



# MARYLAND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES COALITION

Dedicated to the rights and quality of life for people with developmental disabilities in Maryland

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**



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The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Coalition (DD Coalition) is comprised of five statewide organizations that are committed to improving the opportunities and outcomes for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) and their families. As such, the DD Coalition supports HB 502.



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### 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.



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### WHY is this legislation important?

- **More needs to be done to address employment gaps.** People with developmental disabilities need and want to work, earn real wages with benefits, and thrive in Maryland's economy.
  - Only **45% of Marylanders with disabilities** (ages 18-64) are employed
  - **79% of those without disabilities** are employed
- **More needs to be done to improve economic outcomes.** People with intellectual and 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 Marylanders with disabilities while helping with 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.
- **Creates a more inclusive workforce.** Modeled on the nationally recognized State as a Model Employer (SAME) Initiative, Maryland State government will serve as a model employer for private-sector business by committing to improve hiring, recruitment, retention, and advancement of people with disabilities in the State workforce.



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