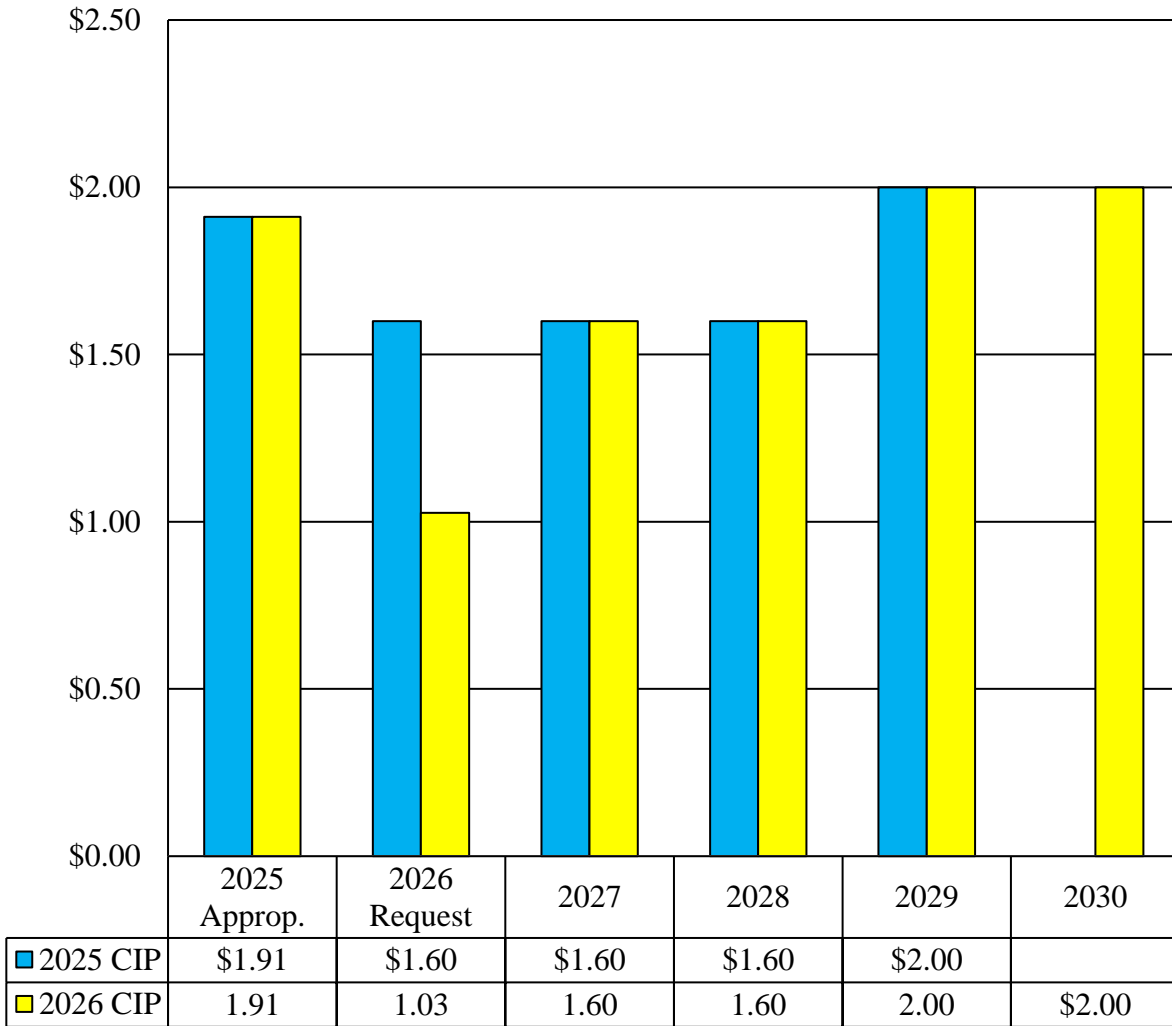


DA0201
Department of Disabilities – Capital

Capital Budget Summary

Grant and Loan *Capital Improvement Program*
(\$ in Millions)



CIP: *Capital Improvement Program*

Note: Access Maryland CIP is funded entirely with general obligation bonds.

Key Observations

- ***Seven Projects Funded Across Four Jurisdictions:*** The fiscal 2026 budget for the Maryland Department of Disabilities (MDOD) Access Maryland program allocates \$1.027 million in general obligation (GO) bonds. This funding will support seven projects: two for design only; four for construction only; and one involving both design and construction.
- ***Encumbrance Challenges in the MDOD Budget:*** As of February 2025, MDOD has expended \$468,000 of its authorized \$2.028 million allocation for fiscal 2024. While for projects authorized in fiscal 2025, MDOD has expended \$393,063.52. This reflects a continuing trend of low annual encumbrances and significant unencumbered balances from previous years. Further details on MDOD’s encumbrance issues are provided in Issue 1 of this analysis.

GO Bond Recommended Actions

1. Approve the general obligation bond authorization for the Access Maryland program.

Budget Overview of Grant and Loan Programs

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires State agencies to ensure that individuals with disabilities can access public services and programs. In compliance with the ADA, MDOD manages the Access Maryland program, which funds accessibility modifications at State-owned facilities. Rented space is not eligible for funding. Projects funded within this program are part of a long-term effort, and the program will require funding beyond the current *Capital Improvement Program*. Since fiscal 2020, higher education institutions within the University System of Maryland are required to contribute a 30% non-State match to any Access Maryland-funded project.

New Policy to Address Project Backlogs

Beginning with the fiscal 2025 application cycle, MDOD implemented a policy limiting the number of open project phases per agency. Under this policy, an agency, subagency, or campus may have no more than three active project phases before submitting a new application. This change aims to address capacity concerns, stemming from entities repeatedly initiating new accessibility funding requests while maintaining backlogs of approved projects that remain stalled.

Exhibit 1 shows MDOD’s funding in the Governor’s budget as introduced. The fiscal 2026 authorization of new GO bonds for the Access Maryland program totals \$1.027 million to support

one ongoing and six new higher education projects. From these seven projects, two are for design only, four for construction only, and one involves both design and construction.

Exhibit 1
Access Maryland Fiscal 2026 Request
(\$ in Thousands)

<u>Project Description</u>	<u>Estimated Total</u>	<u>Prior Auth.</u>	<u>2026 Request</u>	<u>Total State Share</u>
University of Maryland, Baltimore Campus (Baltimore City) – Construct restroom renovations on floor 2 of the Bressler Research Building. The fiscal 2026 budget includes funding to design and construct the restroom renovations.	\$210	–	\$147	70.0%
Towson University (Baltimore County) – Van Bokkelen Hall Elevator Renovation. Renovate the existing elevator to comply with 2010 ADA standards and to address reliability issues due to age. The fiscal 2026 budget includes funding for the construction of this project.	230	–	160	69.6%
University of Maryland Baltimore County (Baltimore County) – Meyerhoff Chemistry Building Teaching Labs Modifications. Modify four existing teaching labs to allow students with disabilities to fully participate in critical chemistry and biochemistry lab courses. The fiscal 2026 budget includes funding to complete construction of this project.	959	\$268	403	70.0%
University of Maryland (Prince George’s) – Renovate men’s restroom in McKeldin Library to comply with 2010 ADA Standards. The fiscal 2026 budget includes funding for design of this project.	352	–	46	60.2%

DA0201 – Department of Disabilities – Capital

<u>Project Description</u>	<u>Estimated Total</u>	<u>Prior Auth.</u>	<u>2026 Request</u>	<u>Total State Share</u>
University of Maryland (Prince George’s) – Renovate restrooms in McKeldin Library to comply with 2010 ADA standards. The fiscal 2026 budget includes funding for design of this project.	208	–	27	60.1%
St. Mary’s College of Maryland (St. Mary’s) – Construct entry access improvements at the rear entrance to Dorchester Hall, giving students access to an additional floor of dorm rooms, the recreation room, kitchen, and laundry facilities. Provide lobby restroom improvements, including new doors, fixtures, grab bars, and finishes to be fully ADA compliant. The fiscal 2026 budget includes funding for the construction of this project.	176	–	176	100.0%
St. Mary’s College of Maryland (St. Mary’s) – Prince George’s Hall Entry and Access Improvements – Phase II. Construct entry and access improvements to Prince George’s Hall to provide wheelchair-using students access to an additional floor of bedrooms and common-use elements of the building. The fiscal 2026 budget includes funding to construct this project.	68	–	68	100.0%
Total New Funds	\$2,203	\$268	\$1,027	

ADA: Americans with Disabilities Act

Source: Department of Budget and Management

Issues

1. Maryland Department of Disabilities Maintains Significant Balance

Exhibit 2 provides an overview of various accessibility-related projects authorized across different fiscal years. It shows that as of February 2025, from fiscal 2021 to 2025, only 29% of the total \$7.9 million authorized has been encumbered or expended, highlighting a potential slow pace of project execution. Project progress within the Access Maryland program presents a diverse range of outcomes:

- projects authorized in fiscal 2025 include upgrades to automated doors, restrooms, signage, and accessibility improvements in multiple facilities. Among these, the Towson University Interior Sign Replacement and Wayfinding Upgrades project has fully expended its funds and is scheduled for completion in August 2025. Other projects, such as the Department of General Services (DGS) Community Place upgrades, have encumbered partial funds, while several others, including bathroom renovations at the University of Maryland’s Atlantic Building, have not yet incurred expenditures;
- for fiscal 2024, projects range from restroom and wheelchair lift upgrades to accessible building modifications. The Stephens Hall Wheelchair Lift Replacement at Towson University has been completed, while the University of Maryland Baltimore County (UMBC) Biological Science Building project is progressing through the construction phase. However, some projects remain in early stages, such as the Public Relations Building accessibility upgrades at Historic St. Mary’s City, which is still in the design phase;
- among fiscal 2023 projects, the Meyerhoff Chemistry Building accessibility modifications at UMBC are on hold due to higher costs, with plans to apply for additional funding in fiscal 2027. Meanwhile, the University of Maryland, Baltimore Campus Curb Ramps and Driveway Crossings Project is expected to enter the construction phase in April 2025;
- older projects, dating back to fiscal 2021 and 2022, exhibit varying progress. The Susquehanna State Campground Access project is under construction, while the Clifton Perkins Hospital wheelchair evacuation route ramps have faced delays due to on-site issues. Several projects managed by DGS, such as the Elkton District Court wheelchair ramp, have encountered design-related delays requiring reconfigurations; and
- most projects remain on schedule, though some have been delayed due to design changes, cost overruns, or interagency coordination challenges.

Exhibit 2
Status of Active Projects for the Access Maryland Program

Fiscal Year	Project Title	Authorizations	Encumbered	Expended	% Encumbered	Estimated Project Completion Date	Status
2025	DGS – Community Place – Automated Doors and Restroom Upgrades	\$1,404,000	\$347,064	\$347,064	25%	Early 2026	On schedule.
2025	DGS – Historic State House – Restroom Upgrades	1,603,000	0	0	0%	Mid-Late 2026	On schedule.
2025	TU – Interior Sign Replacement and Wayfinding Upgrades	210,000	210,000	210,000	100%	August 2025	On schedule.
2025	UMD – Atlantic Building – Bathroom Renovations	148,000	0	0	0%	June 2025	On schedule.
2025	HSMCC – Plantation Exhibit Visitor Restroom Facility Upgrades	650,000	0	0	0%	Early 2026	On schedule.
2025	SMCM – Prince George’s Hall Accessibility Improvements	84,000	0	0	0%	June 2025	On schedule.

<u>Fiscal Year Initially Authorized</u>	<u>Project Title</u>	<u>Authorizations</u>	<u>Encumbered</u>	<u>Expended</u>	<u>% Encumbered</u>	<u>Estimated Project Completion Date</u>	<u>Status</u>
2024	DGS – Central Services Building – Various Upgrades	945,000	0	0	0%	Early 2026	On schedule.
2024	TU – Stephens Hall – Wheelchair Lift Replacement	84,000	84,000	84,000	100%	January 2025	Complete.
2024	UMBC – Biological Science Building – Accessible Restrooms	220,000	20,000	220,000	100%	Late 2026	On schedule – construction phase.
2024	UMCP – Atlantic Building – Accessible Restrooms	42,000	0	0	0%	February 2025	On schedule.
2024	HSMCC – Public Relations Building – Accessible Restrooms and ADA Entrance	450,000	0	0	0%	Spring 2026	In design process – plans being examined by Technical Review Team.
2023	UMBC – Meyerhoff Chemistry Building Teach Labs Modifications – Classroom Accessibility	268,000	66,236	66,236	25%	Unknown	Project on hold due to higher costs. UMBC will apply for additional funding in fiscal 2027.

<u>Fiscal Year Initially Authorized</u>	<u>Project Title</u>	<u>Authorizations</u>	<u>Encumbered</u>	<u>Expended</u>	<u>% Encumbered</u>	<u>Estimated Project Completion Date</u>	<u>Status</u>
2023	UMB – Curb Ramps and Driveway Crossings Project	386,480	60,480	60,480	16%	Early 2026	Project will move into construction phase in April 2025.
2022	DNR – Susquehanna State Campground Access – ADA Parking, Signage, and Pathway	210,000	0	0	0%	Fiscal 2026	Currently in construction phase.
2022	HSMCC – State House Accessible Restrooms	490,000	65,652	65,652	13%	Fiscal 2027	Delays due to issues between HSMCC and BPW.
2021	MDH – Clifton Perkins Hospital Wheelchair Evacuation Route Ramps	450,000	61,857	61,857	14%	Late 2026	Delays due to on-site issues undetected at the time of application.
2021	DGS – Hargrove Court Building – Auto Door Openers	50,000	14,750	0	30%	Late 2026	Delays due to design has to be reconfigured.

<u>Fiscal Year Initially Authorized</u>	<u>Project Title</u>	<u>Authorizations</u>	<u>Encumbered</u>	<u>Expended</u>	<u>% Encumbered</u>	<u>Estimated Project Completion Date</u>	<u>Status</u>
2021	DGS – Elkton District Court – Wheelchair Ramp	175,000	22,750	0	13%	Late 2026	Delays due to design has to be reconfigured.
2021	DGS – Salisbury Multi-Service Center – Public Restroom Access	75,000	7,250	0	10%	Fiscal 2027	Delays due to extra work needed on site to the restrooms and the ramp. Agency needs to reapply for extra funds.
Total		\$7,944,480	\$1,160,039	\$1,115,289	15%		

ADA: Americans with Disabilities Act
 BPW: Board of Public Works
 DGS: Department of General Services
 DNR: Department of Natural Resources
 HSMCC: Historic St. Mary’s City Commission
 MDH: Maryland Department of Health
 TU: Towson University
 UMB: University of Maryland, Baltimore Campus
 UMBC: University of Maryland Baltimore County
 UMCP: University of Maryland, College Park Campus
 UMD: University of Maryland

Source: Maryland Department of Disabilities

Delays in Fund Allocation and Project Progress

Obstacles or Delays Affecting Fund Allocation and Spending

State agencies and universities continue to face challenges in fully encumbering funds due to project delays and rising costs, often necessitating project rebidding, staffing changes, and issues encountered during planning and design. These factors must be resolved before construction begins, leading to slower project progress and delays in utilizing allocated funding.

Efforts to Address These Challenges in Future Budget Cycles

According to the agency, the responsibility for encumbering funds in a timely manner lies with the agencies and universities managing the projects. MDOD indicates that the Access Maryland program provides ongoing support through multiple annual webinars for project managers, including targeted sessions for those managing open projects or newly awarded funding. Direct outreach efforts also offer one-on-one assistance throughout the funding cycle.

To improve project completion timelines, MDOD reports the use of the following strategies:

- limiting the number of open projects per agency or university;
- establishing deadlines for encumbering funds within each project cycle;
- allocating a small contingency fund for cost overruns to help projects reach completion; and
- funding projects by phase (*e.g.*, design versus construction) to ensure that funds are expended efficiently within each fiscal year.

Impact on Funding Priorities for Future Projects

If a project is canceled due to inaction or lack of progress, the previously allocated funds may be redirected. These funds could support an existing project that has exceeded its budget, a new project requesting funding in a different fiscal year, or another eligible project from the current application cycle, if identified in time. **Given the substantial funds earmarked for encumbrance, MDOD should comment on the adoption of a cash flow management procedure commencing in the next budget cycle. This initiative will enhance the assurance that funds are disbursed efficiently and effectively, thereby optimizing resource utilization and program outcomes.**