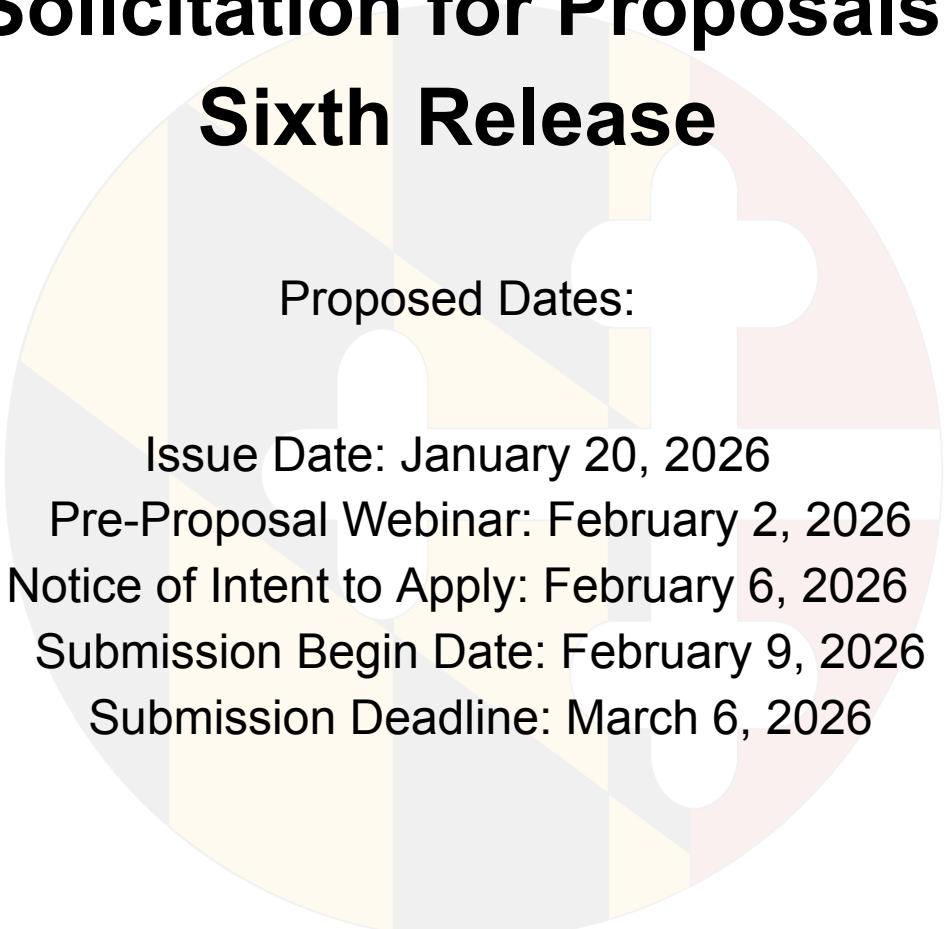# ADULT HIGH SCHOOL PILOT PROGRAM
Solicitation for Proposals
Sixth Release

Proposed Dates:

Issue Date: January 20, 2026
Pre-Proposal Webinar: February 2, 2026
Notice of Intent to Apply: February 6, 2026
Submission Begin Date: February 9, 2026
Submission Deadline: March 6, 2026

SECTION 1 - GENERAL INFORMATION

INTRODUCTION

Adult education serves as a cornerstone for workforce development, career advancement, and postsecondary attainment by providing secondary education, high school credentialing, English language acquisition, and a strong foundation of competencies promoting successful transitions to employment and postsecondary education and training. According to the 2024 American Community Survey, 439,547 Maryland adult residents 18 years and older did not have a high school diploma.[1] Of all jobs in Maryland, 69 percent (2,060,000 jobs) will require some postsecondary training beyond high school in 2031.[2] Postsecondary education and training has an essential role in preparing an effective twenty-first century workforce, but many adult learners face challenges in pursuing secondary education and may need intensive academic support and other intervention services to hurdle challenges in an environment that is conducive to success.

Connecting Marylanders to jobs is a priority of the Moore-Miller Administration. The Maryland Adult High School Program will help Maryland advance these priorities by addressing the needs of students through career pathway education and training that leads to good jobs, reducing barriers to economic development, and maintaining sustainable career growth. In addition, the Administration's focus on developing an equitable, robust, and competitive economy in Maryland provides opportunities for adult learners to expand their opportunities for work, wages, and wealth. Implementing the Administration's mission to "Leave No One Behind" in Maryland, the Adult High School Program contributes to addressing the needs of adult learners to improve their quality of life by furnishing the resources that will provide individuals with the necessary tools and skills to meet their current and future academic and career aspirations.

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[1] United States Census Bureau. (2024). *Educational attainment. United States Census Bureau, American Community Survey.* https://data.census.gov/table?t=Educational+Attainment&g=040XX00US24

[2] Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce, *After Everything: Projections of Jobs, Education, and Training Requirements through 2031 - State Report* (2022). https://cew.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/Projections_2031-State-Report.pdf

Maryland Department of Labor

KEY INFORMATION SUMMARY SHEET

Solicitation for Proposals: Adult High School Pilot Program, Sixth Release

Solicitation Issue Date: Tuesday, January 20, 2026

Solicitation Issuing Office: Maryland Department of Labor and Maryland State Department of Education

Notice of Intent to Apply: Friday, February 6, 2026

Pre-Proposal Webinar: Monday, February 2, 2026, 12 PM

Submission Begin Date: Monday, February 9, 2026

Proposal Officers: Laura Ostrowski
Maryland Department of Labor
Adult High School Program Supervisor
laura.ostrowski@maryland.gov

Kellise Williamson
Maryland State Department of Education
Postsecondary Credit and P-TECH Coordinator
kellise.williamson@maryland.gov

Proposals are to be sent to: Via email to laura.ostrowski@maryland.gov and kellise.williamson@maryland.gov

Submission of Questions: All questions pertaining to this Solicitation should be submitted via email to laura.ostrowski@maryland.gov by Friday, February 20, 2025. All questions will be answered in a timely manner, and relevant questions will be posted to the Maryland Labor website at https://labor.maryland.gov/adultliteracy/aeadulthsproposals.shtml.

Closing Date and Time: Friday, March 6, 2026 at 5:00 p.m.

Table of Contents

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 The purpose of the Adult High School Program is to serve as an alternative method for adults, 21 years and older, who did not graduate from high school to earn a Maryland High School Diploma.

1.1.2 Learners may earn postsecondary education credits and industry-recognized credentials in an environment that meets the needs of the adult learner.

1.2 Definitions

For the purposes of the Solicitation for Proposals, the following abbreviations or terms have the meaning indicated below:

1.2.1 Industry-recognized credential – a formal validation of an individual's skills and/or competencies that align with state or regional in-demand occupations and is recognized by industry and employers. It may be a certification, license, or credential that is obtained through an assessment process, is portable, and may be stackable. The IRC leads to documented positive employment outcomes, ensures relevance in the labor market, and supports career advancement and economic development for credential holders;[3]

1.2.2 Operator – a private nonprofit entity that establishes an Adult High School under the Program;

1.2.3 Pilot – an adult high school established by an operator under the Program;

1.2.4 Postsecondary education credit – credit awarded by an accredited community college, 4-year college or university, or an approved private career school and other approved training providers;

1.2.5 Program – the Adult High School Pilot Program;

1.2.6 Rural - nonmetro counties that include some combination of:

- open countryside,

- towns (places with fewer than 5,000 people and 2,000 housing units),

- areas with populations ranging up to 50,000 people that are not part of larger labor

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[3] Maryland Governor's Workforce Development Board - Career & Technical Education Committee (2024, May 22): http://www.gwdb.maryland.gov/ctecomm/ctecomm-ircpolicy52224.pdf

market areas (metropolitan areas),[4]

- rural jurisdictions share common characteristics that set them apart from their suburban and urban counterparts, such as geographic isolation, lack of transportation, and lack of access to and availability of health care. The state definition of rural is articulated in the Annotated Code of Maryland ([§ 2-207. Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund](#)) and includes 18 of the 24 jurisdictions in Maryland. Each is represented on the Rural Maryland Council.[5]

  1.2.7 Urban - densely developed territory, and encompass residential, commercial, and other nonresidential urban land uses. Each urban area must encompass at least 2,000 housing units or at least 5,000 people;[6]

  1.2.8 Wraparound Services – individualized services, excluding regular school programs and services that are provided to the student and the student's family.

1.3 Authorization

The Adult High School Program is under the authority of the Maryland State Department of Education and the Maryland Department of Labor.

- Annotated Code of Maryland, Education Article §§ [9.7-101](#) et seq.
- COMAR [13A.05.14](#) Adult High School Pilot Program

1.4 Number of Approved Adult High Schools

In total, MSDE and MD Labor shall approve one pilot in a rural area for each two pilots approved in urban areas. When considering proposals during this solicitation, MSDE and MD Labor will approve pilots in accordance with this ratio and the distribution of existing pilots.

If the maximum number of adult high schools allowed by law – six – are not approved as a result of this solicitation, another solicitation may be posted in the future.

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[4] Overview. USDA ERS - Rural Classifications. (2025, January 8).
https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/rural-economy-population/rural-classifications/
[5] The Rural Maryland Council. Rural Maryland Council. (2020, August 27).
https://rural.maryland.gov/the-rural-maryland-council/#:~:text=How%20do%20we%20Define%20Rural,on%20the%20Rural%20Maryland%20Council.
[6] United States Census Bureau. (2022). *2020 Census Urban Areas FAQs*.
https://www2.census.gov/geo/pdfs/reference/ua/Census_UA_2020FAQs.pdf

1.5 Priority

Priority shall be given to applicants with locations that:
- are in a county or geographic area with a high school attainment rate that is lower than the state high school attainment average. Graduation rate information, MSDE (2025): https://marylandpublicschools.org/stateboard/Documents/2025/0225/2024-Cohort-Graduation-Rate-Data-A.pdf;
- represent a rural area.

1.6 Program Officers

The points of contact in the State for purposes of this Solicitation for management of the Program are the Program Officers listed below:

Laura Ostrowski
Adult High School Program Supervisor
Maryland Department of Labor
Email: laura.ostrowski@maryland.gov

Kellise Williamson
Postsecondary Credit & P-TECH Coordinator
Maryland State Department of Education
Email: kellise.williamson@maryland.gov

The Departments may change the Program Officers at any time by written notice.

1.7 Proposals Due (Closing) Date and Time

Proposals, in the number and form set forth in Section 4, "Proposal Format," must be received no later than 5:00 p.m. EDT on Friday, March 6, 2026, in order to be considered. Submissions received after this date and time will not be considered.

1.8 Approval Basis

1.8.1 All proposals will undergo an initial screening to ensure that submission requirements were met and all required sections were included. Proposals not meeting all screening requirements will not be reviewed. Preference will be given to proposals that offer geographic diversity.

1.8.2 Proposals will be evaluated by a Review Committee established by the Maryland State Department of Education and the Maryland Department of Labor. The Review

Committee will be composed of representatives from the Maryland State Department of Education and the Maryland Department of Labor and may include reviewers from other State or stakeholder agencies. If necessary, an oral presentation of the proposal may be required.

1.8.3 Final approval for each proposal shall be determined by the Maryland State Superintendent of Schools and the Maryland Secretary of the Department of Labor based on the recommendations of the Review Committee.

1.9 Funding

1.9.1 An adult high school established under the program is not a public school for public financing purposes under Title 5 of the Education Article.

1.9.2 The operator must secure financing to develop, or have the capacity to secure financing for the development of, a physical site for the adult high school. The applicant must present a detailed 3-year budget with the proposal to demonstrate financial sufficiency.

1.9.3 The operator or advisory board of the adult high school may apply for and accept donations, grants or other financial assistance from a governmental entity, any nonprofit or other private organizations.

1.9.4 Operators approved to open an adult high school may apply for limited state funding. Funding is awarded directly to the programs who are approved by the Maryland State Department of Education and Maryland Department of Labor as official Adult High School Pilot Programs. All programs must be approved by the State of Maryland prior to applying for funding.

1.9.5 The grant is intended to support the operating costs of approved Adult High School Pilot school. For more information about this funding, visit the Maryland State Department of Education Grants Program website https://marylandpublicschools.org/about/Pages/OFPOS/GAC/GrantPrograms/index.aspx.

SECTION 2 - ELIGIBILITY

2.1 Purpose

The purpose of this Adult High School Pilot Program Solicitation for Proposals is to seek eligible organizations to open a Maryland adult high school under the *Adult High School Pilot Program* to provide high school education services utilizing a quality curriculum based upon the *Maryland*

Graduation Requirements for Public High Schools and access to postsecondary education and/or pathways leading to an industry-recognized credential for adults 21 years or older to earn a Maryland High School Diploma.

2.2 Eligible Applicants

2.2.1 An eligible applicant is a private nonprofit entity and is required to:

- Be registered as a nonprofit organization in the State of Maryland.
- Have previous experience and measured success in providing education services, including industry credentials and job placement services, to adult learners.
- Have previous experience providing education services or workforce development services to adult learners who have been limited by educational disadvantages, a disability, a criminal record, or other barriers to employment opportunities.
- Employ appropriately trained instructional personnel.
- Operate from a physical location in the state of Maryland.

2.2.1 A partnership of two or more organizations that meet the above qualifications are eligible to submit a proposal.

2.3 Timeline

Solicitation for Proposals Release	January 20, 2026
Pre-Proposal Webinar	February 2, 2026
Notice of Intent to Apply	February 6, 2026
Proposal Submission Begin Date	February 9, 2026
Proposal Due Date	March 6, 2026
Curriculum Decision*	April 10, 2026 - May 5, 2026
Notice of Proposal Decision	April 17, 2026

*Curriculum will be reviewed within 60 days of receipt.

SECTION 3 - REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

3.1 Reporting Requirements

3.1.1 The Operator of the adult high school must conduct a semi-annual evaluation of the school due in January and July to the Maryland State Department of Education and the Maryland Department of Labor. Progress of the school will be measured against the outcomes and goals defined by the Operator in this application, SMARTIE Goals submitted after approval, and the items listed below.[7]

3.1.2 The operator will report, on a State provided template, the following criteria:
- Demographic information on students enrolled in the school (gender, age, race/ethnicity, last high school grade completed in traditional school, zip code, barriers to success).
- Academic and career progress of each student enrolled in the Pilot.
  - Academic levels of students at the time of enrollment in the school;
  - Students enrolled in the school are on track for completion;
  - Academic progress of students as measured by intake assessment;
  - Number of credits that students complete within the fiscal year;
  - Number of students who completed and graduated from the school;
  - Graduation rate;
  - Number of postsecondary education credits earned, and the types of credits sought;
  - Number of industry recognized credentials earned;
  - The types of industry recognized credentials;
  - Post-graduation employment.

3.1.3 Interim and final fiscal year financial reports.

SECTION 4 - PROPOSAL FORMAT

4.1 Proposal Submission Requirements

Proposals **must** contain the following documents, with signatures where indicated. Proposals that do not have all of these documents with signatures where required will not be reviewed.

4.1.1 Application (Appendix A)
- Cover Page (Section 1)
- Executive Summary (Section 2)

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[7] SMARTIE stands for Strategic, Measurable, Ambitious, Realistic, Time-bound, Inclusive, and Equitable.

- Narrative (Section 3)

4.1.2 Qualifications of Personnel Chart/Key Staff ([Appendix B](#))

4.1.3 Budget ([Appendix C](#))

4.2 Notice of Intent to Apply

All organizations that plan to submit a proposal to establish an Adult High School are requested to complete the electronic Notice of Intent to Apply form by **Friday, February 6, 2026.**

Click on the link to access the [Notice of Intent to Apply Form](#).

4.3 Pre-Proposal Webinar

4.3.1 The Pre-Proposal Webinar will be a web conference on **Monday, February 2, 2026 at 12 PM**. Access information and the time of the briefing will be posted on the Maryland State Department of Education and the Maryland Department of Labor websites.

4.3.2 Questions regarding the Adult High School Program and the Solicitation for Proposals will be accepted prior to the Pre-Proposal Webinar. The responses to the questions will be provided during the Pre-Proposal Webinar. Answers will not be provided in advance, however, upon completion of the Pre-Proposal Webinar, questions and responses will be posted on the Maryland State Department of Education and the Maryland Department of Labor websites. Please submit questions using the [Pre-Proposal Webinar Question Submission Form](#). Questions will be accepted until 11 AM on Monday, February 2. No additional questions prior to the webinar will be answered live after this deadline.

4.4 Proposal Submission Format

4.4.1 Submitted proposals must meet the following formatting requirements:
- All pages of the application must use one-inch margins.
- Each section of the application narrative must be clearly labeled.
- The application narrative must use line spacing of at least 1.5 and 12-point font.
- Charts may use single spacing and 10-point font.
- Each page must contain a header with the lead organization's name.
- Include page numbers in the bottom right corner of the footer.

- The cover page must be the first page of the application.

4.4.2 Email completed proposal including budget to both laura.ostrowski@maryland.gov and kellise.williamson@maryland.gov.

Proposals must be received at the email addresses above no later than **5 p.m. on Friday, March 6, 2026.**

SECTION 5 - DECISION NOTIFICATION

5.1 Decision Notification

5.1.1 The applicant will be notified within 60 days after submission if the curriculum submitted is approved. If not approved, the applicant will be provided with guidance on corrections and resubmission.

5.1.2 If the curriculum is approved, the applicant will be notified in writing of the approval of the applicant's plan and pilot.

5.1.3 Final approval proposals for each adult high school shall be determined by the Maryland State Superintendent of Schools and the Secretary of the Maryland Department of Labor based on the recommendations of the Review Committee.

SECTION 6 - WAIVERS

6.1 Waivers

6.1.1 Within 30 days of approval of the pilot, the operator may request waivers from certain regulations (COMAR 13A.05.14.10).

6.1.2 The State Board of Education shall grant an approved pilot a waiver from any regulation that conflicts with the purpose and goals of the pilot's plan, including the student service requirement set forth in COMAR 13A.03.02.05.

6.1.3 A waiver may not be granted related to assessment requirements in COMAR 13A.03.02.06.

SECTION 7 - RESOURCES

7.1 Research and Best Practices

- Adult Learning Resource Center www.thecenterweb.org/
- Coalition on Adult Basic Education www.coabe.org
- Framework for 21st Century Learning www.battelleforkids.org/insights/p21-resources/
- International Society for Technology in Education www.iste.org/standards
- Learning Disabilities Association of America ldaamerica.org/
- Literacy Information and Communication System (LINCS) www.lincs.ed.gov
- Literacy Information and Communication Systems (LINCS) Courses courses.lincs.ed.gov/#ld
- Maryland Higher Education Commission mhec.maryland.gov/Pages/default.aspx
- National Coalition for Literacy www.national-coalition-literacy.org
- National College Transition Network www.collegetransition.org
- National Skills Coalition www.nationalskillscoalition.org
- Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovae/index.html
- ProLiteracy www.proliteracy.org
- TESOL International Association www.tesol.org
- World Education www.worlded.org/WEIInternet/resources/index.cfm

7.2 Data

- American FactFinder data.census.gov/
- Maryland State Data Center planning.maryland.gov/msdc/Pages/default.aspx
- National Center for Education Statistics nces.ed.gov/naal/
- U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics www.bls.gov/
- U.S. Census www.census.gov

7.3 Maryland State Resources

- Maryland High School Graduation Requirements
  dsd.maryland.gov/regulations/Pages/13A.03.02.03.aspx
- Maryland Opportunity Zones dhcd.maryland.gov/Pages/OZ/OpportunityZones.aspx
- Maryland Report Card reportcard.msde.maryland.gov/
- Maryland State Department of Education www.marylandpublicschools.org
- Maryland State Department of Education - Office of Teaching and Learning
  https://marylandpublicschools.org/about/Pages/DCIPL/index.aspx
- Maryland Department of Labor www.labor.maryland.gov
- Maryland Governor's Workforce Development Board (GWDB) http://www.gwdb.maryland.gov/
- Maryland GWDB Career & Technical Education Committee
  http://www.gwdb.maryland.gov/ctecomm/
- Moore-Miller Administration 2024 State Plan
  governor.maryland.gov/priorities/Documents/2024%20State%20Plan.pdf
- Maryland State Department of Education, High Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM)
  Frameworks & Rubrics, hqim.marylandpublicschools.org/frameworks-and-rubrics/