



**Division of Workforce
Development and Adult Learning
(DWDAL)**
Policy Issuance



PI 2026-11 Lower Living Standard Income Level (LLSIL) | July 22, 2026

TO	Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning (DWDAL) staff	
FROM	DWDAL Maryland Department of Labor (MD Labor)	
SUBJECT	2026 Federal Poverty Guidelines and 2026 Lower Living Standard Income Level (LLSIL)	
PURPOSE	To provide the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services 2026 federal poverty guidelines and the U.S. Department of Labor's updated annual LLSIL levels for 2026.	
ACTION	Local Workforce Development Area (Local Area) Directors, American Job Center (AJC) Reemployment Program Directors, adult education program administrators, Division of Rehabilitation Services program staff, and central office managers will ensure all employees are aware of and receive copies of this policy. DWDAL policies are available on the MD Labor website .	
EXPIRATION	Until Cancelled.	
QUESTIONS	Lauren Gilwee Director of Policy DWDAL 410.767.2268 laurene.gilwee@maryland.gov	Melissa Volpe Acting Director, Office of Workforce Development DWDAL 410-767-2995 melissa.volpe@maryland.gov
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CANCELLATIONS

All previous policies on Federal Poverty Guidelines and Lower Living Standard Income Levels (LLSIL) remain active for program participants during that policy's effective date. These policies may be archived and available at: <http://www.labor.maryland.gov/employment/mpi/>.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Maryland Department of Labor's (MD Labor) Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning (DWDAL)'s mission is to improve the lives of all Marylanders by implementing innovative, responsive practices that nurture a skilled workforce, connect people to good jobs, and ensure businesses have the skilled workforce they need to compete in a global economy.

This policy outlines the Lower Level Standard Income Levels (LLSIL), determined annually by the U.S. Department of Labor and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. This policy is effective July 2026.

GENERAL INFORMATION

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) was signed into law on July 22, 2014 and went into effect July 1, 2015. WIOA supersedes the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA) and amends the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, the Wagner Peyser Act, and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. By design, the workforce system established under WIOA is integrated to help both businesses and jobseekers. WIOA envisions connecting businesses with job seekers through meaningful partnerships among workforce, education, human services, and economic development entities to ensure optimum results and leveraging of resources. The law addresses the needs of job seekers by establishing a workforce system that helps them access employment, education, training, and support services to succeed in the labor market. Through the American Job Centers (AJCs), WIOA works to address employer needs by matching them to the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy.

Title I of WIOA requires the United States Secretary of Labor to update and publish the Lower Living Standard Income Level (LLSIL) guidelines tables annually. States must use these tables as described in the law, including for youth eligibility determinations. WIOA defines the term “low income individual” as one who qualifies under various criteria, including an individual who receives, or received for a prior six-month period, income that does not exceed the higher level of the poverty line or 70 percent of the LLSIL.

This policy provides the annual LLSIL for 2026 for the Maryland Department of Labor’s (MD Labor) Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning (DWDAL). MD Labor created this policy in response to the United States Department of Labor (USDOL) releasing LLSIL guidelines through the Federal Register. USDOL determines LLSIL figures by calculating the percentage change in the most recent Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers for an area, then applying this calculation to each of the previous year's LLSIL figures. Tables 4 and 5 on USDOL’s Lower Living Standard Income Level Guidelines webpage represent these changes. Additionally, the calculations reference the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)’s current 2026 poverty guidelines.

MD Labor determined LLSIL levels for each county based on either census tract or on metropolitan status, as determined by Bureau of Labor Statistics Office of Management and Budget Bulletin No. 18-03, [“Revised Delineations of Metropolitan Statistical Areas, Micropolitan Statistical Areas, and Combined Statistical Areas, and Guidance on Uses of the Delineations of These Areas.”](#) MD Labor may update LLSIL designations annually as HHS and USDOL figures change.

2026 FEDERAL POVERTY GUIDELINES

The following chart provides the 2026 Poverty Guidelines, as given by HHS.

2026 Poverty Guidelines

Size of Family	Poverty Guideline
1	\$15,960
2	\$21,640
3	\$27,320
4	\$33,000
5	\$38,680
6	\$44,360
7	\$50,040
8	\$55,720

NOTE: For family units with more than 8 members, add \$5,680 for each additional person.¹

¹ Department of Health and Human Services: Annual Update of the HHS Poverty Guidelines:
https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/ETA/llsil/pdfs/HHS-Poverty-Guidelines_2025-FRN.pdf.

2026 LOWER LIVING STANDARD INCOME LEVEL

WIOA stipulates that 70 percent of the LLSIL value shall be used for certain WIOA programs, including the WIOA Title I Youth program. The following chart provides Maryland's LLSIL standards by family size, Local Workforce Development Area (Local Area), and county.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	If 7+, Add
Anne Arundel Co.	15,463*	25,339	34,782	42,932	50,671	59,259	8,588
Baltimore City	15,463*	25,339	34,782	42,932	50,671	59,259	8,588
Baltimore Co.	15,463*	25,339	34,782	42,932	50,671	59,259	8,588
Carroll Co.	15,463*	25,339	34,782	42,932	50,671	59,259	8,588
Frederick Co.	14,923*	24,456	33,568	41,434	48,903	57,191	8,288
Howard Co.	15,463*	25,339	34,782	42,932	50,671	59,259	8,588
Lower Shore							
Somerset Co.	12,441*	20,384*	27,978	34,542	40,767	47,680	6,913
Wicomico Co.	12,441*	20,384*	27,978	34,542	40,767	47,680	6,913
Worcester Co.	12,441*	20,384*	27,978	34,542	40,767	47,680	6,913
Montgomery Co.	14,923*	24,456	33,568	41,434	48,903	57,191	8,288
Prince George's Co.	14,923*	24,456	33,568	41,434	48,903	57,191	8,288
Southern MD							
Calvert Co.	14,923*	24,456	33,568	41,434	48,903	57,191	8,288
Charles Co.	14,923*	24,456	33,568	41,434	48,903	57,191	8,288
St. Mary's Co.	12,441*	20,384*	27,978	34,542	40,767	47,680	6,913
Susquehanna							
Cecil Co.	13,819*	22,642	31,082	38,367	45,283	52,951	7,668
Harford Co.	15,463*	25,339	34,782	42,932	50,671	59,259	8,588
Upper Shore							
Caroline Co.	12,441*	20,384*	27,978	34,542	40,767	47,680	6,913
Dorchester Co.	12,029*	19,705*	27,046*	33,386	39,399	46,076	6,677
Kent Co.	12,441*	20,384*	27,978	34,542	40,767	47,680	6,913
Talbot Co.	12,029*	19,705*	27,046*	33,386	39,399	46,076	6,677
Queen Anne's Co.	15,463*	25,339	34,782	42,932	50,671	59,259	8,588
Western MD							
Allegany Co.	12,441*	20,384*	27,978	34,542	40,767	47,680	6,913
Washington Co.	12,441*	20,384*	27,978	34,542	40,767	47,680	6,913
Garrett Co.	12,029*	19,705*	27,046*	33,386	39,399	46,076	6,677
Effective April 2026							

2026 LLSIL – 70%, by Family Size

*Poverty level is greater than the LLSIL figures.

REFERENCES

LAW

- [Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act](#) (WIOA), 29 U.S.C. § 3101 et. seq (2015);
- Md. Ann. Code, Labor and Emp. Art., Title 11, [Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning](#).

REGULATION

- 2 CFR §§[200](#), [683](#) and [2900](#) – Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards;
- 20 CFR Part 651, “[General Provisions Governing the Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service](#),”
- [Employment and Training Administration, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act](#); Final Rule (WIOA DOL Final Rule) published at 81 FR 56071 (Aug. 19, 2016);
- 29 CFR Part 38 –“[Implementation of the Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity Provisions of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act](#),”
- COMAR 09.33 et seq. [Job Service](#);
- COMAR 09.12.42 [Equal Employment Opportunity](#);
- COMAR .09.12.43 [Maryland Apprenticeship and Training](#); and,
- COMAR 09.37.01 et seq. [Workforce Development and Adult Learning](#).

OTHER RESOURCES

- [DWDAL Policy Issuance Page](#);
- [Language Access Plan](#);
- [Maryland Local Plans](#);
- [Maryland WIOA Combined State Plan](#);
- [MD Labor’s Non-Discrimination Plan](#).