



SUPPORTING MARYLANDERS WITH DISABILITIES

"We are united in our belief in the dignity of every individual and that our government should protect rights equally for all" —Governor O'Malley

COMMUNITY LIVING:

➤ **SUPPORTING INDEPENDENT LIVING**

One of the guiding principles of the O'Malley-Brown administration is that individuals with disabilities can live independent, productive and full lives in their communities when provided with the right supports.

➤ **CLOSED THE ROSEWOOD FACILITY**

Governor O'Malley and Lt. Governor Brown led the effort to close the Rosewood center, Maryland's oldest institution and a home cited for abuse and neglect. They successfully helped move 145 residents to new community homes.

➤ **DECREASED THE DIVISION OF REHABILITATION SERVICE'S WAITING LIST**

In 2009, Governor O'Malley and Lt. Governor Brown added more than \$2 million to the Maryland Division of Rehabilitation Services in order to take individuals with disabilities off of the waiting list. As a result of these important funds, the waitlist decreased from 4,703 to 1,304 and there is currently no waiting list for individuals with the most significant disabilities. The average time on the waitlist has also dropped from 18 months to 4 to 6 months.

HOUSING:

➤ **AFFORDABLE HOUSING FOR MARYLANDERS WITH DISABILITIES**

Governor O'Malley will continue to work with local jurisdictions that receive HUD funds to prioritize people with disabilities for rent subsidies while also involving disability advocates in developing additional subsidized rental units.

➤ **PROVIDING IMPORTANT SERVICES TO MORE MARYLANDERS WITH DISABILITIES**

Under the leadership of Governor O'Malley, the Maryland Division of Rehabilitation Services has dramatically increased the number of individuals it is providing services to from 6,572 in 2008 to nearly 11,000 in 2010.

EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES

➤ **BUILDING MARYLAND'S #1 RANKED SCHOOLS**

Governor O'Malley secured record funding for K-12 public education helping to create the #1 ranked public school system in the country for the past two years in a row. Under his leadership, elementary school students are scoring the best they ever have on their MSA tests and our high school students are leading the nation with the highest Advanced Placement participation rates and scores in the country. As accountability and

expectations are raised for all, students with disabilities will benefit with improved test performance and greater accomplishment in the classroom

➤ **INCREASED FUNDING FOR MARYLAND’S INFANTS AND TODDLERS PROGRAM**

Governor O’Malley invested \$36 million into the Maryland Infants and Toddlers Program—a 71% increase over the previous administration. The MITP supports local programs serving nearly 14,000 children with developmental issues such as speech delays, Down Syndrome, and Autism. Because of this much needed funding; there has been a 50% increase in the number of children receiving early intervention services since 2003.

➤ **INVESTING IN THE STATE’S TRANSITIONING YOUTH PROGRAM**

Over the past four years, Governor O’Malley and Lt. Governor Brown have invested \$47 million into the Transitioning Youth Program—a 55% increase over the previous administration. This funding helps Maryland’s young people with disabilities access quality employment, day activities or higher education opportunities after they leave the school system.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

➤ **EXPANDING EQUAL OPPORTUNITY**

In 2008, Governor O’Malley signed the Fitness and Athletics Equity Act for Students with Disabilities that requires all Maryland school systems to allow students with significant disabilities to try out for sports teams and participate alongside their peers.

➤ **RESPECTING INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES**

Over the past two years, the O’Malley-Brown administration has worked with families and advocates to remove the “R” word from our policies and laws, reducing the negative stigma against our citizens with disabilities.

EMPLOYMENT

➤ **WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD**

To ensure that people with disabilities were included in all discussion about workforce development, Governor O’Malley appointed the Secretary of the Department of Disabilities as a permanent representative on the Governor’s Workforce Investment Board.

➤ **PROVIDING DISABLED WORKERS WITH THE SKILLS 2 COMPETE**

In March 2010, the O’Malley-Brown Administration launched Skills2Compete-Maryland, an initiative aimed at increasing the skills and competitiveness of Maryland’s workforce. Strategies to increase the skills of people with disabilities are a part of the initiative.

➤ **ENCOURAGING THE HIRING OF MARYLANDERS WITH DISABILITIES**

Governor O’Malley issued a set of principles to guide his sub-cabinet on Workforce Development that included the following, “There Is No Such Thing as a Spare Marylander.” This slogan summarizes the Administration’s belief that all Marylanders are needed and valued in the workplace.

➤ **JOBS FOR MARYLANDERS WITH DISABILITIES THROUGH BRAC**

Maryland was one of three states to participate in the “State Leaders Innovation Institute”, a project of the National Technical Assistance and Research Center to Promote Leaders for Increasing Employment and Economic Independence of Adults with Disabilities. Maryland’s project developed a program currently underway that will enable people with disabilities to take advantage of new jobs coming to Maryland through the military Base Realignment and Closure. (BRAC)

➤ **PARTICIPATING IN THE “THINK BEYOND THE LABEL” CAMPAIGN**

Under the leadership of Governor O’Malley, Maryland is participating in the “Think Beyond the Label” national marketing campaign that encourages employers to overlook the disability and look at

the person's skills. The campaign is running ads on television and radio stations and placards are on Maryland Transit Authority buses during October's Disability History Awareness Month.

➤ **ENCOURAGING STATE EMPLOYMENT FOR MARYLANDERS WITH DISABILITIES**

The O'Malley-Brown administration continues to encourage quest internships, which offer work experience and an opportunity for a permanent job within State Government. By demonstrating that people with various disabilities can successfully perform a wide array of jobs, Maryland sets an example for all employers.

TRANSPORTATION

➤ **MAKING STATE BUILDINGS AND PROPERTIES MORE ACCESSIBLE**

The O'Malley-Brown administration allocated \$6.4 million over the last four years to make State buildings and properties more accessible, compared to \$6.1 million under the previous administration.

➤ **ENCOURAGING TRANSIT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT**

The O'Malley-Brown administration has made transit oriented development a priority and has identified 14 sites around the State for these projects. Transit Oriented Development presents a unique opportunity to create more livable communities that enrich the lives of people with disabilities by enabling them to access public transit options so that they can get to jobs and other places they want to go.

➤ **ENHANCED TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS**

This year, under the leadership of Governor O'Malley, Mobility Paratransit enhanced its service and is now providing door-to-door service in many areas as opposed to curb to curb. The fleet is continually being upgraded with 48 new wheelchair vans and 55 new sedans being used in addition to replacement vehicles and expanded service.

HEALTH AND HEALTH CARE REFORM

➤ **EXTENDING HEALTH COVERAGE TO INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES**

Under the leadership of Governor O'Malley, over 550 individuals with disabilities who work and meet certain other requirements are receiving Medicaid coverage for a small premium. The number of individuals enrolled in this program represents a 200% increase since 2007.

TECHNOLOGY AND ACCESSIBILITY

➤ **ENACTED A CLOSED-CAPTIONING LAW**

In 2010, Governor O'Malley signed into law legislation that requires a place of public accommodation to activate closed captioning on any television in use during regular hours if a person requests the feature be activated.

➤ **SUPPORTING THE ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY LOAN PROGRAM**

In order to enable people with disabilities to work, operate a business, excel in school, live in safe and accessible homes, enjoy independent transportation and gain greater access to their communities, Governor O'Malley and Lt. Governor Brown continue to support the Assistive Technology Loan Program. This program provides low interest loans to purchase assistive technology or make home modifications. Since taking office the O'Malley-Brown administration has provided nearly 200 loans totaling \$2.4 million for this program.

➤ **PROVIDING ACCESS TO STATE GOVERNMENT WEBSITES**

The O'Malley-Brown administration expanded the role of the Department of Information Technology to ensure that information and services available through State Agency websites are accessible to Marylanders with sensory, physical and cognitive disabilities. Governor O'Malley was also one of the first governors in the nation to post videos on his website with captions.