

BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE MARYLAND: SUPPORTING INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

BACKGROUND:

Nearly 670,000 Marylanders live with a disability, including nearly 100,000 students and 325,000 working-aged people. People with disabilities in Maryland are working as educators, entrepreneurs, public servants, and serving in other vital roles. However, this community, from birth through adulthood, still faces tremendous disparities related to education, employment, and economic well-being. Marylanders with disabilities face disproportionately high rates of unemployment at 56%, and 62% of Black Marylanders with disabilities experience unemployment. Additionally, nearly one-fourth of Marylanders with disabilities are living in poverty. Maryland's economy cannot truly thrive until every person, regardless of their abilities, is able to succeed and thrive.

WES' VISION:

Wes recognizes that our families, communities, state and economy cannot thrive until every Marylander has the ability to access better work, wages, and wealth. As governor, Wes will build an inclusive economy and:

- Partner with child care and early learning programs to improve screening protocols, identify disabilities earlier, and connect families with early intervention services.
- Ensure students with disabilities are able to succeed and learn safely by fully funding and implementing the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, urging Congress to fully fund the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and address critical staffing shortages.
- Partner with Maryland's disability rights and advocacy organizations to improve access to community programs, secure additional waiver slots for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and more.
- Promote economic mobility by establishing set asides in state apprenticeship and training programs for people with disabilities and partnering with the business community to develop new employment programs and incentives to encourage companies to hire people with disabilities.
- Work with Maryland's world-class institutions of higher education, community college system and other stakeholders to build and strengthen specialized job training, apprenticeship, degree, and certification programs and ensure necessary wraparound services are in place to support completion.
- Make it easier for Marylanders with disabilities to start and grow businesses by streamlining the process to obtain an MBE certification, reforming the procurement process so business owners with disabilities can compete for and win state contracts, and ensure every state agency meets their MBE targets.
- Increase investments in supportive housing, which connects people with disabilities with the housing and the wraparound services they need to live and thrive in their communities.
- Improve transportation options by expanding Maryland's MobilityLink/Paratransit service so that more Marylanders can have access to the mobility and transportation options needed to work, shop, and enjoy all our state has to offer.



"MARYLAND IS AN INCREDIBLY DIVERSE STATE, and we are strongest when we recognize and celebrate the contributions of every resident, regardless of their background or ability status. As governor, I will be laser-focused on building an inclusive economy from cradle-to-career that creates opportunities and lifts every Marylander up." — **Wes Moore**

