

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2021 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Third Reader - Revised

Senate Bill 647

(Senator King, *et al.*)

Budget and Taxation

Appropriations

Federal COVID-19 Relief Funding - Report

This emergency bill requires the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) to submit a report to the Senate Budget and Taxation and House Appropriations committees by March 15, 2021, and quarterly through June 30, 2022, on federal COVID-19 relief funding provided to the State under the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021, and any other enacted federal legislation that provides funding for COVID-19-related response or relief. The reports must include specified information relating to (1) the amount of federal COVID-19 relief funding distributed to the State and each political subdivision of the State; (2) the allocation of federal COVID-19 relief funding to State programs and programs administered by political subdivisions in the State; (3) the amount of federal COVID-19 relief funding for which the State may exercise any discretion as to how the funds are used, and the criteria used to allocate such funds; (4) the amount of federal COVID-19 relief funding available to the State or a political subdivision of the State that has not been provided by the federal government, and the reasons why the funding has not been provided; and (5) additional COVID-19-related funding needs to which the Governor will prioritize any future federal COVID-19 relief funding received by the State.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: DBM can prepare the required reports with existing budgeted resources. However, the bill's March 15, 2021 deadline for the initial report cannot be met, as discussed in the Additional Comments section below. Revenues are not affected.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: The federal government has enacted several pieces of emergency legislation to address the public health and economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic (most recently, the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, which was signed into law on March 11, 2021). The CARES Act and Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021, which were signed into law in March and December of 2020, respectively, included substantial financial assistance for state and local governments. For detailed information on the earlier federal legislation regarding COVID-19 and federal funding for Maryland to address COVID-19, see the **Appendix – COVID-19**.

Expenditure of Unanticipated Funds by Budget Amendment

Section 7-217 of the State Finance and Procurement Article authorizes the expenditure of special or federal funds that are not estimated or included in the State budget, or that exceed the estimate in the State budget, by an approved budget amendment. Such funds may be expended for (1) the specific purpose to which the money is dedicated by State law or act of Congress or (2) if the money is not dedicated to a specific purpose, with the approval of the Governor and as authorized in an approved budget amendment, for necessary current operations.

In addition, language in the annual budget bill expressly authorizes revenues in excess of special or federal fund appropriations in the budget bill to be made available by approved budget amendment. Budget amendments that increase a special, federal, or higher education fund appropriation by \$100,000 or more are generally subject to legislative review. For example, Section 27 of the fiscal 2021 budget bill specifies that such amendments may not be approved by the Governor until (1) the amendment has been submitted to the Department of Legislative Services and (2) the budget committees or the Legislative Policy Committee have considered the amendment, or 45 days have elapsed from the date of submission. Specified budget amendments are excluded from the legislative review requirement, including budget amendments solely for the purpose of appropriating federal disaster relief funds.

Additional Comments: The bill requires DBM to submit a report to the budget committees by March 15, 2021, and quarterly through June 30, 2022. As of the publication of this revised fiscal and policy note, the bill cannot take effect until after the March 15, 2021 deadline for the initial report.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Department of Budget and Management; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 15, 2021
rh/mcr Third Reader - March 18, 2021
 Revised - Amendment(s) - March 18, 2021
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Appendix – COVID-19

In December 2019, a novel strain of coronavirus known as severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 emerged in Wuhan, China. Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by this virus. As the number of cases spread globally by March 2020, the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a pandemic.

Testing, Cases, and Deaths in Maryland

Maryland's first three confirmed cases of COVID-19 were recorded on March 6, 2020, with the first two deaths occurring March 16, 2020. As of January 27, 2021, Maryland reported a total of 346,559 confirmed cases, 31,468 individuals ever hospitalized, and 6,821 confirmed deaths. The jurisdictions with the highest number of cases have been Prince George's, Montgomery, and Baltimore counties and Baltimore City. Statewide, 8.4% of cases (28,954) and 45.9% of COVID-19 deaths (3,130) occurred in congregate living settings (*i.e.*, nursing homes, assisted living, and group homes). Updated data on COVID-19 in Maryland is available on the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) dashboard: <https://coronavirus.maryland.gov>.

Vaccines

In December 2020, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved both Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna's COVID-19 vaccines for emergency use. Due to limited quantities, distribution began with priority groups as determined by states. Maryland began distribution in January 2021 with Phase 1A, which includes health care workers, residents and staff of nursing homes, first responders, public safety, corrections staff, and front-line Judiciary staff. Phase 1B began January 18, 2021, and includes residents of assisted living facilities and other congregate settings, adults age 75 and older, staff of K-12 schools and child care facilities, high-risk incarcerated individuals, and those involved in continuity of government. As of January 27, 2021, the State is in Phase 1C, which includes adults aged 65 and older, additional public safety and public health workers, and essential workers in food/agriculture, manufacturing, public transit, and the postal service. Phase 2 will include individuals aged 16 to 64 at increased risk of severe illness, incarcerated adults, and remaining essential workers. Phase 3 will include the general public. As of January 27, 2021, 852,625 doses of the vaccine have been distributed, and 419,579 doses have been administered (363,282 first doses and 56,297 second doses). Updated data is available on the MDH dashboard: coronavirus.maryland.gov/#Vaccine.

Declaration of a State of Emergency and Initial Executive Orders

On March 5, 2020, Governor Lawrence J. Hogan, Jr. declared a state of emergency and the existence of a catastrophic health emergency to deploy resources and implement the emergency powers of the Governor to control and prevent the spread of COVID-19. The declaration, which has been renewed several times (most recently January 21, 2021), initiated a series of executive actions, including moving the Maryland Emergency Management Agency to its highest activation level, activating the National Guard, and closing all public schools. The Governor then ordered the closure of in-house dining at bars and restaurants and banned mass gatherings of more than 50 people. This action was followed by a more extensive stay-at-home order on March 30, 2020, requiring closure of all nonessential businesses. This order remained in effect until May 15, 2020.

Emergency Legislation

Chapters 13 and 14 of 2020 (the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency Protection Act of 2020) authorized the Governor, for the duration of the emergency, to take actions relating to health insurance, Medicaid, retailer profits, employer actions, and personnel at State health care facilities as a result of the state of emergency and catastrophic health emergency. The Acts also authorize the Secretary of Labor to determine certain individuals eligible for unemployment insurance (UI) benefits due to COVID-19. The Acts terminate April 30, 2021.

Subsequent Executive Orders and Advisories

Since March 2020, the Governor has issued numerous executive orders relating to COVID-19, including (1) closing Maryland ports and harbors to passenger vessels; (2) expanding child care access; (3) expanding the scope of practice for health care practitioners, activating the Maryland Responds Medical Reserve Corps, controlling and restricting elective medical procedures, closing adult day care centers, and providing additional health care regulatory flexibility; (4) augmenting emergency medical services; (5) prohibiting price gouging; (6) fast tracking lab testing processes; (7) authorizing expanded telehealth services; (8) delegating authority to local health officials to control and close unsafe facilities; (9) extending certain licenses, permits, and registrations; (10) authorizing remote notarizations; (11) prohibiting evictions of tenants suffering substantial loss of income due to COVID-19, additionally prohibiting certain repossessions, restricting initiation of residential mortgage foreclosures, and prohibiting commercial evictions; (12) regulating certain businesses and facilities and generally requiring the use of face coverings; (13) establishing alternate health care sites and authorizing regulation of patient care space in health care facilities; and (14) implementing alternative correctional detention and supervision.

Federal Legislation Regarding COVID-19

Five federal emergency bills have been enacted to address the COVID-19 pandemic:

- the **Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act**, which provided \$8.3 billion in emergency funds for federal agencies (including \$950 million through the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for state and local response);
- the **Families First Coronavirus Response Act**, which addressed emergency family and medical leave and paid sick leave, specified insurance coverage of COVID-19 testing, and provided additional funding for nutrition assistance programs and unemployment benefits;
- the **Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act**, which included a Coronavirus Relief Fund for state and local governments; an Education Stabilization Fund for states, school districts, and institutions of higher education; a Disaster Relief Fund for state and local governments; additional funding for public health agencies to prevent, prepare for, and respond to COVID-19; funding for transit systems; an expansion and extension of eligibility for UI benefits, and additional temporary unemployment compensation of \$600 per week; \$349 billion for the establishment of the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP); a \$500 billion lending fund for businesses, cities, and states; and Economic Impact Payments to American households of up to \$1,200 per adult and \$500 per child;
- the **Paycheck Protection Program and Health Care Enhancement Act**, which provided an additional \$310 billion to PPP, \$75 billion for health care providers, \$60 billion for small business disaster loans, and \$25 billion for increased testing capacity; and
- the **Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, and Other Extensions Act**, which included \$908 billion in relief, including another \$284 billion for PPP, \$82 billion for schools, \$45 billion for transportation, \$25 billion in emergency assistance to renters, \$20 billion for vaccine distribution, \$13 billion for a major expansion in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance benefits, \$13 billion for agriculture and rural programs, \$10 billion for child care assistance, extended federal unemployment benefits of up to \$300 per week, extended the federal moratorium on evictions through January 31, 2021, and provided a second stimulus payment of up to \$600 per person.

Federal Funding for Maryland to Address COVID-19

The CARES Act and the Families First Coronavirus Response Act provided Maryland with a significant amount of federal aid. More than \$6 billion in assistance has been made available to the State and local governments, including an enhanced federal matching rate for Medicaid. More than \$900 million was directly provided to local governments. The largest and most flexible portion of CARES Act funding is the Coronavirus Relief Fund, which totals \$2.3 billion, \$691 million of which was allocated directly to Baltimore City and Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Montgomery, and Prince George's counties.

CARES Act funding also included \$800 million for the Disaster Recovery Fund; \$696 million for transit grants; \$575 million in enhanced Medicaid matching funds (through December 2020); \$239 million in CDC grants; \$108 million for airports; \$74 million for community development block grants; \$50 million for homelessness assistance; \$46 million for grants for local education agencies and higher education institutions; \$46 million for child care and development block grants; \$36 million for public housing and rental assistance grants; \$24 million for community health centers; \$20 million for senior nutrition; \$19 million for energy assistance; \$18 million for justice assistance grants; \$17 million for administration of the UI program; \$14 million for community service block grants; \$13 million for emergency food assistance; \$8 million for Head Start; \$8 million for the Women, Infants, and Children program; and \$7 million for election security.

The Consolidated Appropriations Act is estimated to provide Maryland with \$1.2 billion for education (including \$869 million for K-12 education, \$306 million for higher education, and \$57.7 million for the Governor's Fund); \$1.1 billion for transportation (including \$830.3 million for transit in the Washington, DC area, \$149.3 million for highways, \$76.2 million for transit in Baltimore, \$22.5 million for airports, and \$9.1 million for rural area grants); more than \$475 million for health (including \$335.6 million for testing, \$75.3 million for vaccines, \$32.6 million for mental health assistance, and \$31.9 million for substance use assistance); \$402.4 million for rental assistance; and \$140.6 million for human services (including \$130.4 million for child care).