Partners include the *Maryland Workforce Association (MWA)* (a collective body with representation from all 13 of Maryland's Local Workforce Development Areas), the *Baltimore City Mayor's Office of Employment Development (MOED)*, the *Baltimore County Department of Economic & Workforce Development (DEWD)*, the *Upper Shore Workforce Investment Board (USWIB)*, and the *Lower Shore Workforce Alliance (LSWA)*. Specifically, *DEWD* and *LSWA* will serve as conveners for their respective regions, house project-funded staff, and conduct data analysis.
5. **State Executive Agencies** will provide oversight of Maryland's investment in clean energy by connecting employers to OSW opportunities and leveraging existing and future staffing and resources for the *MWW* project. Committed partners include the *Office of Governor Larry Hogan*, the *Governor's Workforce Development Board*, the *Maryland Department of Commerce*, the *Maryland Energy Administration*, and the *Governor's Office of Small, Minority & Women Business Affairs*. Additionally, to ensure equity in access to these good paying OSW job opportunities, the *Department of Human Services*, the *Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services*, and the *Maryland State Department of Education* (which includes Division of Rehabilitation Services) are key partners. These three agencies regularly serve populations with barriers to employment, such as returning citizens, public assistance recipients, foster youth, non-custodial parents, and individuals with disabilities.
6. **Training Organizations ("Tier I")** will develop the OSW pipeline through entry-level programming to ensure a prepared workforce. MD Labor will rely on successful EARN Maryland and MEA OSW Workforce training program grantees and other established partners to engage participants in initial welding, manufacturing, logistics, and construction courses. Partners include *Chesapeake College (CC)*, the *Community College of Baltimore County (CCBC)*, *Jane Addams Resource Corporation (JARC)*, the *Living Classrooms Foundation (LCF)*, *Maryland New Directions (MND)*, *Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP)*, *MD Labor's Office of Correctional Education*, and *Wor-Wic Community College (WWCC)*. In addition to occupational training, these partners will provide other services to ensure equity in the types of populations who can successfully access these career opportunities. Equity supports will include essential skills training, barrier removal and supportive services, job placement support, and retention services. The *ARCON Training Center (ARCON)* and *Maritime Institute of Technology and Graduate Studies (MITAGS)* will provide Global Wind Organization (GWO) Basic Safety Training courses, a critical

requirement for offshore workers. Currently, ARCON is the only training provider in the entire Mid-Atlantic region for this GWO training and MITAGS will be launching their GWO in early 2022, which will give jobseekers and employers in Maryland a competitive edge to support the OSW industry.

7. **Organized Labor/Training Organizations (“Tier II”)** will provide advanced skills training through Registered Apprenticeships and serve as the primary talent pipeline for OSW employers. Based on existing and anticipated Project Labor Agreements with *US Wind, Inc.* and *Ørsted*, the following organized labor groups and/or associated training groups, collectively called “the unions,” will deliver a trained workforce for this project: *Baltimore-DC Metro Building Trades Council, Carpenters Local 474, Finishing Trades Institute/International Union of Painters and Allied Trades District Council 51, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 24, International Association of Ironworkers Local 5, Operating Engineers Local 37, and the United Steelworkers.*

### **Section 3: Regional Description**

*MWW* will economically impact multiple jurisdictions within the State and the Mid-Atlantic region. Under Maryland’s Combined WIOA State Workforce Plan, there are five targeted service regions across 24 jurisdictions. For *MWW*, the primary service areas will include three of 5 regions, totaling 18 of the State’s 24 jurisdictions: Central Maryland (Baltimore City and Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Cecil, Harford, and Howard counties), the Eastern Shore (Caroline, Dorchester, Kent, Queen Anne’s, Somerset, Talbot, Wicomico, and Worcester counties), and the Capital region (Frederick, Montgomery, and Prince George’s counties). One employer partner, *US Wind, Inc.*, estimates that activities in the Central Maryland/Baltimore area alone will yield \$1,019,056,500 in labor income and \$2,972,895,500 in total economic output over the next 20 years.

Tradeport Atlantic (TPA), located adjacent to the Chesapeake Bay and the I-95 corridor in southeastern Baltimore County, is a multi-modal industrial site for global logistics, distribution, manufacturing, and retail. It is the future home of *US Wind, Inc.*’s OSW fabrication operations. With over 1,000 acres and 15,000,000 square feet of development space, onsite project activities will include specialized ironworking to build the components of 125 turbine monopiles and their eventual transportation via the Chesapeake Bay for installation off the coast of Ocean City, Maryland on the Eastern Shore. To achieve this, *US Wind, Inc.* anticipates hiring 530 skilled production and logistics staff annually (*Ørsted* will have a similar presence at TPA with additional details coming in 2022).

This workforce, which will include individuals with significant barriers to employment, will be initially prepared by Tier I training providers, including CCBC, JARC, LCF, MITAGS, MND, and MEP that are all located in the Central Maryland Region. Registered Apprenticeships will provide skilled talent for more advanced roles in longitudinal welding, steel fabrication, overhead crane operation, etc. Specifically, labor organizations will use an “earn and learn” model to conduct in-house training for paid apprentices, with the Ironworkers Union outfitting a new Joint Apprenticeship Training Center in the Capital Region’s Lanham area which will serve

as a hub for all OSW ironworking training. On Maryland's Eastern Shore, CC and WWCC will support *Ørsted's* partnership with employer Crystal Steel (located in Caroline County) by preparing a welding workforce.

The OSW industry is composed of various skilled trades, as well as distribution/logistics. The creation, installation, and maintenance of turbine substations incorporates welding, advanced manufacturing, ironworking, construction, and electrical. Additionally, sophisticated transportation techniques are required to move monopiles and towers safely via road and maritime thoroughfares. The most difficult-to-meet aspect of this industry is the additional professional skills required to work *over water*. *MWW* will bolster a skilled workforce through supplementary instruction for safe electrical and construction work in maritime scenarios, including the GWO safety training provided by ARCON on the Eastern Shore and MITAGS in the Central Region.

MD Labor and project partners will conduct *MWW* activities with a lens on equity, targeting individuals who were adversely economically impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, returning citizens, and traditionally underserved populations, such as women and individuals of color. Tier I training providers partner with a variety of community-based organizations to ensure they have a far reach into historically hard-to-reach communities and populations. These partners include, but are not limited to: The Center for Urban Families, Helping Up Mission, South Baltimore Learning Center, The House of Ruth, Maryland Legal Aid, the Department of Human Services, and the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services. By leveraging a variety of non-profit and State organizations, all with an equity lens and specific focus on one or more underserved populations, MD Labor's *MWW* project will ensure Tier I providers are serving their intended target populations.

At the height of the COVID-19 pandemic in April and May of 2020, Maryland's unemployment rate was 9%. While the State has recovered faster than other parts of the country, unemployment remains at 5.4% as of November 2021. MD Labor will work with project partners to refer unemployment insurance claimants and/or underemployed jobseekers to training providers and Registered Apprenticeship sponsors to further Maryland's pandemic recovery. The integration of an Off-Shore Wind Navigator in local American Job Centers will ensure all clients, but specifically UI claimants attending DWDAL's reemployment workshops, are educated on the varying training and employment opportunities in the industry.

In addition to workforce development, DWDAL is uniquely home to the Office of Correctional Education, which provides all academic, occupational, and transitional programming to inmates at Maryland's 17 State prisons. After participants earn a Maryland High School Diploma, they have the option to participate in in-demand occupational training to gain skills necessary for employment and earn industry-recognized certifications. Recognizing that fields such as construction, welding, and logistics are "ex-offender friendly," MD Labor and DPSCS already invest heavily in training programs within these industry sectors. By building on the existing infrastructure, MD Labor will ensure returning citizens are prepared to meet the demands of OSW employers through utilizing Good Jobs Challenge funds to purchase welding and

Commercial Driver's License (CDL) simulators for six prisons. To ensure returning citizens who are trained through *MWW* are later connected to opportunities upon release, MD Labor will leverage its Re-Entry Navigators, who are strategically embedded in the local workforce boards' American Job Centers, to connect these students to Tier I training providers. Further training will allow for the returning citizen population to continue to grow their skillsets and/or work secure employment upon release.

As part of the efforts to grow and expand Maryland's Registered Apprenticeship system, there have been significant gains made in diversifying those becoming apprentices. Specifically, since the end of calendar year 2014 until October 2021, the number of minority apprentices has grown by almost 62% in the State. During that same time period, the number of female apprentices grew by over 130%. These substantial increases in diversity have come as MD Labor has utilized federal funding resources to seed new program development and efforts to broaden outreach to be more inclusive of historically underrepresented populations. Examples of work occurring in this regard have been the translation of apprenticeship informational materials to twelve different languages, hosting or supporting numerous apprenticeship job fairs and information sessions for diverse populations, and targeted technical assistance to existing apprenticeship program sponsors to expand their efforts at diverse outreach and recruitment. An analysis of the class of 2012-2013 Registered Apprenticeship graduates shows above average earnings. The data provides an analysis of the wages five years after graduation for an average of \$82,748. The data also shows that female and African-American/Black graduates had slightly higher than average earnings with female graduates at \$84,244 and African-American/Black graduates earning \$83,732.

Strengthening the OSW talent pipeline is consistent with the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies (CEDS) of both metro Baltimore and Maryland's Lower Shore. Both areas emphasize the need to grow technical skills for logistics and advanced manufacturing. In Baltimore, the CEDS recognizes the Port of Baltimore's value as an economic engine and on the Lower Shore, the strategy strives to further recruit and train workers for "heavy industries." In addition to alignment with regional CEDS, *MWW* supports (the soon to be published) "Maryland Offshore Wind Workforce Development Report" by MEA, Maryland's leading agency on OSW. The report emphasizes the need for OSW industry-recognized training, partnering with labor unions to fill workforce gaps, and enhanced relationships with community colleges to develop occupational courses.

#### **Section 4: Impacts of the Regional Workforce Training System**

A) *MWW* proposes a three-phase project, inclusive of development, design, and implementation activities. *Phase One: System Development* will occur over 6 months between July 2022 and December 2022 and MD Labor will use this phase to address the challenge of ensuring there is a skilled workforce available to meet the unique demands of OSW employers. This will include engaging all partners both individually and collectively to ensure maximum collaboration and coordination. *Phase Two: Program Design* will also occur over six months between January 2023 and June 2023 and revolve around finalizing critical components of Maryland's regional OSW training system, further solidifying the State as a regional hub for domestic and

international OSW activity. *Phase Three: Program Implementation* will showcase a fully operational OSW workforce training system in Maryland and will occur from July 2023-June 2025.

While there are existing components for an OSW infrastructure in Maryland, they are not currently coordinated. *MWW* will tackle the challenge of connecting stakeholders, facilitating discussions around curriculum development, and providing financial support for equipment purchases related to critical training components (like GWO). By supporting the development of new courses and bringing equipment such as welding simulators and turbine practice towers into the State, employers will have the skilled talent pool they require to remain globally competitive. Currently, there are strong union, community college, and community-based training providers in Maryland, but many are not yet prepared to instruct on the “over the water” needs of OSW employers. *MWW* will **eliminate** this gap.

**B)** *MWW* strongly aligns with EDA’s investment priority of Recovery and Resilience, as well as the Biden administration’s goal of reaching 30 gigawatts of OSW capacity by 2030. The effects of COVID-19 on Maryland’s economy are significant, with over 1.1 million Marylanders filing Unemployment Insurance claims between March 7, 2020 and September 5, 2020 alone. As of December 20, 2021, 11,022 Marylanders have lost their lives to virus complications and, with the omicron variant raging in full force, the State is now seeing a resurgence in cases and hospitalizations, which is placing an additional strain on the economy. While strategic investments by the Hogan administration and federal support have improved the economic and public health outlook in recent months, many residents are still searching for family-sustaining careers.

The pandemic has revealed that businesses, government, and training organizations must be innovative and flexible to adapt to an economic future that is still unknown. *MWW* will help Maryland “bounce back” from this disruption because it will engage a broad range of economic development practitioners in a comprehensive multi-industry planning effort: local workforce development boards, business alliances, employers, etc. Enhancing Maryland’s OSW talent pipeline will further diversify the State’s clean energy industry as the western part of the State moves away from traditional coal occupations to renewable resources. Investing in international credentials like GWO will lead to mid-Atlantic OSW expansion, as well as lucrative commerce to Maryland from visiting training participants. This commerce will also result in positive secondary effects on the economy, leading to increases in spending on hospitality and lodging revenue.

The diversity of partners in *MWW* ensures that the project not only meets the current needs of employers, but also provides participants with the diversified skills to be successful in a blossoming field for the future. Symbolically, the strategic industrial complex at TPA is located at the original site of the Bethlehem Steel factory that closed its doors in 2012. *MWW* will allow Maryland to reimagine this historic economic landmark that for over 100 years helped sustain the region and transform it to meet the needs of a new generation of workers.

In addition to EDA’s Recovery and Resilience investment priority, *MWW* meets the needs of three other EDA investment priorities:

1. Equity – MD Labor will coordinate *MWW* to ensure that the project is implemented through an equity lens. This proposal outlines that State’s plans for intentional efforts to recruit jobseekers impacted by the pandemic and other underserved populations, such as returning citizens, individuals with disabilities, and women and racial minorities. Additionally, *MWW* is strategically partnered with the *Governor’s Office of Small, Minority & Women Business Affairs* to ensure all Maryland business owners are given a fair shot at competing for OSW contracts by having an opportunity to learn about procurement, contract, and employment opportunities related to OSW.
2. Workforce Development – Recognizing the opportunity to be a regional and national leader in OSW, *MWW* is designed to provide the workforce education and skills training activities needed by employers to directly connect jobseekers with occupations that result in well-paying, quality jobs. As the State’s public workforce system leader, MD Labor has a proven track record and is well positioned to deliver meaningful workforce development outcomes through the Good Jobs Challenge.
3. Environmentally-Sustainable Development – *MWW* allows for the development and implementation of “green products” in Maryland. Climate change is a concern for industries across the State (agriculture, aquaculture, and seaside tourism) and well as for the Chesapeake Bay, a huge economic driver. Investing in environmentally sustainable practices and renewable energy sources is essential for the long-term economic success of the State.

C) In a December 2021 approval for activities at TPA, Maryland’s Public Service Commission attached new conditions to OSW awards for *US Wind, Inc.* and *Ørsted*, requiring the developers to create a minimum of 5,381 direct jobs, engage small, local and minority-owned businesses, pass up to 80% of any construction costs savings to ratepayers, and contribute \$6 million each to the Maryland Offshore Wind Business Development Fund. (These approvals represent the two largest renewable energy projects in the State’s history). To meet this workforce demand, *MWW*’s Tier I training partners will work closely with employers, taking an equity approach to recruitment and program activities, to train and/or upskill 2,040 participants over the grant period. It is projected that at least 75% of individuals who are unemployed or underemployed prior to training will enter employment with starting wages ranging from \$15-20 per hour.

Tier II training providers will utilize the proven “earn and learn” Registered Apprenticeship model. All OSW Registered Apprenticeships will offer participants a wage from day one of the training program. Wages will increase over four years as apprentices demonstrate mastery of additional skills and will range from \$15/hour (first year steelworker apprentice) to \$41.75/hour (journeyworker electrician) exceeding local prevailing wages for related industries. All of *MWW*’s Tier II training providers are organized labor groups who are connected to an existing or soon-to-be established Project Labor Agreement with a Maryland OSW employer. Participants will have “quality jobs” inclusive of medical, retirement, and leave benefits, as well as union membership. Examples of job titles: carpenter, electrician, and wind turbine technician.

*MWW* partners will leverage existing resources to supplement a Good Jobs Challenge award. As mentioned above, OSW activities are underway in Maryland and *MWW* will help to firmly coordinate those efforts. Leveraged resources include:

- MEA’s \$2.8M investment in the Maryland Offshore Wind Workforce Grant Training Program (MD Labor’s *MWW* Project Manager will assist MEA with proposal reviews);
- EARN Maryland’s \$8M from the *Clean Energy Jobs Act* (2019), to support the OSW industry through Pre-Apprenticeship, Youth, and Registered Apprenticeship;
- *Ørsted’s* \$10M community workforce pledge to support scholarship and internship costs for youth interested in clean energy and STEM careers;
- State staff who will lend their expertise to this project “in-kind,” such as Samuel Beirne and Emma Stoney, Energy Program Managers for Wind and Water at MEA; and
- Philanthropic, private, and public funding provided to Tier I partners to serve underrepresented populations, valued at \$9 million over the grant period.

Project partners will utilize the Maryland Workforce Exchange (MWE) to collect *MWW* data and DEWD will conduct regular trend analysis related to OSW demand, vacancies, and wages. The MWE is an automated system that supports the State’s jobseekers and businesses through comprehensive client tracking, case management, and performance report. The system will track all *MWW* participant data across partners and allow for wage matching with MD Labor’s Division of Unemployment Insurance to document long-term professional and economic impacts.

**D)** MD Labor is confident the *MWW* project will be successful given the Department’s extensive experience administering the nationally recognized EARN Maryland program. EARN is industry-led and designed with the flexibility to ensure that Maryland’s businesses have the talent they need by focusing on industry sector strategies that produce long-term solutions to sustained skills gaps and personnel shortages. Based upon employer-identified training needs, SIPs provide education and skills training to unemployed and underemployed Marylanders, including support for individuals with specific barriers to employment. The program also provides career advancement strategies for incumbent workers, leading to a more highly skilled workforce and improved business outcomes for employers.

The advent of EARN in 2014 represented an important paradigm shift in workforce development, encouraging sector-based collaboration between a diverse group of partners to develop innovative strategies to meet industry demand and bridge skills gaps. These partners, including employer and industry representatives, non-profit and community based organizations, and workforce, economic development, and higher education partners, make up a SIP.

While traditional workforce programs often look to training entities or higher education to determine training needs and develop curriculum, EARN’s unique model places employer and industry partners at the forefront of program design. Employers are committed to identifying the specific skill gaps for their workforce, as well as the broader range of skills needed within their industry sector. By anticipating the changing landscape of training needs, curriculum can be designed flexibly to perform over time as an effective workforce strategy.

Aside from employer partners, the other members of a SIP, usually a blend of non-profit or community-based organizations, higher education and workforce development partners, also play a critical role in the success of the consortium. These partners are generally responsible for

the recruitment to placement framework, including pipeline development, recruitment, screening, case management, barrier removal, job placement, and general partnership management.

As of October 2021, nearly 7,000 individuals have obtained employment through EARN, and close to 9,500 incumbent workers have benefitted from critical upskilling opportunities. A recent study on the economic impact of EARN performed by Salisbury University found that for every dollar the state invests into the program, an additional \$16.78 in economic activity is created. The national average for programs similar to EARN is \$3.41.

EARN's unique program design and implementation of sector strategies has been recognized as a best practice by numerous organizations, including the National Skills Coalition, the Urban Alliance, and the abovementioned Innovations in American Government Award competition by The Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation, a leading research center at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. The program highlights exemplary models of government innovation and advances efforts to address the nation's most pressing public concerns. Additionally, the Deloitte Center for Government Insights cited EARN as a best practice for public-private partnership. Furthermore, EARN staff have provided technical assistance to other states and localities, such as Rhode Island, that have since implemented similar initiatives. The program will be highlighted in a book expected to be published in 2022 by the Harvard Business Review as a best practice for achieving effective government.

*MWW* will bolster the capacity of several existing EARN grantees, all of whom have demonstrated the capability to effectively engage employers, implement industry-led training curricula, and provide opportunities for economic self-sufficiency to underserved populations by giving them tools and training to gain and maintain employment. Collectively, the EARN training providers included in the *MWW* project have trained close to 2,500 incumbent workers through EARN. Additionally, through use of an equity lens and specific tools to support and empower participants in achieving success, they have helped more than 1,000 individuals secure employment, many of whom have significant barriers including deep poverty, homelessness, struggles with opioid addiction, language barriers, or criminal records.

**E)** *MWW* will target individuals who have been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and Maryland's priority populations under the WIOA, with a focus on returning citizens and individuals with barriers to employment. As of December 17, 2021, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that while Maryland continues to steadily add jobs, the unemployment rate remains higher than it was pre-pandemic (at 5.4%). Project partners will work to connect unemployed and underemployed Marylanders to the "good jobs" available in the OSW industry. Additionally, MD Labor will focus on ensuring that returning citizens have access to these lucrative careers through customized training within the prisons and direct connections to "ex-offender friendly" employers upon release.

MD Labor estimates that 4,370 individuals will receive training during the *MWW* project, across 16 Tier I or Tier II provider organizations (at a cost of \$5,655 per participant). In addition to *US*

*Wind, Inc.* and *Ørsted*, participants may be placed at EARN Maryland or union-contracted employer sites (see attached letters of support). Impacted communities will include the entire mid-Atlantic region, as unions may place workers on jobs across state lines in Delaware or Virginia. Baltimore City and Baltimore County, as well as Maryland's eight Eastern Shore counties (Caroline, Dorchester, Kent, Queen Anne's, Somerset, Talbot, Wicomico, and Worcester) will be directly impacted. The Eastern Shore and Baltimore City impacts are especially significant, as June 2021 annual unemployment data by county shows that some of the State's highest annual unemployment rates coming out of the pandemic are in Somerset (8.6%), Baltimore City (8.5%), Worcester (7.4%), and Dorchester (6.9%).

Funding for the *MWW* initiative would be a sound investment, for it would position Maryland to be a national leader and premiere hub for OSW training in the United States. Through Tier I providers ARCON and MITAGS, EDA investments would enable these organizations to deliver cutting-edge, industry-driven training for employers up and down the Mid Atlantic, and would ensure Americans receive training in the U.S. versus overseas in the U.K., which is currently happening. The economic impact for the region, especially the Eastern Shore of Maryland, is significant. For instance, Salisbury-Wicomico Economic Development estimates that the proposed training provided by ARCON would lead to an estimate \$13 million in economic activity related to lodging. This does not include other economic impacts, such as hospitality and tourism related activity.

*MWW* will recruit through the American Job Center (AJC) network (see letters of support from the Local Workforce Boards in Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Lower Shore, Upper Shore, and the Maryland Workforce Association). Unemployment Insurance claimants are required to attend reemployment workshops that are delivered by AJC staff, which will ensure UI claimants are fully aware of OSW opportunities presented through *MWW*. Frontline staff at the AJCs, including those from the core WIOA programs, will identify interested individuals and refer them for participation in this project.

### **Section 5: Funding Request and Program Design and Implementation**

**A)** MD Labor requests \$24,715,775 for the *MWW* project in order to further link existing resources and to establish and foster new ones that will, all together, significantly bolster Maryland's OSW industry. As noted above, *MWW* will be a three-phase initiative inclusive of development, design, and implementation. Extensive activities include peer learning consortia, equipment purchases, curriculum development, workforce training, mentorship, and wraparound services.

**B) *Phase One: System Development*** will address the challenge of ensuring there is a skilled workforce available to meet the unique demands of OSW employers. During this portion of the project, Tier I training providers will begin programming with entry-level courses. All budgeted project staff will be hired, including MD Labor's Project Manager (headquartered in Baltimore City) and the Eastern Shore OSW Program Manager and Navigator (stationed at the American Job Center in Salisbury, Maryland close to the newly established OSW projects off Ocean City in Worcester County).

Partner business alliances (BNOW and CESA) will facilitate three overseas peer learning consortiums during *Phase One*, with a focus on connections to OSW businesses and public policymakers. BNOW will coordinate two of its “Global Gateway” experiences for a delegation of ten *MWW* project partners to meet key business stakeholders in the OSW industry. The delegation will observe technology advancements and discuss export opportunities via targeted networking events. CESA will coordinate one European trip to connect Maryland policymakers with government counterparts that will establish relationships and clear lines of information sharing with demonstrated experts, leading to effective state policy and economic development in Maryland’s clean energy sector. Finally, during *Phase One*, MD Labor’s Project Manager will convene all *MWW* partners monthly and conduct site visits to Tradepoint Atlantic, employer locations, and training providers to ensure enhanced coordination. Regular meetings with MEA will also occur during this portion of the project to ensure alignment of State investments.

*Phase Two: Program Design* will include finalizing critical components of Maryland’s regional OSW training system. Utilizing knowledge learned in *Phase One*, Tier II training providers will complete curriculum development (with employer input). Instructors that require offsite travel for certification such as “Safety Global Wind Organization (GWO),” will complete activities by the end of June 2023. (See the Budget Narrative for additional similar descriptions of *Phase Two* activities for organized labor groups). During this time all Tier I and Tier II providers will purchase equipment. For instance, CC will purchase a mobile welding lab to offer courses onsite at Crystal Steel and MD Labor’s OCE will procure six Lincoln Welding simulators and six CDL prep/construction vehicle simulators. Union training affiliates will purchase related equipment such as arc welders, spray pumps, and a boom crawler crane. ARCON and MITAGS will scale their capacity to offer GWO certification, further solidifying Maryland as a regional hub for domestic and international visitors to train in OSW.

*Phase Three: Program Implementation* will showcase a fully operational OSW workforce training system in Maryland. It will feature regular Tier I and Tier II trainings occurring in entry level welding, construction, and logistics (Tier I), as well as the regular in-house union training (Tier II) for Registered Apprentices. This period will constitute the final two years of the *MWW* project and coincide with the start of significant hiring efforts by *US Wind, Inc.* and *Ørsted*. PLAs will be complete and operational, and between 2023 and 2024, *US Wind, Inc.* will hire 500 workers for TPA alone.

C) The Tier I training providers target underrepresented populations, including returning citizens, veterans, disconnected youth, and individuals from economically or educationally disadvantaged backgrounds. These individuals often have significant barriers that must be overcome prior to entering the workforce, including lack of transportation, involvement with the criminal justice system, homelessness, addiction, and childcare needs. The COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated some of these barriers for individuals.

To provide holistic services, the Tier I training providers will build on their proven experience working one-on-one with trainees to identify any potential barriers which may hinder success in the workplace. Once identified, training providers will leverage existing relationships with community-based organizations to ensure these challenges are overcome prior to graduation

from training. Examples of barrier removal services provided to trainees include record expungement, transportation assistance (bus tokens or assistance in procuring a vehicle), providing bridge instruction in math and reading, GED® courses, childcare, stipends for training, and more.

Additionally, Tier I training providers will deliver essential skills training, an important component of job-readiness training that may directly impact one's potential to succeed in the workplace. Employers indicate that essential skills are equally, if not more important than the technical skills that are necessary to be proficient in a career. Examples of essential skills include, but are not limited to, skills related to professionalism, problem-solving, timeliness, interpersonal communication, and customer service. Curriculum is delivered in the classroom, as well as through modeling on-the-job work experiences throughout training. For instance, several training providers already simulate a work environment throughout their program that aligns with the expectations of the workplace, which will also be used in the *MWW* initiative. Essential skills are imbedded in this proposal's model, reinforcing the importance of nurturing a high standard of personal accountability.

Upon completion of training, Tier I training providers will match graduates with employer partners from their Strategic Industry Partnership. Based on Labor's past experience with these providers, more than 80% of individuals who complete programming are placed into employment. Additionally, several Tier I partners already provide retention support for graduates - many remaining in contact with past graduates for several years after the completion of training to ensure continued success on the job. This includes providing continued supportive services and connecting participants to professional development opportunities as needs arise.

Through the *MWW* initiative, Tier I training providers will bolster relationships with Tier II partners who are committed to increasing Registered Apprenticeship opportunities for underserved populations. Through these strengthened partnerships, there will be a concerted effort to connect graduates of Tier I programming to the various Registered Apprenticeship opportunities made available through Tier II partners, which will continue the participants' journey along a career pathway. Additionally, through the use of job coaches and the newly created Offshore Wind and Registered Apprenticeship Navigators, applicants will receive support navigating the application process and retention services to ensure completion of the program.

MD Labor oversees the Maryland Apprenticeship and Training Program and has made critical investments towards expanding Registered Apprenticeship opportunities for underrepresented populations. For instance, using USDOL funding, MD Labor launched the Apprenticeship Innovation Fund, meant to invest in programs that support and enhance RA expansion strategies, particularly for vulnerable populations, youth, and dislocated workers. Similarly, the Department has invested grant funding to create career pathways and connect correctional education occupational Pre-Apprenticeship programming to Registered Apprenticeship sponsors upon release.

Through a collaborative partnership between Tier I and Tier II providers, the *MWW* initiative will expand on this work. For instance, the Jane Addams Resource Corporation, a Tier I partner, reports that close to three-quarters of the individuals they serve are African-American, and nearly 70% have a criminal background. More than half of their participants report receiving SNAP benefits at the time of enrollment, and close to 50% report a history of substance abuse. Similarly, of the clients served by Tier I partner Maryland New Directions in FY21, 94% were classified as low or extremely-low income, and 90% were African-American.

Labor is confident that through the occupational training, support services, and barrier removal provided by Tier I providers, the *MWW* initiative will connect underrepresented populations to excellent career pathways in OSW.

**Exhibit A: MWW Project Partners**

# MWW Project Partners

