

Maryland Adult Learning Advisory Council Meeting Notes
Annie E. Casey Foundation, 503 N. Charles Street, Baltimore, MD 21201
December 3, 2018, 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Meeting Outcomes:

- Discussed member priorities and possible synergies among partners.
- Shared updates at the state and departmental levels.
- Shared initiatives to increase access to post-secondary education in Maryland.
- Discussed current state and federal work on expanding the use of Ability to Benefit, the provision allowing individuals without a high school diploma to access federal financial aid for career pathway programs

Welcome and Introductions, Irene Lee, Chair and Terry R. Gilleland Jr., Co-Chair

The meeting was opened at 10:00 a.m. and members and guests were welcomed by the Chairs. Each attendee reported a current organization priority.

Ability to Benefit, Judy Mortude, Senior Policy Analyst, CLASP and Lauren Walizer, Senior Policy Analyst, CLASP

CLASP presenters discussed how Ability To Benefit (ATB) is a financial aid program that allows students who lack a high school credential receive federal financial aid to earn college credits. ATB allows students without a high school diploma or equivalency to receive Title IV student financial aid to pay for postsecondary education and training if they are enrolled in a career pathway program. To be eligible for the aid, students must first complete 6 credits (or equivalent) toward a degree or certificate, pass a U.S. Department of Education approved exam, or complete a state process approved by the Secretary of Education. Students face challenges to become eligible for the financial assistance. Completing the six credits may be a challenge for low income students who may be unable to afford the tuition and fees. The U.S. DOE approved exam may be difficult for students to pass and no state has submitted a process for approval to fulfill the third option.

MHEC Overview & Workforce Development Sequence Scholarships, Emily Dow, Assistant Secretary, Academic Affairs, MHEC and Donna Thomas, Director, OSFA, MHEC

The Workforce Development Sequence Scholarship is designed to provide financial assistance to students enrolled in a certificate program leading to employment, licensure, or job skill enhancement at a community college. The scholarship went into effect for the 2018-2019 school year. Students must be enrolled in an eligible program at a participating community college.

Closing Discussion, Irene Lee, Chair and Terry Gilleland Jr., Co-Chair

Ms. Lee thanked everyone for attending and invited attendees to the networking lunch after the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 12 noon.