

# HOUSE BILL 384

O3, P1

5lr2026  
CF SB 157

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By: **Delegates Lehman, Acevero, Allen, Feldmark, Foley, Guyton, Guzzone, Harris, Ivey, Kaufman, J. Long, Patterson, Ruth, Spiegel, Taveras, Taylor, Terrasa, Turner, Williams, Wims, Woods, Woorman, and Ziegler**

Introduced and read first time: January 16, 2025

Assigned to: Health and Government Operations

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## A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Maryland Disability Service Animal Program – Established**

3 FOR the purpose of establishing the Maryland Disability Service Animal Program in the  
4 Department of Disabilities; requiring the Department to select a nonprofit training  
5 entity for participation in the Program; establishing the Maryland Disability Service  
6 Animal Program Fund as a special, nonlapsing fund; and generally relating to the  
7 Maryland Disability Service Animal Program.

8 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,  
9 Article – Human Services  
10 Section 7–114  
11 Annotated Code of Maryland  
12 (2019 Replacement Volume and 2024 Supplement)

13 BY adding to  
14 Article – Human Services  
15 Section 7–1201 through 7–1206 to be under the new subtitle “Subtitle 12. Maryland  
16 Disability Service Animal Program”  
17 Annotated Code of Maryland  
18 (2019 Replacement Volume and 2024 Supplement)

19 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,  
20 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

21 **Article – Human Services**

22 7–114.

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EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 (a) (1) The Department is the principal unit of State government responsible  
2 for developing, maintaining, revising, and enforcing statewide disability policies and  
3 standards throughout the units of State government.

4 (2) In this capacity, the Department shall:

5 (i) serve as the principal advisor to the Governor on the means and  
6 methods available to:

7 1. implement and fund support to individuals with  
8 disabilities in accordance with the State Disabilities Plan;

9 2. modify or consolidate support to individuals with  
10 disabilities; and

11 3. collaborate with federal, regional, and local units of  
12 government to enhance the effectiveness of the provision and funding of support to  
13 individuals with disabilities;

14 (ii) annually recommend projects to the Department of Budget and  
15 Management for inclusion in the capital budget to promote access to State-owned facilities  
16 for individuals with disabilities;

17 (iii) assist units of State government to identify federal, State, local,  
18 and private funds available to the State for programs and services for individuals with  
19 disabilities; and

20 (iv) provide technical assistance to local jurisdictions in planning and  
21 implementing collaborative strategies consistent with the State Disabilities Plan.

22 (b) The Department shall oversee and administer the following programs and  
23 units:

24 (1) constituent services and ombudsmen programs;

25 (2) the Assistive Technology Guaranteed Loan Program under Subtitle 6  
26 of this title;

27 (3) the Office of Personal Assistance Services, including the Attendant  
28 Care Program under Subtitle 4 of this title;

29 (4) Telecommunications Access of Maryland under Subtitle 8 of this title;  
30 [and]

31 (5) Telecommunications Devices and Distribution of Accessible  
32 Information for Disabled Individuals under Subtitle 9 of this title; **AND**

1           **(6) THE MARYLAND DISABILITY SERVICE ANIMAL PROGRAM UNDER**  
2 **SUBTITLE 12 OF THIS TITLE.**

3           **SUBTITLE 12. MARYLAND DISABILITY SERVICE ANIMAL PROGRAM.**

4 **7-1201.**

5           **(A) IN THIS SUBTITLE THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE MEANINGS**  
6 **INDICATED.**

7           **(B) “DEPARTMENT” MEANS THE DEPARTMENT OF DISABILITIES.**

8           **(C) “ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUAL” MEANS AN INDIVIDUAL WITH A DISABILITY, AS**  
9 **DEFINED IN THE FEDERAL AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT OF 1990, 42 U.S.C.**  
10 **§ 12102.**

11           **(D) “FUND” MEANS THE MARYLAND DISABILITY SERVICE ANIMAL**  
12 **PROGRAM FUND.**

13           **(E) “NONPROFIT TRAINING ENTITY” MEANS A CORPORATION, A**  
14 **FOUNDATION, OR ANY OTHER LEGAL ENTITY THAT:**

15                   **(1) IS TAX-EXEMPT UNDER § 501(C)(3) OF THE INTERNAL REVENUE**  
16 **CODE;**

17                   **(2) ENGAGES IN THE TRAINING OF SERVICE ANIMALS FOR USE BY**  
18 **ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS; AND**

19                   **(3) HAS BEEN SELECTED BY THE DEPARTMENT TO PROVIDE**  
20 **SERVICES UNDER THIS SUBTITLE.**

21           **(F) “PROGRAM” MEANS THE MARYLAND DISABILITY SERVICE ANIMAL**  
22 **PROGRAM ESTABLISHED UNDER THIS SUBTITLE.**

23           **(G) “PROGRAM PARTICIPANT” MEANS AN ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUAL WHO**  
24 **PARTICIPATES IN THE PROGRAM.**

25           **(H) (1) “SERVICE ANIMAL” MEANS AN ANIMAL THAT IS INDIVIDUALLY**  
26 **TRAINED TO DO WORK OR PERFORM TASKS FOR THE BENEFIT OF AN INDIVIDUAL**  
27 **WITH A DISABILITY.**

28                   **(2) “SERVICE ANIMAL” DOES NOT INCLUDE AN ANIMAL THAT:**

1 (I) AS A RESULT OF THE ANIMAL'S PRESENCE, IS MEANT TO  
2 DETER CRIME; OR

3 (II) PROVIDES ONLY EMOTIONAL SUPPORT, WELL-BEING,  
4 COMFORT, OR COMPANIONSHIP TO AN INDIVIDUAL.

5 (I) "SUCCESSFUL PROGRAM PARTICIPANT" MEANS A PROGRAM  
6 PARTICIPANT WHO SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETES THE TRAINING PROTOCOL  
7 SPECIFIED BY A NONPROFIT TRAINING ENTITY.

8 7-1202.

9 THERE IS A MARYLAND DISABILITY SERVICE ANIMAL PROGRAM IN THE  
10 DEPARTMENT.

11 7-1203.

12 THE PURPOSES OF THE PROGRAM ARE TO:

13 (1) REFER ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS WHO INQUIRE ABOUT  
14 PARTICIPATION IN THE PROGRAM TO ONE OR MORE NONPROFIT TRAINING  
15 ENTITIES;

16 (2) PROVIDE ADDITIONAL FUNDING MECHANISMS TO ASSIST  
17 ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS IN THE PROGRAM; AND

18 (3) ENCOURAGE SUCCESSFUL PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS TO ASSIST IN  
19 OUTREACH AND REFERRALS TO OTHER ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS WHO COULD  
20 BENEFIT FROM PARTICIPATION IN THE PROGRAM.

21 7-1204.

22 THE DEPARTMENT SHALL:

23 (1) MANAGE, SUPERVISE, AND ADMINISTER THE PROGRAM;

24 (2) ADOPT REGULATIONS TO IMPLEMENT THE PROGRAM AND TO  
25 ENSURE THAT FUND RESOURCES ARE UTILIZED TO CARRY OUT THE PURPOSES OF  
26 THE PROGRAM, INCLUDING REGULATIONS ESTABLISHING PROCEDURES FOR THE  
27 DEPARTMENT TO:

28 (I) PROMOTE THE PROGRAM TO ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS  
29 THROUGH THE DEPARTMENT'S OUTREACH METHODS;

1 (II) REFER ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS TO SELECTED NONPROFIT  
2 TRAINING ENTITIES;

3 (III) RECEIVE DONATIONS FOR THE FUND; AND

4 (IV) USE REVENUE FROM THE FUND TO PAY SELECTED  
5 NONPROFIT TRAINING ENTITIES FOR SERVICES THAT ARE PROVIDED THROUGH THE  
6 PROGRAM; AND

7 (3) SELECT AT LEAST ONE NONPROFIT TRAINING ENTITY TO:

8 (I) DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A TRAINING PROTOCOL THAT  
9 WILL TEACH EACH PROGRAM PARTICIPANT METHODOLOGIES, STRATEGIES, AND  
10 TECHNIQUES FOR PARTNERING WITH SERVICE ANIMALS;

11 (II) SELECT QUALIFIED PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS FROM THOSE  
12 ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS REFERRED TO THE NONPROFIT TRAINING ENTITY UNDER  
13 THE PROGRAM;

14 (III) SELECT AN APPROPRIATE SERVICE ANIMAL FOR EACH  
15 PROGRAM PARTICIPANT;

16 (IV) FACILITATE EACH PROGRAM PARTICIPANT'S TRAINING  
17 USING THE NONPROFIT TRAINING ENTITY'S TRAINING PROTOCOL; AND

18 (V) PARTNER EACH SUCCESSFUL PROGRAM PARTICIPANT WITH  
19 THE SERVICE ANIMAL ON THE PROGRAM PARTICIPANT'S SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION  
20 OF THE NONPROFIT TRAINING ENTITY'S TRAINING PROTOCOL.

21 7-1205.

22 (A) TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR SELECTION AS A NONPROFIT TRAINING ENTITY  
23 UNDER § 7-1204 OF THIS SUBTITLE, A NONPROFIT TRAINING ENTITY SHALL:

24 (1) SERVE THE NEEDS OF ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS IN THE STATE; AND

25 (2) GENERATE ITS OWN REVENUE AND REINVEST THE PROCEEDS OF  
26 THAT REVENUE IN THE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF ITS PROGRAMS.

27 (B) A NONPROFIT TRAINING ENTITY MAY DISQUALIFY A PROGRAM  
28 PARTICIPANT FROM PARTICIPATION IN THE PROGRAM IF THE NONPROFIT  
29 TRAINING ENTITY DETERMINES THAT THE PROGRAM PARTICIPANT'S INVOLVEMENT  
30 IN THE PROGRAM:

1           **(1) PRESENTS A DANGER TO THE PROGRAM PARTICIPANT'S MENTAL**  
2 **OR PHYSICAL WELL-BEING;**

3           **(2) PRESENTS A DIRECT THREAT TO OTHERS, AS DEFINED BY THE**  
4 **FEDERAL AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT;**

5           **(3) PRESENTS A DIRECT THREAT TO THE SERVICE ANIMAL'S MENTAL**  
6 **OR PHYSICAL WELL-BEING; OR**

7           **(4) DOES NOT MEET THE TRAINING REQUIREMENTS OF THE**  
8 **NONPROFIT.**

9           **(C) A PROGRAM PARTICIPANT MAY DISCONTINUE INVOLVEMENT IN THE**  
10 **PROGRAM FOR ANY REASON.**

11 **7-1206.**

12           **(A) THERE IS A MARYLAND DISABILITY SERVICE ANIMAL PROGRAM FUND.**

13           **(B) THE PURPOSE OF THE FUND IS TO:**

14                   **(1) PAY A NONPROFIT TRAINING ENTITY; AND**

15                   **(2) COVER THE COSTS OF ADMINISTERING THE PROGRAM.**

16           **(C) THE SECRETARY SHALL ADMINISTER THE FUND.**

17           **(D) (1) THE FUND IS A SPECIAL, NONLAPSING FUND THAT IS NOT**  
18 **SUBJECT TO § 7-302 OF THE STATE FINANCE AND PROCUREMENT ARTICLE.**

19                   **(2) THE STATE TREASURER SHALL HOLD THE FUND, AND THE**  
20 **COMPTROLLER SHALL ACCOUNT FOR THE FUND.**

21           **(E) (1) THE FUND CONSISTS OF:**

22                           **(I) REVENUE COLLECTED BY THE DEPARTMENT IN THE FORM**  
23 **OF DONATIONS TO THE PROGRAM;**

24                           **(II) MONEY APPROPRIATED IN THE STATE BUDGET TO THE**  
25 **FUND; AND**

26                           **(III) ANY OTHER MONEY FROM ANY OTHER SOURCE ACCEPTED**  
27 **FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE FUND.**

1           **(2) EXPENDITURES FROM THE FUND MAY BE MADE ONLY IN**  
2 **ACCORDANCE WITH THE STATE BUDGET.**

3           **(3) MONEY EXPENDED FROM THE FUND IS SUPPLEMENTAL TO AND IS**  
4 **NOT INTENDED TO TAKE THE PLACE OF FUNDING THAT OTHERWISE WOULD BE**  
5 **APPROPRIATED FOR THE PROGRAM.**

6           **(F) THE FUND MAY BE USED ONLY TO PAY:**

7                 **(1) A NONPROFIT TRAINING ENTITY; AND**

8                 **(2) ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS OF THE PROGRAM.**

9           **(G) (1) THE STATE TREASURER SHALL INVEST AND REINVEST THE**  
10 **MONEY OF THE FUND IN THE SAME MANNER AS OTHER STATE MONEY MAY BE**  
11 **INVESTED.**

12                 **(2) ANY INVESTMENT EARNINGS OF THE FUND SHALL BE CREDITED**  
13 **TO THE GENERAL FUND OF THE STATE.**

14           **(H) FOR THE PURPOSE OF IMPLEMENTING THIS SECTION, THE**  
15 **DEPARTMENT MAY ACCEPT GIFTS OR GRANTS FOR DONATION TO THE FUND.**

16           SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect  
17 October 1, 2025.