



**SB 1015: Developmental Disabilities Administration - Services -
Eligibility for Recently Relocated Individuals - Ralph's Bill
February 19, 2026 Position: Favorable**

The Maryland Down Syndrome Advocacy Coalition (MDAC) is a coalition of the five Down syndrome organizations in Maryland, as well as individuals with Down syndrome and their family members. We have come together to advocate for improved quality of life for all individuals with Down syndrome throughout Maryland.

MDAC supports House Bill 1015: Developmental Disabilities Administration - Services - Eligibility for Recently Relocated Individuals (Ralph's Act) to ensure individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD,) such as Down syndrome, who relocate to Maryland after the death or incapacitation of a caregiver, can continue receiving critical services from Maryland's Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) without being trapped for years on a waitlist. The bill stipulates that those individuals moving to Maryland after a caregiver crisis will receive an expedited eligibility review that can begin even before the individual moves to Maryland, which is a vital piece to making sure there is no delay in services.

Our favorable position is in line with MDAC's Guiding Principle: "Adults with Down syndrome and other intellectual disabilities should control where and with whom they live, have the freedom to choose their daily routines and other activities, and have opportunities to rent or buy their own homes. Home and community-based services (HCBS) and long-term services and supports should be readily available, easily accessible, fully funded, flexible, and implemented as soon as the need arises."

Individuals with Down syndrome often receive supportive Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS,) such as personal supports for activities of daily living, and employment coaching. These supports mean disabled Marylanders can live safely and independently in their community of choice, a right as per the 1999 Olmstead decision.¹

The DDA services waitlist is significant: "at the end of fiscal 2025, the registries ranged from 3,465 for the Community Services waitlist to 23,461 for the Community Options Waiver registry."² Note that the names of the waivers have changed since those numbers were captured, however the long waitlists remain relevant. Waitlists for services are dangerous and degrading to individuals with Down syndrome and those with other IDD who may need support to safely live independently. Further, it is cruel that in the face of a family or caregiver death or injury, an individual with IDD would need to uproot their life in another state, change their routines, and also have less support in Maryland than before.

¹ <https://www.olmsteadrights.org/about-olmstead/>

² <https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/pubs/budgetfiscal/2027fy-budget-docs-operating-M00-MDH-Overview.pdf>

By addressing this subset of disabled individuals, the state of Maryland will have a stronger opportunity to prevent costly crises, avoid costly institutionalization and hospitalization, and confirm that Maryland's leaders care for and respect some of their most vulnerable disabled citizens. For these reasons, we urge a favorable report on House Bill 1015.

Respectfully submitted,

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