

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2024 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 1352
Ways and Means

(Howard County Delegation)

Howard County – Public Campaign Financing – Board of Education
Ho. Co. 1–24

This bill authorizes the governing body of Howard County to establish, by law, a system of public campaign financing for members of the county board of education. **The bill takes effect January 1, 2025.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill is not anticipated to materially affect State operations or finances.

Local Effect: To the extent Howard County uses the authority under the bill to establish a system of public campaign financing for members of the county board of education, county expenditures increase by a significant amount beginning as early as FY 2026.

Small Business Effect: Potential meaningful.

Analysis

Current Law:

Howard County Board of Education

The Howard County Board of Education consists of seven elected members and one student member. Of the seven elected members, (1) one member is elected from each of the five councilmanic districts in the county, elected by the voters of that district and (2) two members are elected at large by the voters of the county. The terms of the elected members are staggered, and each term of office begins on the first Monday in December after the election of a member and until a successor is elected and qualifies. The term of

office of each member elected from a councilmanic district, beginning at the 2020 election, is four years. The term of office of each member elected at large, beginning at the 2022 election, is four years. The successors to the offices elected at the 2020 and 2022 elections, respectively, serve for a term of four years.

Public Campaign Financing

The governing body of a county may establish, by law, a system of public campaign financing for elective offices in the executive and legislative branches of county government. When establishing such a system, the governing body of a county must (1) specify the criteria for determining whether an individual is eligible for public campaign financing and (2) provide the funding and staff necessary for the operation, administration, and auditing of the system of public campaign financing.

Various requirements apply to a system established by a governing body of a county, including that it must (1) be strictly voluntary; (2) not regulate candidates who choose not to participate in public campaign financing; and (3) be subject to regulation and oversight by the State Board of Elections to ensure conformity with State law and policy to the extent practicable.

The following jurisdictions have enacted local laws establishing public campaign financing systems for executive and legislative offices:

- Anne Arundel County – beginning with the 2026 elections;
- Baltimore City – beginning with the 2024 elections;
- Baltimore County – beginning with the 2026 general election;
- Howard County – beginning with the 2022 elections;
- Montgomery County – beginning with the 2018 elections; and
- Prince George’s County – beginning with the 2026 elections.

Local Fiscal Effect: To the extent Howard County uses the authority in the bill, county expenditures increase by a significant amount, beginning as early as fiscal 2026, to provide the public funding distributed to participating candidates for the board of education and for any increased administrative costs (*e.g.*, contractual personnel) associated with administering the program for those candidates.

Small Business Effect: To the extent the bill results in additional campaign spending that otherwise would not occur, small businesses providing campaign consulting services and materials may meaningfully benefit.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years; however, legislation with similar provisions has been proposed. For example, see Senate Bill 951 and House Bill 1093 of 2023.

Designated Cross File: SB 1130 (Howard County Senators) - Rules.

Information Source(s): Howard County; Maryland State Board of Elections; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 3, 2024
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