

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2019 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Third Reader - Revised

Senate Bill 284

(Senators Kagan and Reilly)

Finance

Health and Government Operations

9-1-1 Specialists - Compensation and Benefits

This bill expands eligibility of an existing local property tax credit for 9-1-1 public safety telecommunicators. In addition, the bill states that it is the intent of the General Assembly that jurisdictions employing 9-1-1 specialists appropriately classify and compensate workers. **The bill takes effect June 1, 2019, and applies to taxable years after June 30, 2019.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None.

Local Effect: Local expenditures may increase by a significant amount beginning in FY 2020 due to increased compensation costs. Local property tax revenues may decrease to the extent local governments have granted property tax credits for dwellings owned by 9-1-1 specialists and additional individuals qualify under the bill. **This bill may impose a mandate on a unit of local government.**

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: Under current law, local governments are authorized to provide a property tax credit for a dwelling owned by a 9-1-1 public safety telecommunicator. The bill expands eligibility for the tax credit by establishing that (1) 9-1-1 specialists include employees of a county public safety answering point or employees working in a county safety answering point and (2) 9-1-1 specialist duties and responsibilities include receiving

and processing 9-1-1 requests for emergency assistance and other support functions directly related to 9-1-1 requests for emergency assistance.

Current Law: Chapter 735 of 2018 authorized county and municipal governments to provide a property tax credit for a dwelling owned by a 9-1-1 public safety telecommunicator.

“Public safety telecommunicator” means an employee of a county whose duties and responsibilities include (1) answering, receiving, transferring, and dispatching 9-1-1 calls; (2) other support functions related to 9-1-1 calls; or (3) dispatching law enforcement officers, fire rescue services, emergency medical services, and other public safety services to the scene of an emergency.

County and municipal governments may, by law, grant a property tax credit for a dwelling owned by 9-1-1 public safety telecommunicators. The amount of the property tax credit may not exceed the lesser of \$2,500 or the amount of property tax imposed on the dwelling. County and municipal governments may establish, by law, the amount of the property tax credit, the duration of the property tax credit, additional eligibility requirements for public safety officers to qualify for the property tax credit, procedures for the application and uniform processing of requests for the credit, and any other provisions necessary to implement the credit.

Local Revenues: Local property tax revenues may decrease to the extent local governments have granted property tax credits for dwellings owned by 9-1-1 specialists and additional individuals qualify under the bill.

Local Expenditures: Local expenditures may increase by a significant amount beginning in fiscal 2020 due to increased compensation costs for 9-1-1 specialists. The amount of the increase depends on whether local governments increase compensation and the amount of any increase. **Exhibit 1** shows the number of 9-1-1 public safety telecommunicators in the State by county as of March 2018.

According to the *Salary Survey of Maryland County Governments* published by the Maryland Association of Counties, the statewide average salary for emergency dispatchers was \$42,286 in fiscal 2018. In comparison, the average statewide salary for various public safety officers includes: police officer/deputy (\$57,699), emergency medical technician – paramedic (\$54,040), and correctional officer (\$45,760).

Exhibit 1
9-1-1 Specialists in Maryland
March 2018

<u>County</u>	<u>Number of</u> <u>Telecommunicators</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Number of</u> <u>Telecommunicators</u>
Allegany	25	Harford	68
Anne Arundel	105	Howard	75
Baltimore City	220	Kent	15
Baltimore	193	Montgomery	157
Calvert	25	Prince George's	201
Caroline	21	Queen Anne's	24
Carroll	0	St. Mary's	43
Cecil	46	Somerset	16
Charles	60	Talbot	0
Dorchester	25	Washington	66
Frederick	69	Wicomico	19
Garrett	13	Worcester	0
		Total	1,486

Note: Includes full-time and part-time employees.

Source: Emergency Number Systems Board

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: HB 1090 (Delegate Jackson, *et al.*) - Health and Government Operations.

Information Source(s): U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics; Comptroller's Office; Maryland Association of Counties; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 25, 2019
mag/hlb Third Reader - March 26, 2019
Revised - Amendment(s) - March 26, 2019

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