

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2007 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Revised

House Bill 1189

(Delegates Bobo and McIntosh)

Environmental Matters

Finance

Transportation - Maryland Senior Rides Program - Grant Limitations

This bill renames the Maryland Senior Rides Demonstration Program as the Maryland Senior Rides Program. It also expands eligibility for grants through the program by repealing the following limits on grants: • one grant a year per participant and four grants total per participant (over course of program history); • \$100,000 per grant award; and • \$100,000 per area each year. In addition, the cap on total annual grant awards is increased to \$500,000, up from \$400,000.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Potential increase in Transportation Trust Fund (TTF) expenditures for the Senior Rides Program, depending on the level of funding included for this program in the annual budget as the existing \$400,000 limit has not yet been met. Revenues would not be affected.

Local Effect: Local agencies that either participate in this program or seek to participate could benefit from the elimination of caps on grant size and the number of grants an applicant can receive. However, the effect is dependent on funding for the Senior Rides Program, which cannot be reliably determined at this time.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: The Maryland Senior Rides Demonstration Program was established by Chapters 112 and 113 of 2004 with an effective date of July 1, 2005. The Maryland

Transit Administration (MTA) is required to make grants to organizations that provide door-to-door transportation for low- to moderate-income seniors and (1) match at least 25% of the total capital or operating costs associated with providing the service; (2) use primarily volunteer drivers who drive their own vehicles; (3) use a dispatcher system to respond quickly to requests from participating seniors; and (4) define a geographic area for which door-to-door transportation is provided. An applicant may not receive more than one grant annually and can only receive a total of four grants.

A senior is a person age 60 or older. MTA must award grants of up to \$100,000 each to qualified program applicants, but no more than \$400,000 per year may be awarded.

The program must solicit grant applications from prospective applicants and ensure that the grants are distributed among applicants in the following areas, with no area receiving more than \$100,000:

- the Baltimore Metropolitan Area;
- the Washington, DC Metropolitan Area;
- Western Maryland;
- Southern Maryland; and
- the Eastern Shore.

MTA must ensure, to the extent practicable, that grants are distributed among rural, urban, and suburban areas.

Background: MTA advises that in fiscal 2006 the Senior Rides Program provided \$100,000 in grants. Organizations that received grants provided 6,344 one-way trips. In fiscal 2007, MTA provided \$91,949 in grants. The fiscal 2008 budget includes \$100,000 for this program. According to MTA's November 2006 report on the program, many agencies in rural areas that may be interested in starting up volunteer-based programs have advised that grants ranging from \$20,000 to \$25,000 are too small for start-up programs.

State Fiscal Effect: Under the bill, the budget for the Senior Rides Program could increase to \$500,000 annually, including expenditures for additional personnel at MTA to monitor the program. However, that would depend on budget appropriations for the program, which cannot be reliably determined at this time. Otherwise, the bill alters how existing funds could be used and would have no fiscal impact.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland Department of Transportation, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 18, 2007
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