

**CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL 25-0126
(First Reader)**

Introduced by: Councilmember Ramos
Cosponsored by: Councilmembers Parker, Conway, Gray, Bullock, Schleifer, Middleton,
Torrence, Porter, Blanchard, Jones, and Glover, and President Cohen

Introduced and read first time: November 24, 2025

Assigned to: Public Health and Environment Committee

REFERRED TO THE FOLLOWING AGENCIES: City Solicitor, Department of Finance,
Office of the City Administrator, Office of Equity and Civil Rights, Mayor's Office of Immigrant
Affairs

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ORDINANCE concerning

2 **Accessibility in City Programs, Services, and Activities**

3 FOR the purpose of implementing subtitle A of title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of
4 1990, as amended, and 28 CFR Part 35 {"Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disability in
5 State and Local Government Services"}; establishing the mandate that no qualified individual
6 with a disability shall, on the basis of disability, be excluded from participation in or be
7 denied the benefits of the services, programs, or activities of a City agency, or be subjected to
8 discrimination by a City agency; defining certain terms; establishing a special effective date;
9 and generally relating to the provision of public services to qualified individuals with a
10 disability.

11 BY adding

12 Article 1 - Mayor, City Council, and Municipal Agencies
13 Sections 4-1 to 4-11 to be under the new subtitle designation,
14 "Subtitle 4. Accessibility in City Programs, Services, and Activities"
15 Baltimore City Code
16 (Edition 2000)

17 **SECTION 1. BE IT ORDAINED BY THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE,** That the
18 Laws of Baltimore City read as follows:

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS indicate matter added to existing law.
[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.

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Baltimore City Code

Article 1. Mayor, City Council, and Municipal Agencies

SUBTITLE 4. ACCESSIBILITY IN CITY PROGRAMS, SERVICES, AND ACTIVITIES

§ 4-1. DEFINITIONS.

(A) *IN GENERAL.*

(1) *IN SUBTITLE.*

IN THIS SUBTITLE, THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE MEANINGS INDICATED.

(2) *TERMS NOT DEFINED.*

ANY TERM USED BUT NOT DEFINED IN THIS SUBTITLE SHALL HAVE THE MEANING AS STATED IN THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT OF 1990, AS AMENDED, AND THE FEDERAL REGULATIONS PROMULGATED PURSUANT THERETO, AS AMENDED.

(B) *ADA.*

“ADA” MEANS THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT OF 1990, AS AMENDED, AND THE FEDERAL REGULATIONS PROMULGATED PURSUANT THERETO, AS AMENDED.

(C) *ADA COORDINATOR.*

“ADA COORDINATOR” MEANS A DESIGNATED CITY EMPLOYEE FROM EACH AGENCY COVERED BY THIS SUBTITLE WHO, IN CONSULTATION WITH THE DIRECTOR OF THE AGENCY AND THE OFFICE OF EQUITY AND CIVIL RIGHTS, IS RESPONSIBLE FOR COORDINATING COMPLIANCE WITH ALL RELEVANT LOCAL, STATE, AND FEDERAL LAWS ADDRESSING ACCESSIBILITY.

(D) *AGENCY.*

“AGENCY” HAS THE MEANING STATED IN ARTICLE 1, §2(J) OF THE CITY CHARTER.

(E) *AUXILIARY AIDS AND SERVICES.*

“AUXILIARY AIDS AND SERVICES” HAS THE MEANING STATED IN 28 CFR 35.104.

(F) *DISABILITY.*

“DISABILITY” HAS THE MEANING STATED IN 28 CFR 35.130, AND SHALL BE CONSTRUED BROADLY IN FAVOR OF EXPANSIVE COVERAGE TO THE MAXIMUM EXTENT PERMITTED BY THE TERMS OF THE ADA, THE REHABILITATION ACT, AND STATE AND CITY LAWS.

(G) *DISCRIMINATE.*

“DISCRIMINATE” HAS THE MEANING STATED IN THE ADA, 42 U.S.C. § 12101(B).

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1 (H) *MAYOR’S OFFICE OF IMMIGRANT AFFAIRS.*

2 “MAYOR’S OFFICE OF IMMIGRANT AFFAIRS” OR “MIMA” MEANS THE MAYOR’S OFFICE
3 OF IMMIGRANT AFFAIRS AS ESTABLISHED IN § 54-2 {“OFFICE ESTABLISHED”} OF THIS
4 ARTICLE 1, OR ITS SUCCESSOR.

5 (I) *OFFICE OF EQUITY AND CIVIL RIGHTS.*

6 “OFFICE OF EQUITY AND CIVIL RIGHTS” OR “OECR” MEANS THE BALTIMORE CITY
7 OFFICE OF EQUITY AND CIVIL RIGHTS, OR ITS SUCCESSOR.

8 (J) *QUALIFIED INDIVIDUAL WITH A DISABILITY.*

9 “QUALIFIED INDIVIDUAL WITH A DISABILITY” MEANS AN INDIVIDUAL WITH A DISABILITY
10 WHO, WITH OR WITHOUT REASONABLE MODIFICATIONS TO THE CITY OF BALTIMORE’S
11 RULES, POLICIES, OR PRACTICES, THE REMOVAL OF ARCHITECTURAL, COMMUNICATION, OR
12 TRANSPORTATION BARRIERS, OR THE PROVISION OF AUXILIARY AIDS AND SERVICES, MEETS
13 THE ESSENTIAL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR THE RECEIPT OF SERVICES OR THE
14 PARTICIPATION IN PROGRAMS OR ACTIVITIES PROVIDED BY THE CITY OF BALTIMORE.

15 (K) *REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION.*

16 “REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION” MEANS A CHANGE IN POLICY, PRACTICE, OR
17 PROCEDURE REQUIRED TO MAKE A PROGRAM, SERVICE, OR ACTIVITY ACCESSIBLE FOR AN
18 INDIVIDUAL WITH A DISABILITY.

19 (L) *REHABILITATION ACT.*

20 “REHABILITATION ACT” MEANS THE FEDERAL REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973, AS
21 AMENDED, AND THE FEDERAL REGULATIONS PROMULGATED PURSUANT THERETO, AS
22 AMENDED.

23 (M) *UNDUE BURDEN.*

24 “UNDUE BURDEN” MEANS THERE IS A SIGNIFICANT DIFFICULTY OR EXPENSE INCURRED BY
25 AN AGENCY IN PROVIDING A REQUESTED ACCOMMODATION.

26 (N) *WEB CONTENT ACCESSIBILITY GUIDELINES.*

27 “WEB CONTENT ACCESSIBILITY GUIDELINES” MEANS THE TECHNICAL STANDARD
28 DEVELOPED BY THE WORLD WIDE WEB CONSORTIUM THAT SETS MEASURABLE
29 REQUIREMENTS FOR MAKING DIGITAL INFORMATION AND FUNCTIONS USABLE BY
30 INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES.

31 **§ 4-2. NONDISCRIMINATION ON THE BASIS OF DISABILITY IN GOVERNMENT SERVICES.**

32 AN AGENCY MAY NOT VIOLATE 28 CFR PART 35 {“NONDISCRIMINATION ON THE BASIS OF
33 DISABILITY IN STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICES”} BY, ON THE BASIS OF AN
34 INDIVIDUAL’S DISABILITY:

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1 (1) EXCLUDING THE INDIVIDUAL FROM PARTICIPATION IN THE SERVICES, PROGRAMS,
2 OR ACTIVITIES OF THE AGENCY;

3 (2) DENYING THE INDIVIDUAL THE BENEFITS OF THE SERVICES, PROGRAMS, OR
4 ACTIVITIES OF THE AGENCY; OR

5 (3) DISCRIMINATING AGAINST THE INDIVIDUAL.

6 **§ 4-3. EMPLOYMENT.**

7 (A) *IN GENERAL.*

8 AN AGENCY MAY NOT DISCRIMINATE, ON THE BASIS OF AN INDIVIDUAL'S DISABILITY, IN
9 HIRING OR THROUGH EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES.

10 (B) *HIRING AND EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES; PREFERENCE.*

11 CONSISTENT WITH THE REQUIREMENTS AND OBLIGATIONS TO PROTECTED CLASSES UNDER
12 FEDERAL OR STATE LAW, AN AGENCY SHALL TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION OR GIVE
13 PREFERENCE TO AN INDIVIDUAL'S STATUS AS A PERSON WITH A DISABILITY IN ITS HIRING
14 AND EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES.

15 **§ 4-4. REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION.**

16 (A) *IN GENERAL.*

17 AN AGENCY SHALL MAKE REASONABLE MODIFICATIONS TO EXISTING POLICIES, PRACTICES,
18 AND PROCEDURES TO ENSURE THAT AN INDIVIDUAL WITH A DISABILITY HAS AN EQUAL
19 OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE AND BENEFIT FROM ITS PROGRAMS, SERVICES, AND
20 ACTIVITIES.

21 (B) *LIMITATION ON REQUIREMENT TO PROVIDE ACCOMMODATION.*

22 AN AGENCY MAY NOT TAKE AN ACTION TO PROVIDE A REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION IF
23 THAT ACTION WOULD:

24 (1) FUNDAMENTALLY ALTER THE NATURE OF THE PROGRAM, SERVICE, OR ACTIVITY IN
25 QUESTION; OR

26 (2) IMPOSE AN UNDUE BURDEN ON THE AGENCY.

27 (C) *PROHIBITION ON FEE FOR ACCOMMODATION.*

28 AN AGENCY MAY NOT ASSESS A FEE ON AN INDIVIDUAL WITH A DISABILITY OR ANY GROUP
29 OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES TO PAY THE COST OF PROVIDING:

30 (1) AN AUXILIARY AID;

31 (2) AN AUXILIARY SERVICE; OR

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1 (3) A REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION.

2 **§ 4-5. EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION POLICY.**

3 (A) *IN GENERAL.*

4 AN AGENCY SHALL, UPON REQUEST, PROVIDE AUXILIARY AIDS AND SERVICES TO AN
5 QUALIFIED INDIVIDUAL WITH A DISABILITY SO THE INDIVIDUAL MAY PARTICIPATE
6 EQUALLY IN A PROGRAM, SERVICE, OR ACTIVITY.

7 (B) *COMMUNICATION AIDS AND SERVICES.*

8 TO COMPLY WITH SUBSECTION (A) OF THIS SECTION, AN AGENCY SHALL PROVIDE AN
9 APPROPRIATE AID OR SERVICE TO MAKE INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS
10 ACCESSIBLE TO INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE SPEECH, HEARING, OR VISION IMPAIRMENTS,
11 INCLUDING:

12 (1) A QUALIFIED SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETER;

13 (2) AN INTERPRETER WHO IS A DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING INDIVIDUAL THAT HAS
14 DEMONSTRATED VAST KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF INTERPRETING,
15 DEAFNESS, THE DEAF COMMUNITY, AND DEAF CULTURE.; AND

16 (3) DOCUMENTS IN BRAILLE.

17 (C) *APPLICABILITY TO THE CITY COUNCIL.*

18 EACH MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL, INCLUDING COMMITTEE MEETINGS, SHALL
19 INCLUDE:

20 (1) A QUALIFIED SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETER; AND

21 (2) OPEN CAPTIONS THAT DISPLAY SPOKEN WORDS, SOUND EFFECTS, AND OTHER
22 MEANINGFUL AUDIO INFORMATION AS VISIBLE TEXT THAT APPEARS DIRECTLY ON A
23 SCREEN OR DISPLAY AND CANNOT BE TURNED OFF.

24 **§ 4-6. DIGITAL ACCESSIBILITY POLICY.**

25 (A) *IN GENERAL.*

26 EVERY PUBLICLY AVAILABLE DIGITAL SYSTEM, INCLUDING ANY SITE OR APPLICATION
27 THAT PROVIDES INFORMATION OR SERVICES THROUGH THE INTERNET, SHALL MEET THE
28 ACCESSIBILITY REQUIREMENTS SET OUT IN THE WEB CONTENT ACCESSIBILITY
29 GUIDELINES VERSION 2.1, LEVEL AA, OR ANY LATER VERSION OR EQUIVALENT STANDARD
30 ADOPTED BY THE STATE OR THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT.

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1 (B) *APPLICABILITY.*

2 SUBSECTION (A) OF THIS SECTION APPLIES TO ALL SUCH SYSTEMS DEVELOPED,
3 PURCHASED, OR MAINTAINED BY THE CITY, AS WELL AS THOSE DEVELOPED, PURCHASED,
4 OR MAINTAINED FOR CITY USE UNDER CONTRACT OR OTHER AGREEMENT WITH A THIRD
5 PARTY.

6 **§ 4-7. SERVICE ANIMAL POLICY.**

7 A SERVICE ANIMAL, DEFINED AS AN ANIMAL THAT IS INDIVIDUALLY TRAINED TO DO WORK OR
8 PERFORM TASKS FOR AN INDIVIDUAL WITH A DISABILITY, IS PERMITTED IN A CITY OWNED,
9 OPERATED, OR MANAGED SPACE WHERE THE PUBLIC IS ALLOWED.

10 **§ 4-8. GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE.**

11 (A) *IN GENERAL.*

12 OECR SHALL PROMULGATE RULES AND REGULATIONS ESTABLISHING PROCEDURES:

- 13 (1) FOR AN INDIVIDUAL TO FILE A COMPLAINT AGAINST AN AGENCY FOR PERCEIVED
14 DISCRIMINATION ON THE BASIS OF DISABILITY;
- 15 (2) FOR RECEIPT AND REVIEW OF A COMPLAINT BY AN AGENCY;
- 16 (3) FOR INVESTIGATION OF A COMPLAINT BY AN AGENCY; AND
- 17 (4) FOR RESOLUTION OF A COMPLAINT.

18 (B) *APPLICABILITY OF RULES AND REGULATIONS ESTABLISHED BY OECR.*

19 ALL AGENCIES SHALL IMPLEMENT AND COMPLY WITH ANY RULE OR REGULATION
20 PROMULGATED BY OECR UNDER THIS SECTION.

21 **§ 4-9. AGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES.**

22 (A) *ADA COORDINATOR.*

23 (1) *IN GENERAL.*

24 EACH AGENCY SHALL DESIGNATE, AND ACCORDINGLY COMPENSATE, AT LEAST 1
25 EMPLOYEE TO BE THE “ADA COORDINATOR” FOR THE AGENCY.

26 (2) *DUTIES.*

27 AN ADA COORDINATOR SHALL:

- 28 (1) DEVELOP AN ACCESSIBILITY PLAN FOR THE AGENCY AS REQUIRED UNDER
29 SUBSECTION (B) OF THIS SECTION;

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1 (II) ON A REGULAR BASIS, ASSESS THE AGENCY'S ACCESSIBILITY PLAN FOR
2 EFFECTIVENESS AND MAKE CHANGES, AS NEEDED;

3 (III) RECEIVE AND RESPOND TO REQUESTS FOR A REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION;

4 (IV) COORDINATE THE PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION OF AN AGENCY ANNUAL
5 REPORT REQUIRED UNDER SUBSECTION (C) OF THIS SECTION; AND

6 (V) CONSULT WITH THE AGENCY'S LANGUAGE ACCESS LIAISON TO IMPLEMENT
7 THE AGENCY'S LANGUAGE ACCESS PLAN.

8 (B) *AGENCY ACCESSIBILITY PLANS.*

9 (1) *IN GENERAL.*

10 THE DIRECTOR OF AN AGENCY, IN CONSULTATION WITH OECR AND THE AGENCY'S
11 ADA COORDINATOR, SHALL DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT AN ACCESSIBILITY PLAN.

12 (2) *CONTENTS.*

13 AN ACCESSIBILITY PLAN SHALL INCLUDE:

14 (I) THE MODE:

15 (A) OF EVALUATING THE NEEDS OF A QUALIFIED INDIVIDUAL WITH A
16 DISABILITY ATTEMPTING TO ACCESS AN AGENCY SERVICE;

17 (B) OF PROVIDING AN ACCOMMODATION TO A QUALIFIED INDIVIDUAL WITH
18 A DISABILITY;

19 (C) OF COORDINATING WITH MIMA WHEN SERVING AN INDIVIDUAL WITH
20 BOTH LANGUAGE ACCESS AND DISABILITY-RELATED NEEDS; AND

21 (D) OF PROVIDING PUBLIC NOTICE OF THE AGENCY'S OBLIGATION TO SERVE
22 A QUALIFIED INDIVIDUAL WITH A DISABILITY.

23 (II) THE MEANS BY WHICH THE AGENCY WILL MONITOR ITS COMPLIANCE WITH:

24 (A) THE ACCESSIBILITY PLAN;

25 (B) THE PROVISION OF THIS SUBTITLE; AND

26 (C) ANY OTHER APPLICABLE LAWS, RULES, AND REGULATIONS REGARDING
27 AN INDIVIDUAL WITH A DISABILITY AND ACCESS TO PUBLIC SERVICES;
28 AND

29 (III) THE NAME AND CONTACT INFORMATION OF EACH EMPLOYEE THAT WILL SERVE
30 AS AN ADA COORDINATOR FOR THE AGENCY.

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1 (3) *PUBLICATION; SUBMISSION.*

2 AN AGENCY SHALL:

3 (I) PUBLICLY PUBLISH THE AGENCY’S ACCESSIBILITY PLAN; AND

4 (II) SUBMIT THE AGENCY’S ACCESSIBILITY PLAN TO OECR.

5 (4) *BIANNUAL UPDATE.*

6 THE DIRECTOR OF AN AGENCY SHALL REVIEW, UPDATE, AND IMPLEMENT THE
7 AGENCY’S ACCESSIBILITY PLAN BY JANUARY 1 OF EACH EVEN-NUMBERED YEAR.

8 (C) *REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.*

9 (1) *IN GENERAL.*

10 ON JANUARY 1 OF EACH ODD-NUMBERED YEAR AN AGENCY SHALL FILE A REPORT
11 WITH OECR AND THE DEPARTMENT OF LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE.

12 (2) *CONTENTS.*

13 THE REPORT REQUIRED UNDER THIS SUBSECTION SHALL INCLUDE:

14 (I) AN ASSESSMENT OF THE AGENCY’S PREPARATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF ITS
15 ACCESSIBILITY PLAN; AND

16 (II) DATA RELATED TO THE PROVISION OF REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS,
17 INCLUDING:

18 (A) THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS THAT REQUESTED A REASONABLE
19 ACCOMMODATION;

20 (B) EACH TYPE OF ACCOMMODATION REQUESTED AND IF THE AGENCY
21 PROVIDED THE ACCOMMODATION, AND IF NOT, WHY; AND

22 (C) THE LENGTH OF TIME FROM REQUEST TO DETERMINATION, AND FROM
23 DETERMINATION TO PROVISION OF ACCOMMODATION.

24 **§ 4-10. ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT FOR AGENCIES.**

25 SUBJECT TO THE APPROPRIATION OF FUNDS IN THE ANNUAL ORDINANCE OF ESTIMATES AND
26 SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATIONS, OECR SHALL:

27 (1) PROVIDE OVERSIGHT, COORDINATION, AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO AN AGENCY AS
28 THE AGENCY PREPARES AND IMPLEMENTS ITS ACCESSIBILITY PLAN; AND

29 (2) AS APPROPRIATE, CONSULT WITH MIMA WHEN A QUALIFIED INDIVIDUAL WITH A
30 DISABILITY ALSO REQUIRES LANGUAGE ACCESS SERVICES BASED ON THEIR STATUS AS
31 A LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT INDIVIDUAL.

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1 **§ 4-11. RULES AND REGULATIONS.**

2 SUBJECT TO TITLE 4 {"ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE ACT - REGULATIONS"} OF THE CITY
3 GENERAL PROVISIONS ARTICLE, THE DIRECTOR OF OECR SHALL ADOPT RULES AND
4 REGULATIONS TO CARRY OUT THIS SUBTITLE.

5 **SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED,** That this Ordinance takes effect on the 180th
6 day after the date it is enacted.