

**Resolution Agreement  
University of Baltimore  
Case Number 03172402**

The U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) and the University of Baltimore (the University) enter into this agreement to resolve the allegation in the above-referenced complaint. This agreement does not constitute an admission of liability or non-compliance by the University. The University assures OCR, that it will take the following actions to comply with the requirements of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504), as amended, 29 U.S.C. Section 794, and its implementing regulation at 34 C.F.R. Part 104, and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (Title II), 42 U.S.C. Sections 12131 *et seq.*, and its implementing regulation at 28 C.F.R. Part 35, which prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability by recipients of Federal financial assistance and public entities, respectively.

Prior to the completion of OCR's investigation, the University agreed to resolve the issues of this investigation pursuant to Section 302 of OCR's Case Processing Manual. Accordingly, to resolve the issues of this investigation, the University agrees to take the following actions:

Assurances of Nondiscrimination. The University hereby reaffirms its commitment to ensure that people with disabilities have an opportunity equal to that of their nondisabled peers to enjoy the University's programs, benefits, and services, including those delivered through electronic and information technology, except where doing so would impose an undue burden or create a fundamental alteration.

Benchmarks for Measuring Accessibility. For the purposes of this Agreement, when determining the University's compliance with Title II and Section 504, the W3C's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA standards will be used as a reference. The University may also, but is not required to, utilize the Web Accessibility Initiative Accessible Rich Internet Applications Suite (WAI-ARIA) 1.0 techniques as appropriate.

Adherence to these accessible technology standards is one way to ensure compliance with the University's underlying legal obligations to ensure people with disabilities are able to independently acquire the same information, engage in the same interactions, and enjoy the same benefits and services within the same timeframe as their nondisabled peers, with substantially equivalent ease of use; that they are not excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or otherwise subjected to discrimination in any University programs, services, and activities delivered online, as required by Section 504 and Title II and their implementing regulations; and that they receive effective communication of the University's programs, services, and activities delivered online.

### **Remedies and Reporting**

- 1) Proposed Policies and Procedures Regarding New Online Content and Functionality. By October 31, 2017, the University will submit to OCR for its review and approval proposed policies and procedures ("the Plan for New Content") to ensure that all new, newly-

added, or modified online content and functionality will be accessible to people with disabilities as measured by conformance to the Benchmarks for Measuring Accessibility set forth above, except where doing so would impose a fundamental alteration or undue burden.

- a) When fundamental alteration or undue burden defenses apply, the Plan for New Content will require the University to provide equally effective alternative access. The Plan for New Content will require the University, in providing equally effective alternate access, to take any actions that do not result in a fundamental alteration or undue financial or administrative burdens, but nevertheless ensure that, to the maximum extent possible, individuals with disabilities receive the same benefits or services as their nondisabled peers. To provide equally effective alternate access, alternates are not required to produce the identical result or level of achievement for persons with and without disabilities, but must afford persons with disabilities equal opportunity to obtain the same result, to gain the same benefit, or to reach the same level of achievement, in the most integrated setting appropriate to the person's needs.
  - b) The Plan for New Content must include sufficient quality assurance procedures, backed by adequate personnel and financial resources, for full implementation. This provision also applies to the University's online content and functionality developed by, maintained by, or offered through a third-party vendor or by using open sources.
  - c) Within thirty (30) days of receiving OCR's approval of the Plan for New Content, the University will officially adopt, and fully implement the amended policies and procedures.
  - d) Reporting: Within forty-five (45) days of receiving OCR's approval, the University will submit to OCR the approved policies and procedures, evidence of their adoption and distribution, and a description of how they are being implemented.
- 2) Undue Burden and Fundamental Alteration. If, during the monitoring period of this agreement, the University determines that any technology-related requirement in this Agreement would result in an undue administrative or financial burden or a fundamental alteration in the nature of a University service, program, or activity, such determination will be made by the President of the University (President) or by an individual designated by the President after considering all resources available for use in the funding and operation of the service, program, or activity, and will be accompanied by a written statement of the reasons for reaching that conclusion. If such a determination is made, the official will describe in the written statement how it will provide equally effective alternate access, *i.e.*, other action that would not result in such an alteration or such burdens but would nevertheless ensure that, to the maximum extent possible, individuals with disabilities receive the same benefits or services provided by the University as their nondisabled peers.
  - 3) Audit of Existing Content and Functionality. By November 15, 2017, the University will propose for OCR's review and approval the identity and bona fides of an Auditor

(corporation or individual) to conduct an audit of the content and functionality on its website, including, but not limited to, the home page, subordinate pages, and intranet pages and sites, to identify any online content or functionality that is inaccessible to persons with disabilities, including online content and functionality developed by, maintained by, or offered through a third party vendor or an open source. Such audit may be a representative sample of the University's website, subject to OCR's approval of the parameters of the audit. The Auditor will have sufficient knowledge and experience in website accessibility for people with disabilities to carry out all related tasks, including developing a Proposed Corrective Action Plan. The Audit will use the Benchmarks for Measuring Accessibility set out above, unless the University receives prior permission from OCR to use a different standard as a benchmark. During the Audit, the University will also seek input from members of the public with disabilities, including parents, students, employees, and others associated with the University, and other persons knowledgeable about website accessibility, regarding the accessibility of its online content and functionality.

- a) Reporting: By November 15, 2017, the University will submit the *bona fides* of its proposed Auditor to OCR for review and approval. OCR will evaluate whether the proposed Auditor has the requisite experience and knowledge to carry out an appropriate Audit and to develop a Proposed Corrective Action Plan. Within one hundred twenty (120) days of receiving OCR's approval of the proposed Auditor, the University will submit to OCR documentation of the steps taken by the Auditor during the Audit, a description of the outreach it undertook and the input it received, and a detailed accounting of the results of the Audit.
- 4) Proposed Corrective Action Plan. Simultaneously with the submission of the Audit, the University will submit to OCR for its review and approval a proposed Corrective Action Plan to address all inaccessible content and functionality identified during the University's Audit. The proposed Corrective Action Plan will set out a detailed schedule for: (1) addressing problems, taking into account identified priorities, with all corrective actions to be completed within thirty (30) months of the date OCR approved the Corrective Action Plan; (2) setting up systems of accountability and verifying claims by vendors or open sources that their functionality and content is accessible; and (3) setting up a system of testing and accountability to maintain the accessibility of all online content and functionality on an ongoing basis.
- 5) Within thirty (30) days of receiving OCR's approval of the proposed Corrective Action Plan, the University will officially adopt and implement the Corrective Action Plan.
  - a) Reporting: Within forty-five (45) days of receiving OCR's approval of the proposed Corrective Action Plan, the University will submit to OCR the adopted Corrective Action Plan, and documentation establishing that the adopted Corrective Action Plan is being implemented according to the approved schedule. Reports will be due every twelve (12) months thereafter until the Corrective Action Plan has been completed.
- 6) Notice. Within thirty (30) days of the date of this Agreement, the University will submit to OCR for review and approval a proposed Notice to persons with disabilities regarding how

to request the webmaster or other appropriate person to provide access to (or notify the University regarding) online information or functionality that is currently inaccessible. The proposed notice will also include information or an accessible link to information instructing people how to file formal grievances under Section 504 and Title II. Within 10 (ten) days of receiving OCR's approval of the proposed Notice, the University will officially adopt and prominently post the approved Notice on its home page and throughout its website (including primary subordinate pages and intranet sites).

- a) Reporting. Within fifteen (15) days of receiving OCR's approval of the University's proposed Notice, the University will provide documentation to OCR regarding the locations and content of its published Notice.
  
- 7) Training. Starting no later than sixty (60) days from this date of this Agreement, and annually thereafter the University will deliver website accessibility training to all personnel who are primarily responsible for the University's website content and functionality, including specifically the University's website workgroup who are responsible for developing, loading, maintaining, and/or auditing web content and functionality at each respective University department and/or school. To alleviate the University having to provide training to University personnel, such as professors, who load PDF files or Power Points to a University webpage, the University will disseminate its New Content procedures. These procedures will outline how and by whom new content must be loaded onto any University webpage. The procedures will emphasize that all website workgroups must ensure that all content on webpages meet accessibility requirements.
  - a) Reporting: For each training session required by this Agreement, and thereafter for a period of two years, the University will submit to OCR documentation that such training has been delivered. The documentation will include a list of invitees and attendees, including titles; a description of the delivered training content; and the presenters' credentials for giving such training. Thereafter, once annually until the monitoring of this agreement is completed, the University will affirm in writing, , that all relevant University personnel have received the required training.
  - b) OCR will cease monitoring this training requirement when the University has met the reporting requirements of all the items contained in this agreement. Nothing contained herein shall be deemed to alleviate any obligation of the University to comply with all applicable laws and regulations.
  - c)
  
- 8) The University also understands that by signing this Agreement, it agrees to provide data and other information in a timely manner in accordance with the reporting requirements of this Agreement. Further, the University understands that during the monitoring of this Agreement, if necessary, OCR may visit the University, interview staff, and request such additional reports or data, including simulated website accounts and passwords, as are necessary for OCR to determine whether the University has fulfilled the terms of this Agreement and is in compliance with the regulations implementing Section 504, at 34

C.F.R. §§ 104.4 (a) and (b), 104.8, and 104.21, and Title II, at 28 C.F.R. §§ 35.130, 35.149, and 35.160, which were at issue in this case. Upon completion of the obligations under this Agreement, OCR shall close and dismiss this case.

The University understands and acknowledges that OCR may initiate administrative enforcement or judicial proceedings to enforce the specific terms and obligations of this Agreement. Before initiating administrative enforcement (34 C.F.R. §§ 100.9, 100.10), or judicial proceedings to enforce this Agreement, OCR shall give the University written notice of the alleged breach and ninety (90) calendar days to cure the alleged breach, unless such breach cannot be cured using reasonable efforts in such period, in which case University will begin undertaking within such period and will diligently pursue such cure.

/s/

9/18/2017

\_\_\_\_\_  
President or designee

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

/s/

9/19/2017

\_\_\_\_\_  
U.S. Department of Education  
OCR Philadelphia Office Director

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date