



Proposed Legislation-2026 Session

Department of Disabilities - Housing Programs and Affiliated Foundations - Establishment
SB22/HB226

Summary

This bill would authorize the Maryland Department of Disabilities (MDOD) to establish one or more independent, non-government foundations to support its programs. These foundations could raise funds, apply for grants, and form private partnerships to benefit MDOD initiatives that support assistive technology, employment, and affordable housing for people with disabilities.

Fiscal Note

There is NO COST for this legislation. MDOD will create the affiliated foundation using existing resources. The affiliated foundation will then be self-supporting.

Background

This proposed bill is modeled on successful legislation submitted by the Department of Natural Resources, HB 717 (2025). The legislation is also based on other relatively recent examples in State law, such as Stadium Authority's affiliated foundation, which was created under HB 1619 (2017).

Problem Solved

MDOD has identified four programs that need funding for sustainability or growth and are strong candidates for public-private partnerships. While MDOD actively seeks grants and partnerships, affiliated foundations would gain greater access to fundraising, private grants, and innovative collaboration opportunities if this legislation is enacted.



For more information : **Anne Blackfield, Deputy Secretary**
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The programs and units of MDOD that would work with the affiliated foundation(s) are:

Maryland Technology Assistance Program (MDTAP)



The Maryland Assistive Technology Program (MDTAP) provides assistive technology lending libraries for people with disabilities, especially for education and employment. Fully funded by a federal grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Administration on Community Living, MDTAP has faced rising costs and uncertain future funding. This has limited its ability to expand or update its libraries.

Assistive Technology Guaranteed Loan Program (ATLP)



The Assistive Technology Guaranteed Loan Program (ATLP) offers low-interest loans to people with disabilities for assistive technology or adapted vehicles to support education or employment. Funded by repayments and interest, ATLP's growth is limited due to its low-interest model. While it has received federal grants from ACL, the future of this support is uncertain.

Office of Disability Employment Advancement and Policy (ODEAP)



The Office of Disability Employment Advancement and Policy (ODEAP), established by the General Assembly in 2025 as part of the Model Employer Act (HB 502), will lead the State as a Model Employer (SAME) initiative to improve hiring and retention of people with disabilities in State government. Philanthropists have shown interest in supporting this effort but prefer donating to a non-governmental entity for tax reasons.

Affordable Apartments Program



The Affordable Apartments Program, which was started by a partnership with the Weinberg Foundation to provide integrated, affordable, and accessible units to people with disabilities. The private partnerships with the Weinberg Foundation ended, preventing the programs from expanding beyond their current capacity.



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