

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2025 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 1481 (Delegate Hill, *et al.*)
Health and Government Operations

Disability Services - Adapted Vehicle Access Pilot Program - Established

This bill establishes the Adapted Vehicle Access Pilot Program in the Maryland Department of Disabilities (MDOD) to provide “adapted vehicles” to “eligible individuals” who do not qualify for other programs offered by MDOD that provide access to adapted vehicles. MDOD must (1) prioritize individuals who reside in areas with limited access to public transportation and (2) solicit donations of vehicles, vehicle modification and adaptive services, and funds from individuals or public or private corporations to implement the program. MDOD may apply for, receive, and spend federal funds and grants for the program. By December 1, 2028, MDOD must report to the Governor and the General Assembly on (1) the number of recipients of vehicles under the program; (2) how the program has affected recipients’ independence, mobility, job opportunities, and dependency on public subsidies; (3) the availability of vehicles, modification and adaptation services, and funds; and (4) a recommendation on whether the program should be extended or expanded. **The bill terminates September 30, 2030.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill’s requirements can likely be absorbed within existing budgeted resources, as discussed below. To the extent MDOD applies for and receives federal funds and grants for the pilot program or funds from individuals or public or private corporations, federal and special fund revenues and expenditures increase by an indeterminate amount beginning as early as FY 2026 through 2030.

Local Effect: The bill does not materially affect local government operations of finances.

Small Business Effect: Minimal.

Analysis

Bill Summary: “Adapted vehicle” means a motor vehicle that has been modified to be operated by an individual who requires a wheelchair for mobility. “Eligible individual” means an individual who requires a wheelchair for mobility, is a licensed driver, and is qualified to drive an adapted vehicle.

Current Law: MDOD must oversee and administer constituent services and ombudsmen programs, the Assistive Technology Guaranteed Loan Program, the Office of Personal Assistance Services (including the Attendant Care Program), Telecommunications Access of Maryland, and Telecommunications Devices and Distribution of Accessible Information for Disabled Individuals.

Maryland Technology Assistance Program

The Technology-Related Assistance for Individuals with Disabilities Act (Tech Act) of 1988 authorized grants to states to fund and establish a national network of state programs for assistive technology. The Assistive Technology Act of 1998 (AT Act) further expanded access to assistive technology and increased the availability of technology that enabled individuals with disabilities to live, work, and more independently participate in their communities. The AT Act provided grants to state programs that helped individuals with disabilities access assistive technology. The AT Act has not been reauthorized since 2004.

Enacted in December 2022, the 21st Century Assistive Technology Act is a modernization of the AT Act and aims to increase the quality of life and expand work opportunities for individuals with disabilities through increased access to technology, equipment, and services. Each state is granted flexibility to determine how federal funds are allocated among four key pillars: device demonstration; device loans; device reutilization; and state financing.

The Maryland Technology Assistance Program (MDTAP) was established by MDOD in 1989 to implement federal grant funds authorized under the Tech Act. Grant funds were most recently reauthorized in 2022 under the 21st Century Assistive Technology Act. Since its inception, MDTAP has been fully funded through federal grants.

Through the [Maryland Assistive Technology Reuse Center](#), MDTAP solicits assistive technology donations and connects donors directly to recipients in need. MDOD advises that the reuse center has facilitated the donation of an adapted vehicle in the past.

Assistive Technology Guaranteed Loan Program

MDTAP operates the Assistive Technology Guaranteed Loan Program to provide eligible individuals with disabilities and their families low-interest loans to buy assistive

technology equipment (including [vehicles and vehicle modifications](#)) to help the individual live, work, and learn more independently. An applicant must demonstrate (1) that the loan or subsidy of loan interest will be used to buy assistive technology; (2) the ability to repay the loan; (3) creditworthiness; and (4) the inability to qualify for a loan from a lending institution without a loan guarantee or interest subsidy.

State Fiscal Effect: MDOD advises that the Adapted Vehicle Access Pilot Program can generally be incorporated into Assistive Technology Guaranteed Loan Program operations using existing budgeted resources, as the pilot program is generally an extension of activities already performed by MDTAP under the loan program.

The fiscal 2026 budget as introduced includes approximately \$1.3 million in federal fund revenues and expenditures for MDTAP, which includes personnel and program expenses. MDOD advises that MDTAP currently searches and applies for private and public funds and grants, including federal grants, to supplement federal Tech Act grants included in the fiscal 2026 budget. To the extent that MDTAP solicits additional funds for the pilot program from the federal government or from individuals or public or private corporations, federal and special fund revenues and expenditures increase as early as fiscal 2026 through 2030 (to reflect the bill's September 30, 2030 termination date). This analysis assumes any monetary donations would be treated as special funds and restricted to use by the program.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland Department of Disabilities; Maryland Department of Transportation; Department of Legislative Services

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rh/jc

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