

Department of Legislative Services
 Maryland General Assembly
 2024 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

Senate Bill 887 (Senators Folden and Gile)
 Education, Energy, and the Environment

Veterans Affairs - Responses to Arrested Veterans and Veterans in Crisis

This bill requires the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs (MDVA) to coordinate with State and local law enforcement agencies to establish a process to share information with arrested veterans and inform them of specified services. In fiscal 2026 through 2028, the Governor must include \$2.0 million in the annual budget bill for the Maryland Police and Correctional Training Commissions (MPCTC). MPCTC, in consultation with MDVA, must assess and develop first response practices to veterans in crisis, establish specified data collection processes and training plans, ensure training plans are conducted, and evaluate specified resources. By July 1, 2027, MPCTC must submit a specified report. **The bill takes effect October 1, 2024; provisions regarding the mandated appropriation and MPCTC take effect July 1, 2025, and terminate June 30, 2028.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: MDVA general fund expenditures increase by \$74,100 in FY 2025 for staff; future years reflect annualization and ongoing costs. General fund expenditures increase by \$2.0 million in FY 2026 through FY 2028 from the mandated appropriation for MPCTC. Revenues are not affected. **This bill establishes a mandated appropriation in FY 2026 through FY 2028.**

(in dollars)	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
GF Expenditure	74,100	2,087,800	2,091,700	2,095,700	99,900
Net Effect	(\$74,100)	(\$2,087,800)	(\$2,091,700)	(\$2,095,700)	(\$99,900)

Note: () = decrease; GF = general funds; FF = federal funds; SF = special funds; - = indeterminate increase; (-) = indeterminate decrease

Local Effect: Local law enforcement agencies can coordinate with MDVA and the specified nonprofit within existing resources. Revenues are not affected.

Small Business Effect: Minimal.

Analysis

Bill Summary:

Submission of Contact Information of Arrested Veterans

MDVA must coordinate with State and local law enforcement agencies to establish a process by which (1) an arrested individual may provide the individual's status as a veteran to a law enforcement agency and (2) within 24 hours or as soon as practicable after a veteran's arrest, the law enforcement agency must provide to MDVA and the First Responders Action Group (a nonprofit organization incorporated in North Carolina) with the name and contact information of the veteran who was arrested. On receipt of this information, MDVA must inform the veteran of services provided by MDVA, the First Responders Action Group, and other nongovernment organizations that serve veterans.

Data Collection, Training Plans, and Evaluation

For fiscal 2026 through fiscal 2028, the Governor must include in the annual budget bill an appropriation of \$2.0 million to MPCTC. The funds may be used only to fulfil the specified requirements or authorizations of the bill.

MPCTC, in consultation with MDVA, must:

- partner with nonprofit organizations and units of federal, State, and local government to assess and develop first response practices to veterans in crisis;
- establish or update a statewide data collection process for crises involving veterans;
- educate first responders, crisis response staff, and other relevant individuals about crisis intervention and suicide prevention methods tailored to meet the needs of veterans, and resources available from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and MDVA;
- develop and conduct data-informed statewide training plans for first responders responding to veterans in crisis;
- ensure State, county, and local partners are conducting training plans; and
- evaluate the availability and best allocation of resources to support data collection and training implementation.

By July 1, 2027, MPCTC must report to the Governor, the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee, and the House Judiciary Committee on the effectiveness of the data collection process and training plans, and the feasibility of expanding the data collection process and training plans.

Current Law:

Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs

MDVA delivers services and programs to assist Maryland veterans, their families, and survivors in obtaining State, federal, and local benefits provided by law in recognition for their service. MDVA assures the quality maintenance of veterans’ cemeteries and memorials to honor Maryland veterans. MDVA also manages Charlotte Hall Veterans Home, an assisted living and skilled nursing facility for veterans and their eligible spouses who are unable to care for themselves due to disability, advancing age, or who require nursing home care. Additionally, MDVA engages in public awareness and outreach to veterans, their families, and other stakeholders.

Maryland Police and Correctional Training Commissions

MPCTC provides staffing and administrative services to two separate and distinct commissions. The Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission prescribes minimum police selection and training standards for entrance, in-services, and advanced levels for all police officers serving the State, county, and municipal agencies in Maryland. The Correctional Training Commission prescribes minimum selection and training standards for parole and probation, juvenile justice, and correctional personnel serving in State and county agencies.

State Expenditures:

Department of Veterans Affairs

MDVA advises that the department is unable to absorb additional duties under the bill. Thus, MDVA general fund expenditures increase by \$74,108 in fiscal 2025, which accounts for the bill’s October 1, 2024 effective date for provisions regarding providing information to arrested veterans. This estimate reflects the cost of hiring one veteran liaison to coordinate with State and local law enforcement agencies and provide information to arrested veterans and, beginning in fiscal 2026, to provide consultation to MPCTC. It includes a salary, fringe benefits, one-time start-up costs, and ongoing operating expenses.

Position	1.0
Salary and Fringe Benefits	\$66,852
Operating Expenses	<u>7,256</u>
FY 2025 State Administrative Expenditures	\$74,108

Future year expenditures reflect a full salary with annual increases and employee turnover as well as annual increases in ongoing operating expenses.

Mandated Appropriation to the Maryland Police and Correctional Training Commissions

General fund expenditures increase by \$2.0 million in fiscal 2026 through 2028 due to the bill's mandated appropriation. MPCTC must use the funds to assess and develop first response practices to veterans in crisis, establish or update statewide data collection, educate first responders and crisis response staff, develop and conduct training plans and ensure they are conducted, evaluate specified resources, and produce and submit a mandated report by July 1, 2027.

The Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services did not provide an estimate of the potential cost to implement these requirements. To the extent, MPCTC spends less than the \$2.0 million mandated appropriation in any given year, any remaining funds revert to the general fund.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland Association of County Health Officers; Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems; Baltimore and Frederick counties; Maryland Association of Counties; cities of Frederick and Havre de Grace; Maryland Municipal League; Governor's Office of Crime Prevention and Policy; Department of Budget and Management; Maryland Department of Health; Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services; Department of State Police; Department of Veterans Affairs; Department of Legislative Services

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