

# State of Maryland

## Commission on Civil Rights

*“Our vision is to have a State that is free from any trace of unlawful discrimination.”*



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### **Maryland Commission on Civil Rights Statement Celebrating The Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act**

During this month of Americans with Disabilities awareness, the Board of the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights celebrates all persons with visible and invisible disabilities.

Since its enactment on July 26, 1990, the Americans with Disabilities Act, as amended, and its state-based equivalent statutory protections have provided protections for disability access and inclusion, prohibiting discrimination on the basis of disability in employment, in public accommodation, in public services, in transportation, and in telecommunications. Former President George H. W. Bush called the Act “a new birth of freedom” for Americans who identify as having a disability. This landmark civil rights law has changed society from benevolence towards disability to acceptance. Yet copious work remains.

Maryland protects people with disabilities both in Title 20, State Government Article, and in Sections 7-701 to 7-710, Human Services Title. While these laws provide protections, they must be enforced and awareness must continue to be raised to promote equitable access and acceptance of persons with disabilities.

The recent litigation in Baltimore City, Maryland, asserting a lack of curb ramps and sidewalk maintenance in violation of federal accessibility requirements shows the ongoing need for diligence in promoting compliance with existing laws.

According to the 2018 Disability Status Report, the most recent available, the prevalence of Marylanders with a disability was 11.2% overall, increasing from 5.2% in children between the ages of 5 to 15 to 43.8 percent for persons ages 75 and over.<sup>1</sup>

One area in which persons with disabilities experience discrimination includes seeking and obtaining accessible and equitable housing. On July 28, 2021, at 10:00 a.m. the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights will be hosting an event titled “Fair Housing: Know Your Rights” – a workshop to provide information on the laws under the Fair Housing Act, which provides protections that exist for all Marylanders. This event will include an emphasis on disabilities as it relates to housing. You can register for this free event [here](#).

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<sup>1</sup> Erickson, W., Lee, C., & von Schrader, S. (2020). 2018 Disability Status Report: United States. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Yang-Tan Institute on Employment and Disability(YTI).

Finally, the Commission looks forward to working the Maryland Commission on Disabilities, an advisory body, as well as with the Maryland Department of Disabilities to promote equitable housing and employment for Marylanders with disabilities.