

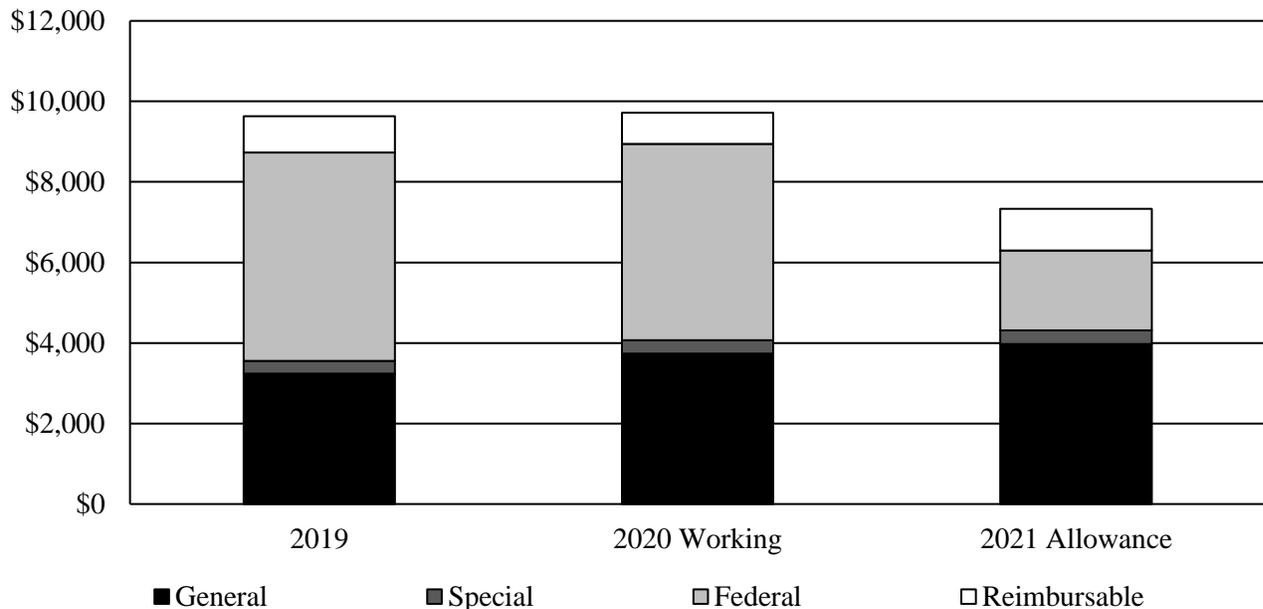
D12A02
Department of Disabilities

Program Description

The Maryland Department of Disabilities (MDOD) focuses on increasing the capacity of Maryland communities to provide services in inclusive settings, which it defines as a citizen-centered delivery system that allows individuals with disabilities to make meaningful choices and maintain control of their lives. The department also provides information, referral services, and expertise on the law. MDOD provides advocacy and guidance to construct a service delivery system that is seamless, responsive, and coordinated; brings elevated expectations about the capacities of individuals with disabilities; and incorporates accessible design into communities and technologies. As part of this work, MDOD directs the development and implementation of the *State Disabilities Plan*. MDOD administers the Constituent Services Program, the Attendant Care Program, the Maryland Technology Assistance Program, and the Access Maryland Program.

Operating Budget Summary

Fiscal 2021 Budget Decreases by \$2.4 Million or 24.5% to \$7.3 Million
(\$ in Thousands)



Note: Numbers may not sum due to rounding. The fiscal 2020 appropriation includes deficiencies, planned reversions, and general salary increases. The fiscal 2021 allowance includes contingent reductions and general salary increases.

- The decrease in the fiscal 2021 allowance is largely associated with the conclusion of the federal Promoting the Readiness of Minors in Supplemental Security Income (PROMISE) grant.

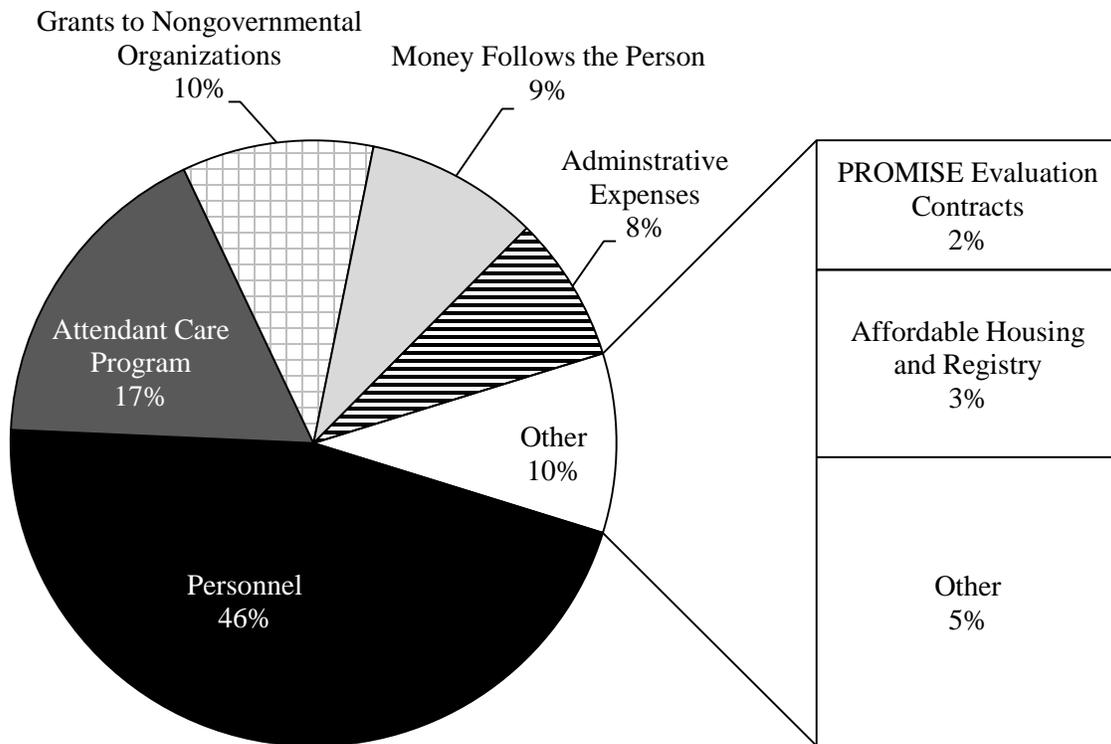
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Fiscal 2021 Overview of Agency Spending

As seen in **Exhibit 1**, nearly half, \$3.4 million, of this agency’s spending goes to personnel expenditures. Other major expenditures include grants and program expenditures. Since fiscal 2014, the PROMISE program has been a large component of this agency’s budget. However, in fiscal 2021, it only makes up 2% of the allowance, reflecting the conclusion of this federal pilot program

Exhibit 1
Overview of Agency Spending
Fiscal 2021 Allowance



PROMISE: Promoting the Readiness of Minors in Supplemental Security Income

Source: Governor’s Fiscal 2021 Budget Books; Department of Disabilities; Department of Legislative Services.

Proposed Budget Change

As shown in **Exhibit 2**, the fiscal 2021 allowance decreases by nearly one-fourth due to the phase out of the federal PROMISE grant. In particular, federal funds decrease to just 40% of the fiscal 2020 levels. All other fund sources see growth from fiscal 2020.

**Exhibit 2
Proposed Budget
Department of Disabilities
(\$ in Thousands)**

How Much It Grows:	General Fund	Special Fund	Federal Fund	Reimb. Fund	Total
Fiscal 2019 Actual	\$3,239	\$313	\$5,179	\$900	\$9,631
Fiscal 2020 Working Appropriation	3,734	331	4,878	773	9,716
Fiscal 2021 Allowance	<u>3,972</u>	<u>339</u>	<u>1,985</u>	<u>1,037</u>	<u>7,333</u>
Fiscal 2020-2021 Amount Change	\$238	\$8	-\$2,893	\$264	-\$2,383
Fiscal 2020-2021 Percent Change	6.4%	2.3%	-59.3%	34.2%	-24.5%

Where It Goes:

Personnel Expenses

	Change
Employee and retiree health insurance	\$193
Turnover adjustments	67
Retirement contributions	25
Fiscal 2021 2% salary increase, effective January 1, 2021	25
Annualization of fiscal 2020 1% salary increase, effective January 1, 2020	12
Regular earnings increases	7
Other fringe benefit adjustments	1
Reclassifications	-69

Grants

Increased grants to nongovernmental organizations that support the agency’s mission	79
Technology Assistance Program grants to Centers for Independent Living	19
Affordable Housing initiatives	11
Money Follows the Person Peer Outreach and Support regional funding allocations	-204
Conclusion of the Maryland PROMISE grant.....	-2,912

Contracts

PROMISE grant evaluation contracts with the University of Baltimore; the University of Maryland, College Park Campus; and MSDE.....	150
Consulting services for Affordable Housing for Individuals with Disabilities	120

Other

Cost allocations	78
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Where It Goes:	<u>Change</u>
Other changes	38
Contractual full-time equivalents (FTE) due to additional FTEs	32
Information technology	5
Administrative expenses.....	-12
Statewide assistive technology cooperative	-46
Total	-\$2,383

PROMISE: Promoting the Readiness of Minors in Supplemental Security Income
 MSDE: Maryland State Department of Education

Note: Numbers may not sum due to rounding. The fiscal 2020 appropriation includes deficiencies, planned reversions, and general salary increases. The fiscal 2021 allowance includes contingent reductions and general salary increases.

Personnel Data

	<u>FY 19</u> <u>Actual</u>	<u>FY 20</u> <u>Working</u>	<u>FY 21</u> <u>Allowance</u>	<u>FY 20-21</u> <u>Change</u>
Regular Positions	27.80	28.80	28.80	0.00
Contractual FTEs	<u>3.90</u>	<u>2.80</u>	<u>3.65</u>	<u>0.85</u>
Total Personnel	31.70	31.60	32.45	0.85

Vacancy Data: Regular Positions

Turnover and Necessary Vacancies, Excluding New Positions	0.57	2.06%
Positions and Percentage Vacant as of 12/31/19	4.00	13.89%
Vacancies Above Turnover	3.43	

- The number of contractual full-time equivalents increases by 0.85 to support increased hours from an assistive technology specialist and to provide staff support to comply with a Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Information Technology (DoIT) for the Telecommunication Access of Maryland program.

Key Observations

1. Department Launches Statewide Information Technology Accessibility Initiative

In the 2019 session, committee narrative in the *Joint Chairmen’s Report* (JCR) requested a report on the status of nonvisual accessibility of State agency websites and documents. In its response to the JCR, MDOD reported that it was “in the beginning phases of launching a statewide information technology (IT) Accessibility Initiative to address the issue on a broad level.” As the initiative was still in its infancy at the time of submission, the response did not include requested information such as an assessment of current nonvisual accessibility, national best practices, recommendations that would be appropriate for Maryland, and cost estimates for recommendations. However, the report did provide a timeline for when this information would be available. The department indicates that it will submit the requested information in May. **The Department of Legislative Services (DLS) recommends requesting submission of this information in addition to a plan describing how the IT Accessibility Initiative will be implemented.**

Since the submission of the response, MDOD reports that it has developed the following two-pronged approach to addressing IT accessibility in the State: (1) advancing the accessibility of State websites; and (2) ensuring that IT procurements are compliant with nonvisual accessibility standards established by DoIT, as set forth by Chapter 632 of the 2018 session.

To achieve these goals, MDOD has converted a position in the Maryland Technology Assistance Program into a position solely devoted to the IT Accessibility Initiative. MDOD has already started training State agency staff and is actively fielding requests from State agencies and the public on ways to improve their IT accessibility. MDOD is also recruiting interns from the University of Maryland Baltimore County and the University of Maryland, College Park Campus (UMCP) to work on this initiative.

DLS recommends MDOD, in consultation with DoIT and the Department of General Services, develop an instructional guideline document to be included with the report, which can be distributed to all State agencies to be used when creating Requests for Proposals that are compliant with IT accessibility standards.

2. Evaluation of Maryland PROMISE Outcomes

Maryland was one of six grantees to receive funding for the federal PROMISE pilot program. Grantees were charged with developing, implementing, and evaluating a service model to promote positive outcomes for children that receive supplemental security income (SSI). The PROMISE initiative funded five-year studies of services to children ages 14 to 16 who receive SSI. The pilot first received funding in fiscal 2014. Services concluded in October 2019.

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In Maryland, a sample of 2,000 eligible youth and families were recruited to participate in the study. Half of the sample received services and supports designed to help them achieve better outcomes. The remaining half received typical services provided within their communities. Services available to participants in PROMISE included transition planning, financial planning and benefits management, employment and post-secondary education preparation activities, and social and health supports.

The results of the two groups are currently being evaluated to inform policy discussions about service to SSI recipients and their families. As part of the evaluation phase of the pilot, MDOD has a Memorandum of Understanding with UMCP to serve as a data repository for PROMISE outcome data. UMCP will prepare analyses of data, journal articles, policy briefs, and related evaluation material for communicating the results of the PROMISE program.

MDOD has received an extension until October 2020 to use the remaining funds in the grant. All funds budgeted in fiscal 2021 for this purpose are to be used in the first quarter of the fiscal year, unless MDOD receives another extension from the federal government.

Operating Budget Recommended Actions

1. Adopt the following narrative:

Information Technology Accessibility Initiative Update: In the 2019 session, the budget committees requested that the Maryland Department of Disabilities (MDOD) submit a report on the status of the State’s website information technology (IT) accessibility. Although MDOD was unable to provide the requested information at the time, MDOD informed the budget committees that it was beginning its statewide IT accessibility initiative and outlined its plans going forward. In light of this timeline, and the fact that the budget committees have not yet received the information they requested, the committees again request that MDOD submit a report including:

- an assessment of the current nonvisual accessibility of State websites and documents;
- national best practices and innovative techniques to achieve better access;
- recommendations to improve accessibility that would be appropriate for State agencies;
- cost estimates for any recommendations made by MDOD; and
- a plan describing how the IT Accessibility Initiative will be implemented.

In addition, the budget committees request that MDOD, in consultation with the Department of Information Technology and the Department of General Services, develop and submit an instructional guideline document that can be distributed to all State agencies to be used when developing Requests for Proposals that are compliant with IT accessibility standards.

Information Request	Author	Due Date
IT Accessibility Initiative update	MDOD	November 15, 2020

Updates

- ***State Disabilities Plan in Progress:*** The State Disabilities Plan is essential to ensuring coordination of State services and policies, ensuring compliance with State and federal law, and supporting community-based services for Marylanders with disabilities. The previous plan identified goals for calendar 2016 through 2019. However, a new plan has not been published for the period beginning in calendar 2020. MDOD indicates a new plan is in progress and will be published by June 2020.
- ***Accessible Public Transit Sees Brief Slump in Performance during Contractor Transition:*** In fiscal 2019, the Maryland Transportation Authority (MTA) saw a 7.29% decrease from the previous year in the number paratransit rides, excluding Call-a-Ride, provided on time. The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) attributed the decrease to a change in its mobility vendor contract. Instead of renewing its previous three contracts, MTA renewed two, resulting in a transitional period as the remaining vendors ramped up capacity to meet service demands previously provided by three vendors. MDOT reports that the transitional period has concluded, and the two vendors are currently meeting MTA’s customer’s mobility demands and mobility service performance has normalized. DLS will continue to monitor mobility service performance over the next fiscal year.
- ***Maryland Achieving a Better Life Experience Grows Exponentially:*** Maryland Achieving a Better Life Experience 529 Savings Plan (Maryland ABLE) accounts allow individuals with disabilities to save money and pay for qualified disability-related expenses without jeopardizing means-tested benefits like SSI or Medicaid. Although Maryland ABLE is overseen by the Maryland 529 Board and not MDOD, its performance measures are considered when examining the State’s service to Marylanders with disabilities. Between fiscal 2018 and 2019, the number of accounts managed grew by 861, to 151% of the 2018 number. The assets under management grew by nearly \$5.8 million, to 247% of the fiscal 2018 number.

Appendix 1
2019 Joint Chairmen’s Report Responses from Agency

The 2019 *Joint Chairmen’s Report* (JCR) requested that the Maryland Department of Disabilities (MDOD) prepare two reports. Electronic copies of the full JCR responses can be found on the Department of Legislative Services Library website.

- ***Centers for Independent Living Oversight:*** While the Independent Living Program is currently administered by the Maryland Department of Education’s Division of Rehabilitative Services (DORS), MDOD and DORS are currently exploring a transition of this responsibility to MDOD over two years. As a significant outcome of this transition, MDOD will obtain the capacity and expertise to expand into Medicaid billing for eligible services provided by the Centers for Independent Living throughout the State. A background of the events leading up to this proposed transition, an outline of fiscal 2018 and 2019 federal and State funding sources, and a two-year draft preliminary action plan are included in the report.
- ***Nonvisual Accessibility of State Websites:*** To assess State websites for nonvisual accessibility, MDOD has two positions that regularly conduct accessibility reviews of State websites, administer an information technology (IT) accessibility internship program, and respond to requests for assistance from State agencies to resolve identified accessibility issues. National best practices were not identified in this report, but MDOD expressed the intent to consult with the Center for Excellence in Non-Visual Access and the National Federation of the Blind for this information. In addition to current approaches, MDOD is launching a more comprehensive statewide IT Accessibility Initiative that will train State agencies’ web development and site maintenance staff to make web content accessible. Cost estimates and recommendations were not provided in this report. However, MDOD pledged to publish recommendations and anticipated fiscal impacts with its IT Accessibility Initiative action plan in May 2020. Additional information on this topic can be found in the first key observation of this analysis.

**Appendix 2
Audit Findings**

Audit Period for Last Audit:	January 5, 2015 – June 20, 2018
Issue Date:	June 2019
Number of Findings:	1
Number of Repeat Findings:	0
% of Repeat Findings:	0%
Rating: (if applicable)	n/a

Finding 1: The Maryland Department of Disabilities did not include sufficient details in its annual grant agreements with one grantee to enable effective monitoring of the grant and did not document that it verified performance of required work by the grantee.

**Appendix 3
Object/Fund Difference Report
Department of Disabilities**

<u>Object/Fund</u>	<u>FY 19 Actual</u>	<u>FY 20 Working Appropriation</u>	<u>FY 21 Allowance</u>	<u>FY 20 - FY 21 Amount Change</u>	<u>Percent Change</u>
Positions					
01 Regular	27.80	28.80	28.80	0.00	0%
02 Contractual	3.90	2.80	3.65	0.85	30.4%
Total Positions	31.70	31.60	32.45	0.85	2.7%
Objects					
01 Salaries and Wages	\$ 2,632,823	\$ 2,904,101	\$ 3,127,295	\$ 223,194	7.7%
02 Technical and Special Fees	223,635	171,464	203,080	31,616	18.4%
03 Communication	33,755	23,825	24,185	360	1.5%
04 Travel	85,081	77,816	88,388	10,572	13.6%
06 Fuel and Utilities	3,222	4,229	3,357	-872	-20.6%
07 Motor Vehicles	31,808	28,610	31,040	2,430	8.5%
08 Contractual Services	4,283,791	4,233,492	1,472,441	-2,761,051	-65.2%
09 Supplies and Materials	31,915	24,900	32,446	7,546	30.3%
10 Equipment – Replacement	13,760	26,458	9,200	-17,258	-65.2%
11 Equipment – Additional	54,054	40,000	18,300	-21,700	-54.3%
12 Grants, Subsidies, and Contributions	2,079,932	2,022,324	2,101,778	79,454	3.9%
13 Fixed Charges	157,618	147,357	173,413	26,056	17.7%
Total Objects	\$ 9,631,394	\$ 9,704,576	\$ 7,284,923	-\$ 2,419,653	-24.9%
Funds					
01 General Fund	\$ 3,239,149	\$ 3,727,536	\$ 3,943,928	\$ 216,392	5.8%
03 Special Fund	313,443	331,060	337,424	6,364	1.9%
05 Federal Fund	5,178,864	4,873,436	1,966,587	-2,906,849	-59.6%
09 Reimbursable Fund	899,938	772,544	1,036,984	264,440	34.2%
Total Funds	\$ 9,631,394	\$ 9,704,576	\$ 7,284,923	-\$ 2,419,653	-24.9%

Note: The fiscal 2020 appropriation does not include deficiencies, planned reversions, or general salary increases. The fiscal 2021 allowance does not include contingent reductions or general salary increases.