

# FACTS ABOUT THE MARYLAND EXTERNAL DIPLOMA PROGRAM

---

## WHAT IS THE MARYLAND EXTERNAL DIPLOMA PROGRAM?

The program is a new way to earn a high school diploma which is specifically suited to the needs and experiences of adults. It is a competency-based program that was created to fill the need for adults to demonstrate what knowledge, experiences, and skills they have acquired. Adults who demonstrate sixty-five general life skills and one individualized skill are awarded a **MARYLAND HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA**.

## WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

Maryland adults without a high school diploma who:

- are 18 years of age or older
- are interested for any reason in earning a high school diploma
- pass a pre-screening test in basic reading, writing, and mathematics

## WHAT COURSES MUST BE TAKEN TO EARN THE DIPLOMA?

There is no classroom instruction and there are no required courses. Many adults have learned the required skills at work and home since they left school. Those who do not have all the skills will be told exactly which ones are lacking and how they can be developed with the help of:

- family and friends
- self-study materials
- libraries
- tutors
- booklets
- adult community education programs

## WHAT ARE THE DIPLOMA REQUIREMENTS?

Program applicants complete a series of diagnostic instruments that have been designed to assess their ability to perform the sixty-five basic General Life Skills and one individualized skill. A staff advisor evaluates the diagnostics and determines which skills the applicant already possesses and which must be learned. The applicant is then given learning recommendations based on these diagnostic results.

During the second phase of the program, applicants must demonstrate the sixty-five life skills through completion of five tasks or projects that are taken home and completed during a one-week period. Spot checks or interviews are administered by the assessor each week.

The applicants can demonstrate such skills as:

- occupational skills used at work
- home management skills used in the family
- reading skills used to get practical information
- writing skills used to make yourself understood on paper

## WHAT IS THE COST OF THE PROGRAM?

There is a \$180 fee for the program for Howard County residents. The fee is \$190 for out-of-county residents.

## HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO COMPLETE THE PROGRAM?

You may take up to four months on the Diagnostic portion and up to eight months on the Assessment portion. Most students are able to complete the program in four to six months.

## HOW CAN PEOPLE ENTER THE PROGRAM?

Contact the Division of Continuing Education at Howard Community College at 410-772-4747 to make an appointment for a reading, writing, and math pre-screening. Office hours are Tuesday from 12:00-8:00 PM, Wednesday from 9:30 AM to 8:00 PM, and Friday from 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM. You may leave a message when the office is not open and the staff will return your call as soon as possible.