

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
1999 Session

FISCAL NOTE

House Bill 319 (Prince George's County Delegation)
Appropriations

Local Correctional Officers Armored Vest Matching Fund
PG 315-99

This bill creates a Local Correctional Officers Armored Vest Matching Fund as a State special fund to be used to award grants to the Prince George's County Department of Corrections for the purchase of armored vests. The Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS) is required to administer the fund.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Potential special fund expenditure increase of up to approximately \$88,000 in FY 2000 or beyond.

Local Effect: Potential \$88,000 revenue and expenditure increases for the Prince George's County Department of Corrections.

Small Business Effect: Potential meaningful, but only to the extent that the providers of armored vests from whom the county makes such purchases are small businesses.

Fiscal Analysis

Bill Summary: The statutory purpose of the fund is to assist the county department in acquiring armored vests for each correctional officer. The Prince George's County Department of Corrections is required to expend, from its own funds, an amount that is equal to the amount of grant money received from the fund.

The Local Correctional Officers Armored Vest Matching Fund will consist of all moneys appropriated to the fund in the State budget, and is subject to audit by the Office of

Legislative Audits. The Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services is required to establish application procedures and to consider certain factors when making awards from the fund.

State Effect: Special fund expenditure increases depend upon the actual amount budgeted for the Local Correctional Officers Armored Vest Matching Fund and grant applications awarded to the Prince George's County Department of Corrections. However, assuming that 50% of the costs of armored vests for Prince George's County correctional officers would total \$87,250 (as described below), special fund expenditures would total that same amount in fiscal 2000 if all correctional officers receive a vest in that year.

Administering and auditing the fund can be handled with the existing budgeted resources of DPSCS and the Office of Legislative Audits, respectively.

Local Effect: At present, correctional officers in Prince George's County do not have access to armored vests. In addition, the county Department of Corrections does not have a mandatory wear policy requiring on-duty officers to wear armored vests. The department has no current plans to adopt such a policy. Accordingly, it is difficult to ascertain if or when the county department would apply for a grant from the special fund.

If a grant application is made, revenues to the county department from the special fund would be limited by the amount of money available in the fund and the department's armored vest needs. Currently, there are 349 county correctional officers. The current market price of an armored vest is approximately \$500. Accordingly, the total cost of outfitting all county correctional officers with armored vests would be \$174,500, if purchased today. Under this bill, upon an expenditure by the county department for half of the cost of vests (\$87,250), the other half of the total cost would be eligible for a grant from the special fund (\$87,250).

Additional Comments: The Department of State Police administers a grant program for the purchase of armored vests for local law enforcement officers. This program is funded in the amount of \$100,000 annually. However, correctional officers do not qualify for these State grants.

Notwithstanding ineligibility under the State program, Prince George's County would qualify for matching funds under the recently enacted federal Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant Act. This is a matching funds program that requires that each applicant match at least 50% of the cost of their "bulletproof vests," and provides a broad definition of the term "law enforcement officer" that includes, but is not limited to, police officers, sheriff's deputies, correctional officers, parole and probation agents, and pretrial services officers.

Under the federal program, each local government applicant may request funds to help purchase one bulletproof vest per law enforcement officer per fiscal year. The chief executive officer of each eligible jurisdiction will coordinate vest needs among all law enforcement agencies in that jurisdiction. Only federally recognized tribal governments may use other federal funds for their portion of the match. Federal payment will cover up to 50% of each jurisdiction's total costs, including all taxes and shipping and handling charges associated with the purchase.

Information Source(s): Department of State Police, Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services, Prince George's County, Department of Legislative Services

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