

Chapter 94

(Senate Bill 248)

AN ACT concerning

**Department of Service and Civic Innovation – Maryland Corps Program Service
Year Option Pathways – Revisions**

FOR the purpose of altering the duties of the Department of Service and Civic Innovation; renaming the Governor’s Volunteer Council to be the Governor’s Commission on Service and Volunteerism; altering certain requirements relating to qualifications for applicants and compensation for participants in the Young Adult Service Year Option Pathway and the Maryland Service Year Option Pathway; altering certain reporting requirements; repealing the Executive Fellows Program; and generally relating to the Maryland Corps Program Service Year Option Pathways.

BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,

Article – State Government

Section 21–106(b)(5) and (8), 21–204(d)(6) and (7), 21–205, 21–206, 21–209, 21–301,
and 21–302

Annotated Code of Maryland

(2021 Replacement Volume and 2024 Supplement)

BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,

Article – State Government

Section 21–201(a) and (h)

Annotated Code of Maryland

(2021 Replacement Volume and 2024 Supplement)

BY repealing

Article – State Government

Section 21–306

Annotated Code of Maryland

(2021 Replacement Volume and 2024 Supplement)

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

Article – State Government

21–106.

(b) The Department shall:

(5) administer:

(i) the Maryland Corps Program under Subtitle 2 of this title; **AND**

[(ii) the Executive Fellows Program under § 21–306 of this title; and]

[(iii)] **(II)** any other volunteer program recommended or designated by the Governor or otherwise established by law;

(8) provide staff support for the [Governor’s Volunteer Council] **GOVERNOR’S COMMISSION ON SERVICE AND VOLUNTEERISM.**

21–201.

(a) In this subtitle the following words have the meanings indicated.

(h) “Program” means the Maryland Corps Program.

21–204.

(d) The Department shall adopt regulations regarding:

(6) stipends for corps participants, including:

(i) monetary payment of at least [\$15 per hour or] the **APPLICABLE COUNTY OR** State minimum wage, whichever is greater;

(ii) health insurance benefits and the potential for wraparound services; and

(iii) requirements for large–scale employers to provide matching funds;

(7) a Program completion award of \$6,000 for participants that complete at least 9 months of service that [may] **SHALL** be awarded as [follows:

(i) by deposit into a tax–exempt Maryland 529 account established under Title 18, Subtitle 19 of the Education Article and may only be used for qualified higher education expenses, as defined in § 18–1901 of the Education Article; or

(ii) payment of] a cash stipend;

21–205.

(a) (1) There is a Young Adult Service Year Option Pathway in the Program.

(2) The purpose of the Young Adult Service Year Option Pathway is to:

(i) provide service placements to eligible young adults as an additional option to immediately pursuing postsecondary education or career and technical training;

(ii) equip corps participants with professional development, mentoring, job training, financial literacy skills, and other supports while working in high-impact service placements;

(iii) assist in addressing the State's greatest challenges by channeling the next generation of Maryland citizens into impactful public service; and

(iv) strengthen a pipeline of talent into State and local governments to fill present and future staffing needs.

(b) An individual may apply to the Department for a service placement in the YA Pathway under this section if the individual [is]:

(1) IS a Maryland resident on the submission of application; [and]

(2) [within 3 years of graduation] **HAS GRADUATED** from high school or [having] **HAS** obtained a similar level of education completion, including an individual who has obtained a:

(i) [Maryland] high school diploma;

(ii) [Maryland] high school diploma by examination; or

(iii) [Maryland High School Certificate of Program Completion] **HIGH SCHOOL CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION; AND**

(3) IS AT LEAST 18 YEARS OLD AND UNDER THE AGE OF 25 YEARS AT THE START DATE OF THE YA PATHWAY.

(c) (1) The Department shall set targets for participation in the YA Pathway under this section, including:

(i) 200 corps participants in the first year of implementation; and

(ii) 2,000 corps participants in the fourth year of implementation.

(2) The Department shall prioritize for participation in the YA Pathway under this section:

(i) individuals historically underrepresented in:

1. higher education enrollment or completion; or
 2. employment:
 - A. by large-scale and community employers;
 - B. by participating organizations; or
 - C. in professions and occupations that require licensure or certification; and
- (ii) organizations that provide wraparound services to corps participants.

(d) The Department shall develop focus areas for the YA Pathway under this section for the purpose of addressing priority State and community issues, including:

- (1) climate;
- (2) education; and
- (3) health.

(e) A corps participant who receives a service placement in the YA Pathway under this section shall:

- (1) participate in all training related to the service placement;
- (2) work at least 30 hours per week;
- (3) be partnered with an on-site mentor;
- (4) perform the duties of the service placement to the satisfaction of the participating organization and the Department;
- (5) participate in Program-wide events;
- (6) be paid [\$15 per hour or] **AT LEAST** the **APPLICABLE COUNTY OR** State minimum wage, whichever is greater, for mandatory work hours or mandatory Program activities; and
- (7) on completion of the Program, be notified of all available post-Program opportunities, including registered apprenticeships.

(f) The Department shall promote and publicize the availability of opportunities in the YA Pathway to:

- (1) high schools and adult high schools in the State;
 - (2) community and nonprofit organizations;
 - (3) faith-based institutions; and
 - (4) employers that are potential service placement providers.
- (g) (1) There is a Young Adult Service Year Option Pathway Fund.
- (2) The purpose of the YA Pathway Fund is to:
- (i) provide stipends to corps participants with a service placement in the [YA Pathway] **PROGRAM** under this section;
 - (ii) pay the costs to administer and promote [the YA Pathway under] the Program; and
 - (iii) assist in the creation of additional corps programs under § 21–207 of this subtitle.
- (3) The Department shall administer the YA Pathway Fund.
- (4) Except as provided in paragraph (9) of this subsection, the YA Pathway Fund is a continuing, nonlapsing fund that is not subject to § 7–302 of the State Finance and Procurement Article.
- (5) (i) The State Treasurer shall hold the YA Pathway Fund separately and shall invest the money in the YA Pathway Fund in the same manner as other State money may be invested.
- (ii) Any investment earnings of the YA Pathway Fund shall be credited to the Fund.
- (6) The Comptroller shall separately account for each source for the YA Pathway Fund.
- (7) The Department:
- (i) may accept any gift or grant from any person for the YA Pathway Fund;
 - (ii) shall use any gift or grant that it receives for the purposes listed under paragraph (2) of this subsection; and

(iii) shall deposit with the State Treasurer any gift or grant that it receives for the YA Pathway Fund.

(8) The YA Pathway Fund consists of:

(i) money appropriated to the YA Pathway Fund under the Program in the State budget;

(ii) gifts or grants received by the Department for the YA Pathway Fund;

(iii) investment earnings of the YA Pathway Fund; and

(iv) any other money from any other source accepted for the benefit of the YA Pathway Fund.

(9) (i) Except as provided in subparagraph (ii) of this paragraph, any unspent State appropriation of the YA Pathway Fund shall revert to the General Fund of the State at the end of the fiscal year.

(ii) For fiscal years 2024 through 2026, any unspent portion of the YA Pathway Fund may not be transferred or revert to the General Fund of the State but shall remain in the YA Pathway Fund to be used for the purposes specified in this subtitle.

(10) Beginning with fiscal year 2024, at the end of each fiscal year, the Department shall prepare an annual report of the YA Pathway Fund that includes:

(i) an accounting of all financial receipts and expenditures to and from the YA Pathway Fund; and

(ii) the following information:

1. the total number of corps participants disaggregated by demographic categories;

2. the total annual cost of the YA Pathway disaggregated by the source of the funds;

3. corps participant transition after Program completion into higher education, postsecondary education, full-time employment, registered apprenticeships, and any other post-Program opportunity;

4. the number of corps participants employed by State or local government agencies after completion of the Program; and

5. to the extent practicable, what former corps participants are doing 1 year, 2 years, and 5 years after completing the Program.

(11) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL SUBMIT A COPY OF THE REPORT PREPARED UNDER PARAGRAPH (10) OF THIS SUBSECTION TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN ACCORDANCE WITH § 2-1257 OF THIS ARTICLE.

[(11)] (12) The YA Pathway Fund is subject to audit by the Office of Legislative Audits in accordance with § 2-1220 of this article.

21-206.

(a) (1) There is a Maryland Service Year Option Pathway in the Program.

(2) The purpose of the Maryland Service Year Option Pathway is to:

(i) equip corps participants with professional development, mentoring, job training, financial literacy skills, and other supports while working in high-impact service placements;

(ii) assist in addressing the State’s greatest challenges by channeling the talents of individuals into impactful public service; and

(iii) strengthen a pipeline of talent into State and local governments to fill present and future staffing needs.

(b) (1) An individual may apply to the Department for a **SERVICE** placement in the MSY Pathway under this section if the individual is **[interested in performing public and community service in the State]:**

(I) A MARYLAND RESIDENT; AND

(II) AT LEAST 18 YEARS OLD AT THE START DATE OF THE MSY PATHWAY.

(2) The Department shall prioritize for participation in the MSY Pathway under this section individuals who are **HISTORICALLY UNDERREPRESENTED IN:**

(i) **[Maryland residents; and**

(ii) **historically underrepresented in:**

1.] higher education enrollment or completion; or

[2.] (II) employment by:

[A.] 1. large-scale and community employers; or

[B.] 2. participating organizations.

(3) The Department shall prioritize for participation in the MSY Pathway under this section organizations that provide wraparound services to corps participants.

(c) A corps participant who receives a service placement in the MSY Pathway under this section shall:

(1) participate in all training related to the service placement;

(2) perform the duties of the service placement to the satisfaction of the participating organization and the Department;

(3) participate in Program-wide events as determined by the Department;

(4) be paid [\$15 per hour or] **AT LEAST** the **APPLICABLE COUNTY OR** State minimum wage, whichever is greater, for mandatory work hours or mandatory Program activities; and

(5) on completion of the Program, be notified of all available post-Program opportunities, including registered apprenticeships.

(d) The Department shall promote and publicize the availability of the MSY Pathway opportunities to:

(1) historically black colleges and universities, as defined in § 3-207 of the State Finance and Procurement Article;

(2) community colleges;

(3) trade schools;

(4) faith-based institutions;

(5) youth who are disconnected from school or work; and

(6) employers and nonprofit organizations with potential service placements for the MSY Pathway under this section.

(e) (1) There is a Maryland Service Year Option Pathway Fund.

(2) The purpose of the MSY Pathway Fund is to:

(i) provide stipends to corps participants with a service placement in the [MSY Pathway] **PROGRAM** under this section;

(ii) provide Program completion awards to corps participants who have completed the Program;

(iii) cover expenses incurred by the Department, including expenses incurred to study the potential use of the Program as a workforce development tool in the State;

(iv) cover expenses incurred to study how alumni of the Program could be better positioned to meet the current and future needs of employers in the State;

(v) provide funding for the MSY Pathway under this section to match gifts or grants received by the Department for the MSY Pathway Fund; and

(vi) assist in the creation of additional corps programs under § 21–207 of this subtitle.

(3) The Department shall administer the MSY Pathway Fund.

(4) Except as provided in paragraph (10) of this subsection, the MSY Pathway Fund is a continuing, nonlapsing fund that is not subject to § 7–302 of the State Finance and Procurement Article.

(5) (i) The State Treasurer shall hold the MSY Pathway Fund separately and shall invest the money in the MSY Pathway Fund in the same manner as other State money may be invested.

(ii) Any investment earnings of the MSY Pathway Fund shall be credited to the Fund.

(6) The Comptroller shall separately account for each source for the MSY Pathway Fund.

(7) The Department:

(i) may accept any gift or grant from any person for the MSY Pathway Fund;

(ii) shall use any gift or grant that it receives for the reasons stated under paragraph (2) of this subsection; and

(iii) shall deposit any gift or grant that it receives for the MSY Pathway Fund with the State Treasurer.

(8) The MSY Pathway Fund consists of:

- (i) money appropriated under subsection (f) of this section;
- (ii) gifts or grants received by the Department for the MSY Pathway Fund;
- (iii) investment earnings of the MSY Pathway Fund; and
- (iv) any other money from any other source accepted for the benefit of the MSY Pathway Fund.

(9) The MSY Pathway Fund may be used only for the purposes described in paragraph (2) of this subsection.

(10) (i) Except as provided in subparagraph (ii) of this paragraph, any unspent State appropriation of the MSY Pathway Fund shall revert to the General Fund of the State at the end of the fiscal year.

(ii) For fiscal years 2024 through 2026, any unspent portion of the MSY Pathway Fund may not be transferred or revert to the General Fund of the State but shall remain in the MSY Pathway Fund to be used for the purposes specified in this subtitle.

(11) [(i)] Beginning with fiscal year [2024] **2026**, at the end of each fiscal year, the Department shall [prepare an annual report of] **INCLUDE IN THE ANNUAL REPORT SUBMITTED UNDER § 21–205(G) OF THIS SUBTITLE INFORMATION ON** the MSY Pathway Fund that includes:

[1.] **(I)** an accounting of all financial receipts and expenditures to and from the MSY Pathway Fund; and

[2.] **(II)** the following information:

[A.] **1.** the total number of corps participants disaggregated by demographic categories;

[B.] **2.** the total annual cost of the MSY Pathway disaggregated by the source of the funds;

[C.] **3.** corps participant transition after Program completion into higher education, postsecondary education, full-time employment, registered apprenticeships, and any other post-Program opportunity;

[D.] 4. the number of corps participants employed by State or local government agencies after completion of the Program; and

[E.] 5. to the extent practicable, what former corps participants are doing 1 year, 2 years, and 5 years after completing the Program.

[(ii) The Department shall submit a copy of the report to the General Assembly in accordance with § 2–1257 of this article.]

(12) The MSY Pathway Fund may be subject to an audit by the Legislative Auditor.

(f) (1) The Governor shall include in the annual budget bill an appropriation to the MSY Pathway Fund of:

- (i) \$5,000,000 for fiscal year 2024;
- (ii) \$10,000,000 for fiscal year 2025;
- (iii) \$15,000,000 for fiscal year 2026; and
- (iv) \$20,000,000 for fiscal year 2027 and each fiscal year thereafter.

(2) It is the intent of the General Assembly that appropriations made under paragraph (1) of this subsection are in addition to any federal funding received for State service or volunteer programming.

(3) Appropriations made under paragraph (1) of this subsection and other funding received by the Department for the MSY Pathway under this section shall be used to:

(i) provide stipends to corps participants with a service placement in the [MSY Pathway] **PROGRAM** under this section;

(ii) provide Program completion awards to corps participants who have completed the Program;

(iii) cover expenses incurred by the Department, including expenses incurred in marketing and recruitment; and

(iv) cover programmatic expenses to expand service opportunities throughout the State, including expanding the Chesapeake Conservation Corps Program, as provided under §§ 8–1913 through 8–1924 of the Natural Resources Article.

On or before December 1 each year, the Department shall report to the Governor and, in accordance with § 2–1257 of this article, the General Assembly regarding:

- (1) the number and amount of stipends awarded under the Program;
- (2) the businesses, nonprofit organizations, or government agencies with which corps participants are placed;
- (3) the institutions, if any, that award academic credit for a corps participant's service; **AND**
- (4) the number and amount of Program completion awards awarded under the Program]; and
- (5) the postsecondary educational institutions at which corps participants use their Program completion awards].

21–301.

- (a) In this subtitle the following words have the meanings indicated.
- (b) “Corps” means the Maryland Service Corps.
- (c) [“Council” means the Governor’s Volunteer Council.
- (d)] “Office” means the Governor’s Office on Service and Volunteerism.

21–302.

There is a Governor’s Office on Service and Volunteerism within the [Governor’s Office of Community Initiatives] **DEPARTMENT.**

[21–306.

- (a) The Executive Fellows Program is established to provide an opportunity for individuals from the private sector with demonstrated leadership and managerial potential to participate in State government.
- (b) Criteria or guidelines for the recruitment, selection, and assignment of executive fellows shall be developed in consultation with representatives of the business community and appropriate State units.
- (c) A committee shall be appointed by the Governor to select qualified applicants to participate in the Executive Fellows Program.]

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July 1, 2025.

Approved by the Governor, April 8, 2025.