

MOED-ARPA Workforce Legal Services

Overview: The Mayor's Office of Employment Development (MOED) has been awarded American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF) to support several workforce development programs that will target populations who have been negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. These initiatives will aid Baltimoreans who are currently unemployed or underemployed, provide workforce development opportunities for youth, and provide sector-based job training in high-growth industries.

As part of the proposed work supported by ARPA Funds, participants who are receiving job training or participating in transitional work will receive workforce support services, including legal services. Offering these support services is a best practice in workforce development systems and helps set participants up for long-term success. Legal services will be provided in a manner similar to services funded under One Baltimore for Jobs (1B4J) and Grads2Careers (G2C), both occupational skills training programs coordinated by MOED, and the Baltimore Health Corps, a transitional work program administered by MOED in partnership with the Baltimore City Health Department.

MOED will enter into a subgrant agreement with The Maryland Legal Services Corporation (MLSC), a nonprofit specializing in grants to nonprofit organizations that provide civil legal services to low-income residents. MLSC will conduct a competitive RFP process to select legal service providers supported by ARPA funds and will coordinate those services during the grant period.

Funding: The Mayor's Office of Recovery Programs (MORP) has awarded MOED an ARPA grant that started November 24, 2021, and ends December 31, 2024, with \$660,000 allocated toward legal services.

Objectives: These funds will be used to offer legal services to approximately 2,400 participants in two programs funded by recovery funds including ARPA (Train Up and Hire Up) over the course of 2.5 program years. Legal services will be offered as soon as contracts are in place in early 2022 and will continue through June 30, 2024. Train Up will provide occupational training and support services to approximately 600 individuals annually in its first two program years, and 450 in a third programming year. Hire Up is currently serving 200 individuals in its first program year, with Maryland RELIEF Act funds, and will serve 110 individuals each year for two years thereafter with ARPA funds. Train Up participants will receive training from one of 17 occupational training providers, and Hire Up participants will work at one of approximately 10-15 work sites operated by 6-10 employer partners. Services will also be offered to approximately 200 residents enrolled in occupational training under an opioid recovery grant funded by the Maryland Department of Labor. If legal services providers find they have extra capacity, they will extend services to other residents served by MOED who have been negatively impacted by the pandemic.

Roles and Responsibilities: MLSC will oversee a competitive RFP process to select 1-3 non-profit service providers to offer legal services to the programs named above. MLSC will administer the subcontracts with selected providers and will:

- Have responsibility for programmatic decision-making, such as which providers to use and how to best match legal services providers to program sites
- Monitor performance of selected legal services providers

- Have its performance measured in relation to whether objectives of the ARPA program were met
- Be responsible for adherence to applicable ARPA SLFRF requirements as specified in the City's federal award and the grant agreement between MOED and MLSC

ARPA-funded legal services are expected to be offered in a remote and in-person format and to include one-on-one consultations and group presentations. Services will be focused on legal issues that can affect employment opportunities and financial stability, including criminal record expungement, driver's license suspensions, bankruptcy, credit maintenance, tax controversies, and estate planning. Legal issues such as child custody or landlord/tenant issues may be referred to volunteer or staff attorneys.

Legal providers will be expected to hire staff or assign existing staff to provide the following services in-person or remotely, including video conferences, telephone consultations, virtual presentations, and document e-signing:

- Virtual and in-person individual legal consultations
- Virtual and in-person "Know Your Rights" presentations
- Community outreach to increase participant engagement with legal services
- Direct representation of clients seeking record expungement and other issues
- Management of relationships with program sites
- Support for program staff and pro bono attorneys at partner sites
- Supervision of staff attorney(s) by existing provider staff
- Client placement with pro bono or staff attorneys for legal issues not handled directly by staff attorney
- Data tracking for legal issues and outcomes and for quarterly reporting

MOED will assist with:

- Communication and service coordination with occupational training sites and subsidized work program sites and provide other administrative and technical support to MLSC
- Ensuring that recipients of legal services have signed self-attestations that they were negatively impacted by COVID-19, to demonstrate that services provided are an eligible use of ARPA funds
- Monitoring expenditures for eligibility and appropriateness, which may include an on-site visit to MLSC to conduct oversight of grant compliance

Eligibility for ARPA workforce legal services:

- City resident;
- Enrolled in Train Up, Hire Up, MOED's opioid workforce recovery program, or other MOED programs as capacity permits; and
- Negatively impacted by COVID-19