

Open Minds. Open Access.

Harford County Department of Community Services
COMMISSION ON DISABILITIES



ANNUAL REPORT
FY2010



David R. Craig
Harford County Executive
Mary F. Chance
Director, Dept. of Community Services

OPEN MINDS. OPEN ACCESS.
The Americans with Disabilities Act
Making the Dream a Reality Since 1990

As the Commission on Disabilities marked the 20th Anniversary of the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) with "Art Without Boundaries", an exhibit of work by artists with and without disabilities, we recognize the importance of making the dream of the ADA a reality. We look back with pride at the disability rights activists who made this landmark legislation possible, but, at the same time, we know that our work continues. We must advocate, educate, and influence to overcome attitudes and barriers that prevent full participation in community life by persons with disabilities. With this in mind, the Commission presents its Annual Report for fiscal year 2010.

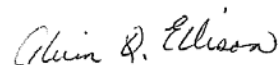
In these tough economic times, the Commission concentrated efforts to reduce the unemployment rate of people with disabilities through its Annual Employment Awards and by co-sponsoring the Aberdeen Proving Ground (APG) Disability Expo & Career Fair. Highlighting successful employees with disabilities and recognizing their employers, our annual employment awards luncheon promotes hiring of persons with disabilities. The APG Disability Expo & Career Fair, an interagency effort funded by a grant from the Maryland Department of Disabilities, provided job-seekers with disabilities face-to face access with APG and BRAC-related employers.

We continued successful partnerships with the Harford County Sheriff's Office through our Disabled Parking Awareness Campaign and with Harford Habitat for Humanity to provide ramps for low-income renters and homeowners. In a new partnership with Volunteer Harford, Commissioners with disabilities shared their volunteer experiences with volunteer coordinators looking to fill vacancies with interested volunteers with disabilities. Finally, the Commission established a new interagency Transportation Committee to increase ridership on current transportation options, including fixed bus routes and paratransit services, and to increase available transportation options.

The public is invited to join the Commission as we work to make the dream of the ADA a reality by attending our meetings on the fourth Monday of each month, 5PM, at the historic "Bel Air Colored High School," located at 205 South Hays Street in Bel Air, or visiting www.harfordcountymd.gov/services/disabilities. For more information and/or to request disability-related accommodations, call 410-638-3373 voice/TTY or email disability@harfordcountymd.gov.



Marc J. Weinstein
Chairperson



Reverend Alvin Q. Ellison
Vice-Chairperson

ABOUT

The **Department of Community Services** works to ensure that people with disabilities are afforded the same rights, services and opportunities as people without disabilities.

The Harford County **Commission on Disabilities**

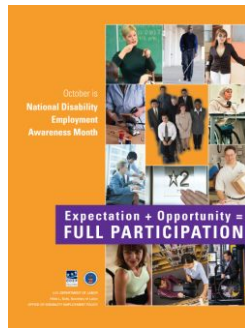
was established in 1995 to serve as the voice of the disability community in Harford County. Members are appointed by the County Executive, with the approval of the County Council. The Commission is dedicated to helping the more than 25,000* Harford County citizens with disabilities participate fully in our community.

Same **RIGHTS**.
Same **SERVICES**.
Same **OPPORTUNITIES**.

INFORMATION AND REFERRAL

The Commission on Disabilities received and responded to 283 requests for information and referral services in FY2010.

EMPLOYMENT



In October 2009, in recognition of **Disability Employment Awareness Month**, the Commission on Disabilities hosted its annual employment awards luncheon at the Maryland Golf and Country Clubs in Bel Air. The event celebrated the accomplishments and achievements of people with disabilities who overcome obstacles in their pursuit of excellence. The Master of Ceremonies

**Source: 2008 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, U.S. Census Bureau.*

was Johnny Hudson, who was also the 2006 luncheon keynote speaker.

Also in October, the Commission partnered with the Aberdeen Proving Ground Army Community Services' Employment Readiness Program, and other private and public agencies, to sponsor the second annual "**Disability Expo & Career Fair**", which was funded in part through a grant from the Maryland Department of Disabilities. This successful event provided job-seekers with disabilities the opportunity to meet face-to-face with APG and Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC)-related employers.



OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

The Harford County Services Collaborative met three times in FY2010 with 41 attendees. Topics included: "Mental Health and Law Enforcement: Innovative Responses in Harford County"; "Harford Transit"; and "Complete Count – 2010 Census".



Harford in Harmony, a workshop which provides tools for effective communication and harmonious living was presented to the Harford County Apartment Managers Group in February 2010. The two hour workshop is available at no charge to multi-family rental communities as well as common ownership communities and covers conflict resolution, community mediation, Fair Housing rights and responsibilities, and using community resources to resolve problems in these difficult economic times.

Commissioners participated in the **Harford County Shelter Drill** on July 15, 2009 and provided feedback on



interactions with persons with disabilities in the emergency shelter. As a follow-up, copies of a Baltimore County Fire Department produced video; “Working with People with Disabilities” were distributed to the Harford County Department of Social Services, which provides staffing for the shelter. The video, which was endorsed by the Baltimore County Commission on Disabilities, the Maryland Department of Disabilities and other disability advocacy organizations, was also provided to Harford County Fire and Emergency Medical Services and the Harford County Sheriff’s Office for training.

In March 2010, the Commission on Disabilities and its interagency partners sponsored the **Expo for Transitioning Youth**, which featured workshops in



issues facing youth with disabilities transitioning from school to the adult world of work and higher education. More than 150 youth and their family members attended the workshops and visited with exhibitors, who showcased their services for persons with disabilities.

Every month, the **Commission’s web site**, www.harfordcountymd.gov/services/disabilities, receives an average of 387 visits; in FY2010 the web site had more than 3,000 unique visitors.

ACCESSIBILITY

Members of the Commission assist local codes officials and the Maryland Codes Administration in ensuring that our community is accessible. Projects for new construction or alteration of buildings that do not meet full compliance with the Maryland Accessibility Code may be eligible for waiver. Commissioners review applications for waiver and provide important feedback on the impact a waiver would have on persons with disabilities.

Harford Transit Extender Service

Harford Transit, on behalf of the Harford County Transportation Steering Committee, was awarded a New Freedom grant, to fund an Extender Service to provide evening and Saturday service to eligible individuals with disabilities, the elderly and low-income earners in a specific service area. The Extender Service became available in January 2009. To increase awareness of the service, five presentations were made to more than 175 staff and clients of service provider agencies.



During the Holiday Shopping Season, the Harford County Sheriff's Office and the Commission repeated their successful **Disabled Parking Awareness Campaign**. From



November 24, 2009 through January 4, 2010, increased emphasis was placed on patrolling parking spaces for people with disabilities. Deputies from the Sheriff's Office checked to make sure that vehicles in those spaces displayed the accessible (handicapped) parking placard or had the designated license plates. Forty parking citations were issued. Additionally, the Sheriff's Office and the Commission issued press releases on topics such as, "Tis the holiday gift-giving season – Don't spend your shopping money on a parking ticket" and "Something to remember this holiday shopping season: Good Access Means Good Business."

Accessible Ramps Program

The Commission's Community Development Block Grant-funded Accessible Ramps program resulted in seven Harford County residents having increased access to their own homes.



Through the work of its partner, Harford Habitat for Humanity, and the FIX IT UP Program, the Commission remains committed to its goal of creating more accessible housing in Harford County, one house at a time.

LEGISLATION

The Commission's online legislation guide, <http://www.harfordcountymd.gov/services/disabilities/links.cfm#legislative> helps citizens to identify and explore issues affecting persons with disabilities and communicate with elected officials.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

In accordance with the requirements of Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Harford County does not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities in the County's services, programs, or activities. For more information or to request reasonable accommodations, please contact Disabilities Coordinator Sharon Grzanka at 410-638-3373 voice/TTY or disability@harfordcountymd.gov.

MEETINGS

The Commission on Disabilities meets monthly, except in December, at 5:00 p.m. on the fourth Monday of the month, at the historic "Bel Air Colored High School," 205 Hays Street, in Bel Air. The public is invited to attend these meetings. For more information or to request reasonable accommodations to attend the meeting, contact Disabilities Coordinator Sharon Grzanka at 410-638-3373 voice/TTY or disability@harfordcountymd.gov.

THE COMMISSION ON DISABILITIES

Susan F. Austin
Amy A. Axel
Nicole B. Biggs
Robert L. Coen
Helene M. Dubay
Alvin Q. Ellison, Vice-Chair
Keith W. England, Student Representative
Dion F. Guthrie, County Council
Kathleen M. Halliday
Laurie A. Kwiedorowicz
Michael B. Mathias
Tracy A. Moore
Stephen W. Sopol
Marc J. Weinstein, Chairperson
*Deborah C. Wilcox
Andrea L. Wiley

**In memory of Commissioner Deborah C. Wilcox, 1953-2009.
Her commitment to service, community, and disability rights
inspires us to continue our work toward a fully accessible
community.*

Harford County, Maryland
Notice under the Americans with Disabilities Act

In accordance with the requirements of Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the County will not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities on the basis of disability in the County's services, programs, or activities.

Employment: The County does not discriminate on the basis of disability in its hiring or employment practices and complies with all regulations promulgated by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission under Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Effective Communication: The County will generally, upon request, provide appropriate aids and services leading to effective communication for qualified persons with disabilities so that they can participate equally in the County's programs, services, and activities, including qualified sign language interpreters, documents in Braille, and other ways of making information and communications accessible to people who have speech, hearing, or vision impairments.

Modifications to Policies and Procedures: The County will make all reasonable modifications to policies and procedures to ensure that people with disabilities have an equal opportunity to enjoy all County programs, services, and activities. For example, individuals with service animals are welcome in County offices, even where pets are generally prohibited.

Anyone who requires an auxiliary aid or service for effective communication, or a modification of policies or procedures to participate in a County program, service, or activity, should contact the office of Sharon Grzanka, Department of Community Services, 319 South Main Street, Bel Air, MD 21014, 410-638-3373 voice/TTY or disability@harfordcountymd.gov as soon as possible but no later than 48 hours before the scheduled event.

The ADA does not require the County to take any action that would fundamentally alter the nature of its programs or services, or impose an undue financial or administrative burden.

Complaints that a County program, service, or activity is not accessible to persons with disabilities should be directed to Sharon Grzanka, Department of Community Services, 319 South Main Street, Bel Air, MD 21014, 410-638-3373 voice/TTY or disability@harfordcountymd.gov.

The County will not place a surcharge on a particular individual with a disability or any group of individuals with disabilities to cover the cost of providing auxiliary aids/services or reasonable modifications of policy, such as retrieving items from locations that are open to the public but are not accessible to persons who use wheelchairs.

Authorized by
Scott T. Gibson, Director
Department of Human Resources
Mary F. Chance, Director
Department of Community Services

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This document is available in alternative format upon request.



Harford County Department of Community Services
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