



# Climate Implementation Plan Template

Maryland Department of Disabilities

November 1, 2024



# Agency Climate Implementation Plan

**Department of Disabilities: Climate Implementation Plan required by Executive Order, “Leadership by State Government: Implementing Maryland’s Climate Pollution Reduction Plan”**

In accordance with Governor Moore’s Executive Order 01.01.2024.19, “Leadership by State Government: Implementing Maryland’s Climate Pollution Reduction Plan,” the Department of Disabilities affirms its commitment to:

- Work to address climate change and ensure a just transition to a clean economy;
- Advance environmental justice by working to address the disproportionate impacts of climate change for underserved and overburdened communities, including the application of Justice40 goals, initiatives, and funding;
- Equitably implement all existing laws, regulations, and policies related to climate change, incorporating robust community and stakeholder engagement; and
- Continue to maximize federal funding opportunities on climate.

The Department of Disabilities hereby submits its own Climate Implementation Plan (CIP) to demonstrate its commitment to a whole-of-government approach to addressing climate change and fully implementing Maryland’s Climate Pollution Reduction Plan.

## Part 1: Agency Actions Under the Climate Pollution Reduction Plan

The Maryland Department of Disabilities is charged with coordinating and improving the delivery of services to individuals with disabilities in the state of Maryland. By working collaboratively with all State government agencies, the Department of Disabilities provides advocacy and guidance to ensure that State entities deliver services in the most integrated settings possible, develop consistent policies affecting those with disabilities, and consider the diverse needs of all when making decisions which impacts Marylanders. The department focuses on independence and full community membership through its programs which address accessible housing, employment, transitioning youth, community living, technology assistance, barrier free living, emergency preparedness and transportation. This focus is one which consistently has an eye to economic growth through strengthening of a diverse workforce and provision of the efficient and effective supports necessary for full participation in our state's economy.

The Maryland Department of Disabilities will support other state agencies on the implementation of their climate plan goals ensuring that people with disabilities and their needs are considered. Accessibility for all Marylanders, including those with disabilities is critical to the success of Maryland's Climate Plans.

Maryland's Climate Pollution Reduction Plan calls on the Department of Disabilities to:

- 1) Our agency will work with the Department of General Services on the following items related to climate-smart operations, buildings, and procurement.
  - Have at least one procurement officer trained as a [green purchasing specialist](#).
  - Provide timely and complete data to Department of General Services' database contractor so that we can track our progress.
  - Create a facility operations policy that maximizes energy efficiency. Include items such as optimized building temperature set points with weekend, nighttime, and holiday temperature turndowns (the utilities have free programs and low cost training to help building managers maintain efficiency), prohibition of space heaters, etc.

- 2) Apply for federal funding - Under the leadership and coordination of the Governor's Federal Office, MDOD will apply for federal funding to implement actions that support the achievement of this plan. MDOD will work closely with other state agencies, local governments, nonprofits, and community-based organizations to ensure Maryland is competitive for federal climate action implementation funds and to build capacity for local-level implementation. MDOD will offer support to Maryland's businesses and private sector to ensure they are competitive for historic federal investments.
  
- 3) Our agency will work with the Department of Budget and Management to help maximize external funding opportunities to address climate in Maryland:
  - The IRS Elective Pay program allows governments (and other non-tax paying entities) to take advantage of tax incentives, including credits for electric vehicles, clean energy generation technologies, energy storage, and electric charging equipment and infrastructure. Since these credits were authorized for 10 years when passed through the Inflation Reduction Act in 2022 they will be a great tool in helping Maryland fund critical work to meet the State's 60% greenhouse gas reduction goal by 2031.
  - Our agency will coordinate with DBM to make sure that all eligible projects are registered with the IRS in order to help maximize federal funding opportunities.
  - Our agency will keep Elective Pay funding in mind as a way to stack and braid tax credits with existing funding, grant opportunities, other federal programs, loans, and/or other financial products to help bridge the gap between traditional items procured and the green premium of climate-smart items.
  
- 4) We will work with the Maryland Department of Environment (MDE) to provide subject matter expertise and consultation on their goals to launch a consumer education campaign and to incentivize the building of the EV infrastructure in Maryland. We will ensure materials for the public campaign to promote consumer rebates and tax credits are produced in accessible formats including the use of captions on videos, alt text in social media and website accessibility features. We will work with MDE to ensure EV infrastructure improvements meet Americans with Disabilities (ADA) standards as well as the United States Access Board standards. The United States Access Board is an independent federal agency that promotes equality for people with disabilities through leadership in accessible design and the development of accessibility guidelines and standards.

- 5) Our agency will work with the Maryland Department of Transportation to do our part in transportation demand management.
  - Our agency will connect with MDOT to receive and disseminate materials that help state employees understand the alternative transportation options available to them which align with the State’s goal of reducing vehicle miles traveled and harmful air pollution.
- 6) MDOD will work with the Maryland Department of Labor to ensure their efforts to promote apprenticeship and workforce development programs for clean energy jobs include efforts to provide reasonable accommodations for workers with disabilities. MDOD will also consult with the Department of Service and Civic Innovation to expand efforts to recruit people with disabilities for the Maryland Climate Corps.
- 7) As this Climate Implementation Plan is implemented, our agency will continue to work with the Department of the Environment to address climate change with Maryland’s whole of government approach.
  - Our agency will stay in communication with MDE in order to monitor and track progress.
  - In compliance with the Climate Solutions Now Act of 2022, our agency will continue to make climate a key consideration in our long term planning of policy and the agency’s operations.

## **Part 2: Recommending Actions to Address Climate Change**

State law (MD Code, Environment, § 2-1305) requires that each State agency shall review its planning, regulatory, and fiscal programs to identify and recommend actions to more fully integrate the consideration of Maryland's greenhouse gas reduction goal and the impacts of climate change. The review shall include the consideration of (i) sea level rise; (ii) storm surges and flooding; (iii) increased precipitation and temperature; and (iv) extreme weather events. Furthermore, each State agency shall identify and recommend specific policy, planning, regulatory, and fiscal changes to existing programs that do not currently support the State's greenhouse gas reduction efforts or address climate change.

In compliance with the law, the Department of Disabilities is taking or recommending the following actions to more fully integrate the consideration of Maryland's greenhouse gas reduction goal and the impacts of climate change.

MDOD will continue to partner with Maryland Department of Emergency Management (MDEM) and Maryland Department of Human Services (DHS) to lead the whole community response to natural disasters including storm surges and flooding, or other extreme weather.

MDOD will provide the equipment kits that contain accommodation materials, devices and equipment including communication tools, signage, personal care equipment, personal protective equipment, etc.

MDOD will participate in any emergency preparedness events, providing staffing and equipment.

The Access Maryland Program, administered by MDOD, provides capital funding to state agencies to create accessible physical spaces. Access Maryland will ensure any funded capital project has fully integrated consideration of the Maryland greenhouse gas reduction efforts.

## **Part 3: Considering Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reductions and Impacts on Disproportionately Affected Communities**

State law (MD Code, Environment, § 2-1305) requires that each State agency, when conducting long-term planning, developing policy, and drafting regulations, shall take into consideration: (1) the likely climate impact of the agency's decisions relative to Maryland's greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals; and (2) the likely impact of the agency's decisions on disproportionately affected communities identified according to the methodology adopted under § 1-702 of the Environment article. Furthermore, Governor Moore's Executive Order 01.01.2024.19 requires each agency to report on how the agency will advance environmental justice by working to address the disproportionate impacts of climate change for underserved and overburdened communities.

In compliance with the law and Executive Order 01.01.2024.19, the Department of Disabilities is taking the following steps to meet these requirements.

People with disabilities constitute approximately 20% of our state's population and live in all regions of the state. This includes communities which are disproportionately affected by climate impacts. Any intervention which is targeting underserved and overburdened communities must include actions to accommodate the needs of people with disabilities.

Many people with disabilities struggle to find employment. According to the federal Department of Labor, people with disabilities experience a more than double the unemployment rate of people without disabilities (7.9% vs 3.6%). Creating climate jobs as a result of this plan will directly impact people with disabilities, giving them more access to good jobs.

## **Part 4: Resources for Implementation**

### **Implementing Maryland's Climate Pollution Reduction Plan**

In order to adequately implement the MDOD Climate Reduction Plan action items, MDOD will need to dedicate staff time and equipment to this effort. Our Director of Emergency Preparedness Policy will dedicate a portion of their time to this effort. Their expertise in response to extreme weather including storms (hurricanes, blizzards, tornadoes or derechos), storm surge, flooding, or extreme heat provide the whole community response that ensures Marylanders with disabilities are considered in that response. The Director of Emergency Preparedness also can distribute the pelican kits that include accessible communication devices and other accommodation equipment needed in an emergency shelter circumstance.

The MDOD Director of Employment will work with the Department of Labor to improve the outreach and inclusion of workers with disabilities in any effort to promote workforce development programs designed for climate jobs including apprenticeships. The Employment Director will also work with the Department of Service and Civic Innovation to promote opportunities to Marylanders with disabilities.

The Access Maryland Program Coordinator will provide guidance and subject matter expertise to any state agency applicant on their capital projects on accessibility to ensure compliance with the Climate Implementation Plan.

The MDOD Americans with Disabilities (ADA) Coordinator will provide subject matter

expertise on physical structures implemented as part of the Climate Implementation Plan for any state agency. MDOD will help state agencies include necessary and legal accommodations for people with disabilities in any plan for physical structures including but not limited to EV Charging stations, building improvements, etc.

### Implementing this Climate Implementation Plan

MDOD will use existing funding from state and federal agencies to provide our subject matter expertise to other state agencies in their efforts to implement the Maryland Climate Implementation Plan.

## **Part 5: Outcomes from Implementation**

MDOD anticipates that by providing our subject matter expertise to other state agencies, more Marylanders with disabilities will be able to live, work and play in their communities without fear of climate impact. Marylanders with disabilities will access the good green jobs that will be created from this plan.