

**Department of Legislative Services**  
Maryland General Assembly  
2020 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**  
**First Reader**

House Bill 1537 (Delegate Chang)  
Environment and Transportation

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**Criminal Law – Humane Society and Animal Control Officers – Education and Training Requirements**

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The bill requires an officer of a humane society or an animal control officer to complete at least 80 hours of training for animal care and control professionals – that is approved by the appropriate unit of a county or municipal corporation – within the first 12 months of employment. The bill also requires an officer of a humane society or an animal control officer to complete at least 6 hours of continuing education approved by the appropriate unit of a county or municipality every year.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** None.

**Local Effect:** Local government expenditures may increase relatively minimally in some jurisdictions, as discussed below. Local revenues are not affected.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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**Analysis**

**Current Law/Background:** State law does not currently establish training requirements or other qualifications for humane society officers or animal control officers. Certain counties that responded to requests for information indicate that their animal control officers currently undergo training and continuing education. For example, Baltimore City requires animal control officers have six months of training with senior officers prior to starting unsupervised work. Additionally, 16 hours of continuing education is provided each year to its officers. Similarly, Montgomery County currently sends its officers to

State/nationally approved training within their first year, and officers are expected to attend training that could serve as continuing education training.

Training programs of at least 80 hours are offered at organizations such as the National Animal Care and Control Association and the East Coast Animal Control Academy.

**Local Expenditures:** Expenditures may increase relatively minimally in certain local jurisdictions to the extent (1) a jurisdiction's officers do not already undergo training and continued education that meets the requirements of the bill and (2) the jurisdiction pays for the training required under the bill. Talbot County, for example, indicates that under the bill it plans to provide a new officer with the required training, which costs approximately \$2,000. The county further indicates that any continuing education cost is nominal, at approximately \$300 annually per officer.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Designated Cross File:** SB 814 (Senator Waldstreicher) - Judicial Proceedings.

**Information Source(s):** Baltimore City; Harford, Montgomery, and Talbot counties; Maryland Association of Counties; Maryland Municipal League; National Animal Care and Control Association; East Coast Animal Control Academy; Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 28, 2020  
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