**Maryland Model Employer Act 2025**

**Frequently Asked Questions**

**How was the legislation developed?**

The Maryland Department of Disabilities (MDOD) led a team selected to participate in the National Governor’s Association (NGA) Disability Summit focused on employment in the Fall of 2023. The team included members from the Lt. Governor’s Office, Maryland Department of Labor, Division of Rehabilitative Services (DORS), and Department of Budget and Management (DBM). The purpose of the Disability Summit was to learn what other states were doing and discuss strategies to improve Maryland state government hiring of job seekers with disabilities. In January 2024, Maryland was selected again by NGA to receive more intensive support to develop a plan based on lessons learned from other states and their best practices. The plan formed the basis of this legislation.

**What will the legislation do?**

The law creates the Office of Disability Employment Advancement Policy (ODEAP) within MDOD. The office will enhance and elevate the coordination of existing efforts with partner agencies (DORS, DBM, MD State Department Education, Labor and MD Department of Health) to improve employment outcomes for Marylanders with disabilities. In addition, ODEA will develop The Maryland as a Model Employer Initiative (MME) which will be focused on:

* promoting the recruitment, hiring, retention, and career advancement of people with disabilities across State government;
* conducting and coordinating outreach to job seekers with disabilities and State agencies to encourage participation in the hiring initiative;
* developing and delivering trainings to State agencies about best practices, resources, and relevant Federal and State laws pertaining to the employment of people with disabilities;
* assisting State agencies to attract qualified job seekers with disabilities to available positions;
* promoting access to and acquisition of assistive technology for new State employees with disabilities;
* evaluating State employment practices and policies and making recommendations of ways to reduce barriers for job seekers and employees with disabilities; and
* collecting and reviewing plans developed by other units of State government regarding performance goals for hiring and retention of people with disabilities, and collecting data identified by the Secretary as necessary to demonstrate outcomes; and
* leading The Maryland as a Model Employer Initiative.

**What is the timeline for the MME Initiative to begin?**

While the Governor signed the bill on April 8, 2025, the funding for it does not take effect until July 1, 2026. MDOD will spend the first year, beginning July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026, planning by meeting with state agency partners. MME will evaluate current State employment practices and policies and development recommendations.

MDOD will also host listening sessions during the planning year to get input on how the state can increase its hiring of job seekers with disabilities.

**What if I need a job now?**

There are a number of resources you can access if you are seeking employment now. State jobs listing can be found at <https://www.jobapscloud.com/MD/>. The state gives you the option for you to identify as having a disability, which adds points to your application.

Other resources include:

[America’s Job Centers](https://www.labor.maryland.gov/county/)

Maryland's American Job Centers (AJCs) are conveniently located throughout the State and are dedicated to serving businesses and job seekers.

[Division of Rehabilitative Services (DORS)](https://dors.maryland.gov/Pages/default.aspx)

DORS helps Marylanders with disabilities find and maintain employment.

[Resources for Impacted Federal Workers](https://labor.maryland.gov/federalworkers/)

This website provides information on resources like unemployment insurance benefits, career guidance, and reemployment support.

[Autism Hiring Program](https://autismsocietymd.org/autism-hiring-program/)

The Autism Hiring Program advances workplace neurodiversity and acceptance, connecting businesses to an untapped workforce of skilled Autistic adults and targeting jobseekers not supported by existing systems.

**I am a business owner and want to hire more people with disabilities. Are there resources for me?**

[Maryland Department of Labor](https://www.dllr.state.md.us/employment/businessservices1.shtml)

The Maryland Department of Labor has resources for businesses looking to hire people with disabilities.

[Build Your Business](https://dors.maryland.gov/business/Pages/default.aspx) Maryland’s Division of Rehabilitation Services can also help business connect with qualified job seekers.

**How can I be notified when the listening sessions are occurring?**

Listening sessions will be announced on the MDOD website, our newsletter and on our social media channels. Be sure to subscribe to our newsletter at [NEWSLETTER](https://visitor.r20.constantcontact.com/manage/optin?v=001f-KEXzn5tO3fTRIcFtXNq3yGbvllh3RZ9chcECIoSjCJuARlbzaU7kbcaShOsYZja5vsQolXAGxRyMor3c_jHTE8_5enrZu_4bvxmwPBG0k%3D). Follow us on Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIN.

**Where can I find updates on the planning year progress and once the program begins?**

The MME Initiative updates can be found on our website, under “Employment”. This section will give you information about the MME Initiative during the planning year, including how you can share your experience and ideas. After the planning year, we will have information for job seekers, as well as state agencies, on the site.

For more information, please visit the Employment page on our website: <https://mdod.maryland.gov/employment/Pages/Employment-Home.aspx>