

For immediate release:

June 13, 2024

Contact: Nathan Miller

nathan.miller1@maryland.gov

443-346-3972

Maryland Launches State's First-Ever Accessibility Officer Initiative

The State of Maryland is leaving no one behind by launching the State's first inter-departmental accessibility initiative.

Crownsville, MD: Last week, the Maryland Digital Service within the Department of Information Technology (DoIT), in collaboration with the Maryland Department of Disabilities and the Office of State Procurement within the Maryland Department of General Service, launched the State's first-ever Accessibility Officer Initiative.



Staff from every Executive state agency were invited to attend a training session to learn more about accessible design and how they can gradually lead its implementation at their agency. These Accessibility Officers will serve as vital points of connection between different state departments, teams, and external entities, facilitating communication and building bridges to help state agencies build more accessible websites and digital services.

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), 22% of Maryland residents have a disability. The accessible design standards these officers are learning will ensure that websites and web applications across State departments are usable and navigable for Maryland residents with disabilities, including visual, auditory, and cognitive disabilities.

Historically, most of Maryland's websites, applications, and major IT projects have been built based on each state agency's needs and technical expertise. As a result, state digital services have had varying levels of accessibility. This accessibility initiative aligns with Governor Moore's mission to leave no one behind and reflects the State's commitment to rebuild to meet the needs of its residents.

"Accessible digital design is critically important to over one million Marylanders with disabilities. This Accessibility Officer Initiative is an important step towards making Maryland's digital

services more accessible so that more Maryland residents and employees can access government services and resources." says Katie Savage, Secretary of the Maryland Department of Information Technology, "I'm incredibly proud of what our Accessibility Office has accomplished and grateful for our partnerships with the Maryland Department of Disabilities, the Maryland Department of General Service, and our other sister agencies."



In the coming months, DoIT will be taking additional steps to make the State's digital services more accessible, including:

- Establishing an Accessibility Community of Practice. In August 2024, the Accessibility Officer cohort will receive additional training from accessibility experts in DoIT, academia, and industry
- Building web templates and design patterns that will allow Maryland agencies to build accessible resources and web services more easily
- Releasing the State's first-ever Digital Accessibility Report, which will detail the current state of accessibility in Maryland and plans to improve accessibility of our digital assets over the following 12 months

About the Maryland Department of Information Technology (DoIT)

The Maryland Department of Information Technology (DoIT) helps Marylanders live and work more safely and productively. DoIT provides vital technology solutions for the Maryland Executive Branch, State Agencies, and Coordinating Offices that improve IT infrastructure, cybersecurity, and the efficiency of government services.