



Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council

CREATING CHANGE • IMPROVING LIVES

House Appropriations Committee

February 4, 2025

HB 502: Office of Disability Employment Advancement and Policy and Maryland as a Model Employer Initiative – Established

Position: **Support**

The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council (DD Council), a statewide public policy organization led by people with developmental disabilities and their families, creates change to make it possible for people with developmental disabilities to lead the lives they want with the support they need. **By increasing employment opportunities and promoting economic mobility for more Marylanders,** HB 502 is another step to make sure that happens.

What does this legislation do?

- Establishes the Office of Disability Employment Advancement and Policy within the Department of Disabilities
- Creates the Maryland as a Model Employer Initiative to promote the recruitment, hiring, retention, and career advancement of people with disabilities across State government.

WHY is it important?

- **People with developmental disabilities need and want to work, earn real wages with benefits, and thrive in Maryland's economy.** The Initiative includes activities that support people with disabilities to get and keep jobs in State government. This includes outreach, recruitment, supportive resources, identification of barriers and help to remove them, strategic planning, and data tracking.
- **More work is needed to close the employment gap for people with disabilities.**
 - Only **45% of Marylanders with disabilities** (ages 18-64) are employed
 - **79% of those without disabilities** are employed
- **People with developmental disabilities are historically underemployed and unemployed.** According to public data:
 - **27.6% of people supported by DDA providers worked in individual competitive jobs, and only 35% of those people worked more than 20 hours per week.**

- **This bill helps many Marylanders while also addressing workforce shortages.** Maryland faces a **severe worker shortage**, with only **40 workers available for every 100 jobs** (Maryland Chamber of Commerce). Tapping into the underutilized talent pool of individuals with disabilities can help fill these gaps.
 - 24% of Marylanders have a disability.

Contact: Rachel London, Executive Director: RLondon@md-council.org