

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2021 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Third Reader

House Bill 1097

(St. Mary's County Delegation)

Environment and Transportation

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

St. Mary's County - Local Officials - Salaries

This bill increases the salaries of specified public officials in St. Mary's County. Pursuant to constitutional requirements, the salary increases take effect at the beginning of the next terms of office.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None.

Local Effect: St. Mary's County expenditures increase by approximately \$38,500 in FY 2023 and by approximately \$134,400 by FY 2026. Revenues are not affected.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary/Current Law: Current and proposed salary changes for St. Mary's County public officials over the next four years are generally shown in **Exhibit 1**.

Exhibit 1
Proposed Salary Changes for St. Mary's County Officials
Calendar 2023-2026

<u>Public Official</u>	<u>Current Salary</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>2024</u>	<u>2025</u>	<u>2026</u>
County Commissioner President	\$44,746	\$55,000	\$55,825	\$56,662	\$57,512
County Commissioner	39,544	50,000	50,750	51,511	52,284
Treasurer	63,000	76,000	89,000	102,000	115,000
Chief Judge Orphans' Court*	9,000	11,000	11,165	11,332	11,502
Orphans' Court Judge*	9,000	10,000	10,150	10,302	10,457
Board of Education – Chair*	7,000	11,000	11,165	11,332	11,502
Board of Education – Member*	6,000	10,000	10,150	10,302	10,457

* Although the salaries for these officials are shown by calendar year to reflect the annual 1.5% salary increase, the Department of Legislative Services notes that the salaries are not specifically tied to calendar years in statute.

Source: St. Mary's County; Department of Legislative Services

Beginning in calendar 2027, the salary for the St. Mary's County Treasurer is equal to the salary of the Register of Wills for St. Mary's County. The current salary of the Register of Wills for St. Mary's County is \$114,641. The salary range for this position is set by statute and the State Board of Public Works determines the annual salary of each register of wills.

Under current law, each member and the chair of the St. Mary's County Board of Education receives an annual increase of \$250 for each year of service. The bill repeals this annual increase, and instead increases salaries by 1.5% annually and provides \$150 for each year of service. Under the bill, orphans' court judges also receive \$150 annually for each year of service. Salaries shown in Exhibit 1 reflect base salaries only with annual increases and do not account for the additional compensation associated with each year of service.

Article III, § 35 of the Maryland Constitution prohibits the salary or compensation of any public official from being increased or diminished during the individual's term of office, except those whose full term is fixed by law in excess of four years. According to a letter from the counsel to the General Assembly, dated January 17, 1978, salary increases that are to be implemented over a period of time are permissible if implemented before the beginning of the term.

Local Fiscal Effect: St. Mary's County expenditures increase by \$38,539 in fiscal 2023 and by \$134,371 in fiscal 2026 for increased salaries for county officials included in the bill. The estimate reflects base salaries only and does not account for any employer contribution rate for fringe benefits or additional compensation for years of service. The estimate reflects the staggered terms of office for the board of education and, therefore, accounts for terms for the chair and one member beginning January 2023 and terms for the remaining three members beginning January 2025. **Exhibit 2** shows the total salary increases for all public officials included in the bill.

Exhibit 2
St. Mary's County Public Officials – Total Salary Increase
Fiscal 2023-2026

<u>Public Official</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>2024</u>	<u>2025</u>	<u>2026</u>
Commissioner President	\$5,127	\$10,667	\$11,498	\$12,341
Commissioners (4)	20,912	43,324	46,348	49,416
Treasurer	6,500	19,500	32,500	45,500
Chief Judge Orphans' Court	1,000	2,083	2,249	2,417
Orphans' Court Judges (2)	1,000	2,150	2,452	2,760
Board of Education – Chair	2,000	4,083	4,249	4,417
Board of Education – Members (4)	2,000	4,075	16,904	17,520
Total	\$38,539	\$85,882	\$116,200	\$134,371

Source: St. Mary's County; Department of Legislative Services

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): St. Mary's County; Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts); Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 9, 2021
rh/jkb Third Reader - March 19, 2021

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