



**STEPHANIE RAWLINGS-BLAKE**  
**Mayor, City of Baltimore**

**“Continuing to Grow Baltimore”**

**Better Schools. Safer Streets. Stronger Neighborhoods.**

## **MAYOR’S COMMISSION ON DISABILITIES**



DR. NOLLIE P. WOOD, JR., EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**STRIVING TO ENSURE EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL**

**FY 2014 Annual Report**

**Lou Ann Blake, Esq., Interim Chair**  
**Nollie P. Wood, Jr., Ph.D., M.P.H., PDF, Executive Director**

# Mayor Stephanie Rawlings Blake Thanks the Sponsors of this Report and Accomplishment Event

Hilton Baltimore

Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center

The University of Maryland Medical System



## PURPOSE OF THE COMMISSION

- **Ensure the accessibility** of City services, facilities, programs, employment opportunities and communications.
- **Ensure compliance** with the Americans with Disabilities Act, associated laws and regulations.
- **Assist City government, businesses and non-profit** organizations with educational and instructional information about reasonable accommodation and universal design.

## MCD COMMITTEES

- Commission Development
- Access
- Emergency Preparedness and Response
- Employment
- Legislative
- Transportation

# COMMISSION DEVELOPMENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

**Primary Goal:** Identify Commission vacancies and recruit appropriate diverse individuals for membership categories.

**Accomplishments:**

- Recruited, oriented and assisted six new Commission members with the Mayoral nomination process. Achieved representation from all City Council districts, except 12, 13, 14.
- Monitored attendance and, where appropriate, intervened to assist the Commission member or representative to attend the required number of meetings.
- Represented the Commission at meetings and events. (Examples are the Maryland Commission on Disabilities and the Maryland Disability Forum).
- Assured that accurate minutes of Commission meetings were recorded and disseminated.

# ACCESS ACCOMPLISHMENTS

**Primary Goal:** Evaluate, educate, train, and assist with the improvement of accessibility at City businesses, facilities, and public/private accommodations.

## **Accomplishments:**

Visited and evaluated various types of buildings for accessibility compliance.

- Forest Park Senior Center  
4801 Liberty Heights Avenue 21207
- Mansion House at The Maryland Zoo  
1876 Mansion House Drive 21217
- Rita Church Community Center at Clifton Park  
2101 St. Lo Drive 21213
- Rusty Scupper Restaurant  
402 Key Highway 21230
- Light Street Bridge  
Light Street between the Hyatt Hotel and Hooters
- Completed over 25 site reviews for the Department of Public Works (DPW) Media Section, for the Mayor's public meetings for the Consent Decree projects. The public meetings are to be held regarding DPW's under ground infrastructure.
- Worked with the Hilton Baltimore, Greater Baltimore Committee, and Visit Baltimore to provide Emergency Medical Technician service for four days to the Deaf Seniors of America Conference at a cost of \$2,880.00 for the approximately 2,000 participants. Additionally, worked with the Governor's Office on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, to provide deaf and hard of hearing sensitivity training to approximately 30 participating organization staff.
- Worked with the Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration, to review 36 applications for accessible parking for the Preakness 2014 and the Maryland Jockey Club.
- Disseminated information on critical health and wellness issues at Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center Disability Awareness Expo attended by approximately 110 individuals.
- Assisted MedStar Good Samaritan Hospital with the development and installation of accessible parking spaces and signage.

# ACCESS ACCOMPLISHMENTS (CONTINUED)

- Worked with the Baltimore Orioles and Maryland Stadium Authority, to improve accessibility at Orioles Park at Camden Yards with additional signage at the 2 drop –off areas, the initiating of a Fan Courtesy Shuttle, and plans for additional benches along the pedestrian pathway. Additionally, there was an Accessibility link added to the website.
- Developed with the Police Department’s Chief of Staff Office a new interpreter policy to improve communication with the deaf and hard of hearing community for victims, suspects, arrestees, and other citizens.
- Worked with the Board of Elections to inspect one new Early Polling location and eight new General Election polling locations for accessibility. Additionally, working with the Baltimore City Schools, we identified 10 school polling sites that needed corrected signage.
- Assisted in the identification of the accessible parking spaces and the accessible routes for the Preakness website at the Pimlico Race Track.
- Worked with Andretti Sports Marketing to develop an accessibility plan for the 2013 Baltimore Grand Prix and monitored and assisted with its implementation.
- Worked with Mr. Elam, Baltimore Housing, to improve customer service to the deaf and hard of hearing at the Housing Choice Voucher Program, 1225, W. Pratt Street. This included Disability awareness and sensitivity training and modification of the customer service process and equipment.
  - May 14, 2014 – 12 participants
  - June 19, 2014 – 58 participants
- Responded to over 135 complaints and requests for assistance regarding disability services, accessibility and accommodation.
- Collaborated with Baltimore City Recreation and Parks to recommend improvements to Samuel F.B. Morse Recreation Center: installation of accessible parking, curb cuts and accessible paths, accessible entrance door, and accessible restrooms.

# ACCESS ACCOMPLISHMENTS (CONTINUED)

- Worked with Councilperson Spector, Delegate Rosenberg, the Department of Transportation, and the Mt. Washington community, to conduct a street survey to plan for improvements to the pedestrian accessibility of walkways, while balancing the community's need for street parking.
- Provided technical assistance to Mercantile Trust Deposit historic building, 202 E. Redwood Street, on Americans with Disabilities Act Guidelines regarding renovation of the building for a performing arts venue.
- Worked with the Best Buddies Maryland and Baltimore City Public Schools on their Urban Initiative to support the one-to-one friendships and leadership development for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. This targeted 1,920 students at three middle schools and four high schools.
- Worked with The Johns Hopkins Hospital, to improve accessibility to the Cancer Center and its garages with automatic door openers and new signage.
- Worked with the Maryland Transit Administration, Mobility Service, Veolia Transportation, and the Mayor's Office of Emergency Management, to develop a process to respond to emergency wheelchair and scooter break downs.
- Heightened accessibility awareness by participating in three radio shows: The Greater Baltimore Community Housing Resources Board's "Living in Baltimore" (WCAO- AM 600 am – March 18, 2014), Jeff St. Pierre, Clear Channel Radio (January 22, 2014), and "Insight on disAbility with Michael Gerlach."
- Worked with the Department of Transportation, to revise the accessible pedestrian traffic signal policy for choosing locations for accessible traffic signals.
- Worked with the Department of Human Resources, Law Department, Department of Finances' Office of Risk Management, to update the ADA Employment Accommodation policy, PM-321.
- Worked with the Department of Transportation, to develop a new ADA Complaint Tracking form and process.
- Worked with the Housing Authority and the Planning Department, to develop a process to track and develop reports on the number of accessible and visitable housing units from housing development building permits.

# EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

**Primary Goal:** Educate the functional needs community about emergency preparedness and responses, the effects of disasters, and their role in disasters.

## **Accomplishments:**

- Completed accessibility evaluations of five City-owned buildings designated as emergency shelters, using FEMA and ADA guidelines and assistance from the Red Cross. The shelters are located in:
  - Edgewood
  - Central Park Heights
  - Hampden
  - Frankford
  - Brooklyn
- Police Department increased Behavioral Emergency Services Team (BEST) Training from four to five days.
  - Baltimore Mental Health has staff located at Public Safety Academy.
  - Creating ongoing training to be held periodically at roll call.
- Completed an Awareness Campaign to Encourage Use of Smoke Alarms for the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing:
  - SafeAwake Smoke Alarms are available FREE through the Office of the Fire Marshall.
  - Created print material for disability service providers. 400 were distributed to: the Hearing and Speech Agency, Maryland Christ Methodist Church of the Deaf, Jewish Deaf Society, and the Baltimore City Commission on Aging and Retirement Education.
  - Created Online awareness campaign:
    - <http://www.baltimorecity.gov/Government/AgenciesDepartments/Fire/SafetyandPrevention/SmokeAlarms.aspx>



# EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

## FREE Smoke Detector Installation!



The Baltimore City Fire Department is working with the Fire and Burn Safety Coalition of Maryland to provide Safe Awake bed shaker alarms free of charge to the deaf and hard of hearing.

### Smoke detectors for the deaf and hard of hearing:

- Equipped with a motorized bed shaker, flashing light, and low frequency sound wave
- Backup battery included
- Available upon request- call (410) 396-5752 for a free installation
- Fire safety education also provided with installation

Baltimore City Fire Department

Call (410) 396.5752 to request a smoke detector or for more information



### MAYOR'S COMMISSION ON DISABILITIES



DR. NOLLIE P. WOOD, JR. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
STRIVING TO ENSURE EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL

# EMPLOYMENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

**Primary Goal :** The Employment Committee works to assure that employment-related information concerning rights, availability, and support services are readily available and accessible to all citizens of our community, including persons with disabilities.

## **Accomplishments:**

- Consulted with Human Resources (HR) designated representatives and discussed the understanding of the employment and recruitment process that an applicant goes through when seeking to apply the hiring preference law. The following HR representatives were identified to work with the Committee:
  - Alanna Davis, Chief, Recruitment & Talent Acquisition
  - Felicia Myers, Recruitment & Talent Acquisition Lead
  - Pervis Lee, Chief Policy Advisor
  - Ronnie Charles, Director of Human Resources
  - Robert L. Paige, HRIS Analyst
- Met with HR Representative Pervis Lee, Chief Policy Advisor, to gain more clarity on how the hiring preference law is currently being utilized, and to address questions and concerns.
- Consulted with Mrs. Betsy Luecking, Program Manager for Montgomery County Department of Health, Human Services, Aging & Disability Services to inquire about Montgomery County's hiring preference process.

# EMPLOYMENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS (CONTINUED)

- Developed and implemented with the Human Resources Department a monthly tracking schedule to gather and track data/information on job applicants who have applied, been interviewed and been hired for a Civil Service job as a result of the City's Ordinance 10-0622 "Hiring Preference for Persons with Disabilities". Data received:

Job Applicants who Have Applied For a Civil Service Job with Test Requirement			
Year	Applied	Interviewed	Hired
2011	0	0	0
2012	1	1	0
2013	1	1	0
2014	3	2	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>

- Lou Ann Blake, Vice Chair of the Commission, coordinated the seventh annual Jacobus tenBroek Disability Law Symposium, Disability Rights in the 21st Century: Creative Solutions for Achieving the Right to Live in the World, on April 24-25, 2014.
  - Hosted by the National Federation of the Blind Jernigan Institute.
  - Brought over 174 disability law scholars, advocates, and government officials from throughout North America to Baltimore to examine the cutting-edge strategies and arguments developed by disability rights advocates to achieve equality of opportunity.
  - Keynote speakers were Jenny Hatch, advocate; Jonathan Martinis, legal director, Quality Trust for Individuals with Disabilities; and Catherine Lhamon, Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education.

# LEGISLATIVE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

**Primary Goals:** Develop, review, comment and provide testimony on proposed City, State and Federal legislation that relates to the Commission's agenda and that affects people with disabilities.

## **Accomplishments:**

- State legislation: Evaluated all disability-related bills before the Maryland General Assembly; tracked the progress of 27 bills; submitted written testimony on 8 bills; and provided oral testimony on 3 bills that were as follows:
  - Senate Bill 940 (HB 705): Victims of Crime – Legal Representative of Minors, Disables and Elderly Persons
  - Senate Bill 446: Commission on Accessibility Concepts in Computer Science and Physically Handicapped – Funding
  - Senate Bill 419: Libraries – Maryland Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped – Funding
  - Senate Bill 189 (HB 486): Property Tax Exemption – Disabled Veterans and Surviving Spouses – Percentage of Disability
  - House Bill 109 (SB 48): Election Law – Polling Places – Accommodations for Disabled Voters

# LEGISLATIVE ACCOMPLISHMENTS (CONTINUED)

- 10 of the 27 bills followed were adopted
  - Senate Bill 940 (HB 705): Victims of Crime – Legal Representative of Minors, Disables and Elderly Persons
  - Senate Bill 446: Commission on Accessibility Concepts in Computer Science and Physically Handicapped – Funding
  - Senate Bill 419: Libraries – Maryland Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped – Funding
  - Senate Bill 909: Income Tax Check off – Developmental Disabilities Services and Support Funding
  - Senate Bill 120: Education – Children with Disabilities – Parent Surrogates
  - Senate Bill 134 (HB119): Maryland Health Insurance Plan – Access for Bridge Eligible Individuals
  - House Bill 1238: Developmental Disabilities Administration – Payment of Providers
  - House Bill 295 (SB 331): Maryland Minimum Wage Act of 2014
  - Senate Bill 198: Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Telemedicine
  - Senate Bill 418 (HB 556): Developmental Disabilities Administration – Low Intensity Support Services Funding
- Produced Disability Awareness Month Fall Public Forum attended by approximately 60 individuals on October 23, 2013 at City Hall, Curran Room. A video clip is in the process of being produced to be placed on our website.
  - Title – How to Lobby for Disability Rights
  - Topics included Lobbying Basics, presented by Nicholas Blendy, Deputy Director, Legislative Affairs
  - Lobbying the General Assembly, presented by Delegate Samuel Rosenberg, District 41
  - Lobbying the City Council, presented by Councilman Robert Curran, District 3; and
  - Using the Media to Generate Support, presented by Chris Danielsen, National Federation of the Blind

# TRANSPORTATION ACCOMPLISHMENTS

**Primary Goal:** To improve transportation services and parking for people with disabilities.

## Accomplishments:

- Partnered with the Baltimore Police Dept., the City and State Departments of Transportation and the MD Motor Vehicle Administration for targeted education and enforcement of accessible parking. These Accessible Parking Education and Enforcement Days on 10/16/13, 3/19/14, 4/16/14 and 5/14/14 resulted in:
  - 232 citizen contacts
  - 60 placards being confiscated
  - 61 citations issued
  - \$24,982 in citation revenue
- Partnered with the Parking Authority of Baltimore City to provide feedback and awareness for **Project SPACE** initiative to improve accessible street parking in Baltimore related to:
  - Disability Awareness Training for Parking Authority staff
  - Marketing strategies to reach city residents with disabilities
  - Appropriate and clear signage for accessible parking spaces
  - Training for 12 representatives from the Parking Authority of Baltimore City's Meter Management Program/ Residential Permit Parking Program and the PR/ marketing firm (Profiles, Inc.) on language communication and interaction with people with disabilities. Training was provided by Commissioners Charles Brown and Ruth Ann Wynegar.
- Reviewed City information on street renovation projects to provide meaningful feedback for public access to government buildings, downtown and Park Heights locations.

