

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2026 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE  
Third Reader - Revised

House Bill 194

(Delegate Metzgar, *et al.*)

Government, Labor, and Elections

Judicial Proceedings

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**Incarcerated Individual Apprenticeship Pilot Program**

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This bill establishes the Incarcerated Individual Apprenticeship Pilot Program in the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS) as an independent program that is separate from Maryland Correctional Enterprises (MCE). DPSCS, in consultation with the Maryland Department of Labor (MD Labor), must develop the program to provide incarcerated individuals at the Baltimore City Correctional Center the opportunity to serve as paid apprentices in an agency or a unit of State or local government or with a private entity. The Division of Correction must arrange for the guarding, transporting, lodging, feeding, clothing, and medical and other care of an incarcerated individual while the incarcerated individual is participating in the program, as specified. A person that employs an incarcerated individual under the program must pay at least the State minimum wage, as specified. If an incarcerated individual successfully completes the program, prior to the individual's scheduled release, DPSCS or the program must provide the incarcerated individual with a certificate demonstrating the incarcerated individual's successful completion of the program. By January 1, 2029, DPSCS must report to the General Assembly on the implementation of the program. DPSCS may adopt regulations to carry out the bill's provisions. **The bill terminates September 30, 2029.**

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** Potential minimal increase in State expenditures (multiple fund types) to the extent that State agencies choose to employ apprentices in the pilot program. Otherwise, DPSCS and MD Labor can implement the bill with existing budgeted resources. No effect on revenues.

**Local Effect:** Potential minimal increase in expenditures for local governments that choose to employ apprentices in the pilot program. Otherwise, the bill is enabling in nature and does not materially affect local finances.

**Small Business Effect:** Minimal.

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## Analysis

**Bill Summary:** DPSCS must make assignments for program participants to eligible employers who are participating in the program.

**Current Law:** For an overview of registered apprenticeship programs in the State, see the **Appendix – Apprenticeship**.

*Maryland Correctional Enterprises:* MCE provides work and job training for incarcerated individuals in State correctional facilities. MCE produces goods and supplies services at a cost that does not exceed the prevailing average market price. These goods and services are used by local, State, and federal agencies. These goods are also available for use by charitable, civic, educational, fraternal, or religious organizations.

*Maryland Wage and Hour Law:* The Maryland Wage and Hour Law is the State complement to the federal Fair Labor Standards Act, which specifies minimum wage and overtime requirements for employers and employees in the State. State law specifies that an employee must be paid the greater of the federal minimum wage (which is currently \$7.25 per hour) or \$15.00 per hour. However, an employer may pay 85% of the State minimum wage rate to employees younger than age 18.

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## Additional Information

**Recent Prior Introductions:** Similar legislation has been introduced within the last three years. See HB 289 of 2025 and HB 1405 of 2024.

**Designated Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Baltimore City; Howard and Prince George’s counties; Maryland Municipal League; Maryland Environmental Service; Maryland Department of Agriculture; Maryland Department of the Environment; Department of Housing and Community Development; Maryland Department of Labor; Department of Natural Resources; Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services; Maryland Department of Transportation; Department of Legislative Services

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Analysis by: Shirleen M. E. Pilgrim

Direct Inquiries to:  
(410) 946-5510  
(301) 970-5510

## Appendix – Apprenticeship

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Generally, apprenticeship is a voluntary, industry-sponsored system that prepares individuals for occupations typically requiring high-level skills and related technical knowledge. Apprenticeships are sponsored by one or more employers or jointly by a labor-management committee. An apprentice receives supervised, structured, on-the-job training under the direction of a skilled journeyman and related technical instruction in a specific occupation. Apprenticeships are designed to meet the workforce needs of the program sponsor. Many industry sponsors use apprenticeship as a method to train employees in the knowledge necessary to become a skilled worker. This also means the number of apprenticeships available is dependent on the current workforce needs of the industry and the capacity and willingness of employers or employer groups to supervise them.

Apprenticeships are available to individuals age 16 and older; an employer, however, may set a higher entry age. By law, individuals must be age 18 to apprentice in hazardous occupations, although there are some exemptions available to minors who are registered as apprentices. Time-based apprenticeships last from one to six years and involve a minimum of 144 hours of related technical instruction and at least 2,000 hours per year of on-the-job training.

A national apprenticeship and training program was established in federal law in 1937 with the passage of the National Apprenticeship Act, also known as the Fitzgerald Act. The purpose of the Act was to promote national standards of apprenticeship and to safeguard the welfare of apprentice workers.

Along with [more than half of other states and the District of Columbia](#), Maryland has chosen to operate its own apprenticeship programs under the federal law. The Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning (DWDAL) within the Maryland Department of Labor (MD Labor) is responsible for the daily oversight of State apprenticeship programs. More specifically, DWDAL approves new apprenticeship programs as well as changes to current programs and ensures compliance with State and federal requirements. The approval process involves assessing the appropriateness of an apprenticeship program in a proposed industry, the education that will be provided to the apprentice, the current staffing level of the entity proposing the program to determine whether adequate supervision can be provided, recruitment and retention efforts, and the overall operations of the entity. The Maryland Apprenticeship and Training Council serves in an advisory role for legislation and regulations, recommending changes to update apprenticeship laws. Additionally, Chapter 2 of 2025 (discussed further below) established the Maryland Office of Registered Apprenticeship Development (MORAD) within DWDAL's Maryland

Apprenticeship and Training Program (MATP) for the purpose of scaling registered apprenticeships across industries and occupations to meet the needs of the State's economy.

According to MD Labor and as of September 2025, the total number of registered apprenticeships in Maryland is over 13,000, with over 1,400 apprentices graduating from their programs during 2025.

In addition to registered apprenticeship, MD Labor, in collaboration with the Maryland State Department of Education, also operates a parallel youth apprenticeship program aimed at connecting students to paid employment and training opportunities called the Apprenticeship Maryland Program. As of May 2024, there were 1,045 active youth apprenticeships participating in the program.

### *Apprenticeship 2030 Commission*

Chapter 168 of 2023 established the Apprenticeship 2030 Commission. The purpose of the commission is to examine and make recommendations to reduce skill shortages in high-demand occupations and provide affordable training for career pathways for young people by:

- expanding registered apprenticeships in industry sectors with skill shortages;
- growing the number of registered apprentices to at least 60,000 by 2030; and
- reaching the Blueprint for Maryland's Future goal for 45% of high school graduates completing the high school level of a registered apprenticeship.

The Apprenticeship 2030 Commission met four times in 2023, ten times in 2024, and once in 2025 and published [interim](#) and [final](#) reports January 2024 and March 2025, respectively. Additionally, the University of Baltimore Schafer Center, as part of its contract to provide support staff to the commission, undertook a [Survey of Employers and Labor Unions](#) and published findings on the prevalence of, barriers to, and benefits of apprenticeships in February 2025.

### *Registered Apprenticeship Investments for a Stronger Economy (RAISE) Act*

Chapter 2, the RAISE Act, operationalized multiple recommendations from the Apprenticeship 2030 Commission's interim and final reports. Specifically, Chapter 2 establishes (1) MORAD within MATP to scale registered apprenticeships across industries to meet the needs of the State's economy; (2) the Registered Apprenticeship Qualified Intermediary Program within MATP to increase apprenticeship awareness, connect employers and labor organizations with partners, and provide technical assistance to launch and expand apprenticeships; (3) the Registered Apprenticeship Development Advisory

Board to advise MORAD on the strategy to achieve its mission of expanding registered apprenticeship opportunities in the State; and (4) the Maryland Pay Per Apprentice Program and associated special fund to provide grants to employers and sponsors to develop a well-trained, productive workforce that meets the needs of the State's economy and help offset apprenticeship costs.

### *Recent Reports and Publications*

In response to Chapters 307 and 308 of 2024, MD Labor released a report on analyzing the apprenticeship mentoring ratio for all nontraditional apprenticeable occupations in the State. The [report](#) indicates that, for fiscal 2024, there were approximately 694 apprentices employed by 119 employers in nontraditional apprenticeships (those outside the traditional building trades).

The 2022 *Joint Chairmen's Report* (JCR) outlined concerns with workforce shortages among government employees in the public safety, health, and transportation sectors. The report directed MD Labor to convene workgroups to study and report on the short-term and long-term needs in each respective sector, as specified. Pursuant to the 2022 JCR, MD Labor released reports from a [Healthcare Apprenticeship Workgroup](#), [Transportation Apprenticeship Workgroup](#), and [Public Safety Apprenticeship Workgroup](#).

The 2024 and 2025 JCR directed multiple agencies to collect data relevant to apprenticeship in the State in accordance with the interim and final recommendations of the Apprenticeship 2030 Commission. This included reports from:

- the Maryland [Department of Public Safety](#) and [Department of Juvenile Services](#) on Public Safety Apprenticeship;
- the Maryland Health Services Cost Review Commission on [Apprenticeships in Maryland Hospitals](#);
- the Maryland Insurance Administration on [Efforts to Support Insurance Industry Apprenticeships](#);
- the Maryland Department of Health on a [Registered Nurse Degree Apprenticeship Program Study](#);
- the Public Service Commission of Maryland on [Apprenticeships Within Public Service Companies](#); and
- the Maryland Department of Budget and Management on [Public Service Registered Apprenticeships within State Government](#).