



House Bill 1358

Labor and Employment - Workforce Development and Local Workforce Development Boards (Local Workforce Solutions Investment Act)

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Government, Labor, and Elections and Health Committees

Date: February 26, 2026

From: Karrington Anderson & Michael Sanderson

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** HB 1358. This bill strengthens coordination between state workforce initiatives and local workforce development boards. HB 1358 ensures that when the State makes strategic investments in workforce development, local workforce leaders are actively involved in planning, consultation, and, where appropriate, the administration of funds.

Local workforce development boards provide key infrastructure for workforce services across Maryland. With guidance and leadership from private industry partners, these boards identify regional skill shortages, cultivate relationships with employers and workers, and integrate workforce development with economic development and education systems. As important players in communities, local boards are uniquely positioned to develop and implement tailored workforce strategies that reflect local labor market needs. HB 1358 appropriately recognizes and reinforces this role.

The bill enhances several important programs by requiring coordination with local workforce development boards. HB 1358 allocates funds to the local workforce development board through the Hospital Employees Retraining Fund to ensure that rapid retraining and reemployment strategies are locally driven and responsive to employer demand. Similarly, the bill aligns the State's Quick Response Program more directly with local workforce boards when assisting private-sector employers experiencing layoffs or operational reductions.

HB 1358 also strengthens the Apprenticeship Career Training in Our Neighborhoods (ACTION) Program by partnering with local workforce development boards to administer grants and implement programming. In addition, the Direct Care Workforce Innovation Program must consult with local workforce boards, ensuring that investments are informed by regional workforce data and employer engagement.

By embedding local workforce development boards into these initiatives, HB 1358 promotes accountability, reduces duplication, and maximizes the impact of limited workforce dollars. Counties strongly support policies that leverage existing local infrastructure and expertise. For these reasons, MACo urges a **FAVORABLE** report on HB 1358.