

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2022 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 177 (Delegates Atterbeary and Wilson)
Health and Government Operations

9-1-1 Registry Program - Autism and Other Special Needs - Established

This bill establishes the 9-1-1 Registry Program to authorize self-advocates, parents, or guardians of individuals with autism or other special needs to register with the 9-1-1 system in order to alert first responders, as defined by the bill, encountering a registered individual that the individual may exhibit certain behaviors, including that the individual may be (1) nonverbal; (2) oversensitive to sirens; (3) unaware of danger; or (4) prone to elope.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill does not directly affect State operations or finances.

Local Effect: Expenditures for many local governments increase to implement the registry program required by the bill, as discussed below. Revenues are not affected. **This bill imposes a mandate on a unit of local government.**

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: To accomplish the purpose of the 9-1-1 Registry Program, each public safety answering point (PSAP) must (1) establish procedures for registering an individual with autism or other special needs; (2) establish procedures for alerting first responders of registered individuals prior to first responders arriving at the registered individual's address and during a time when a registered individual is stopped by the police; and (3) ensure that the details of the program are publicly available. Each PSAP must contact registrants annually to confirm that the information on the registered individual is current.

Current Law:

Maryland's 9-1-1 System and the Maryland 9-1-1 Board

The State's 9-1-1 system operates primarily through PSAPs, which are generally owned and operated by local governments. 9-1-1 specialists working within PSAPs answer, redirect, and take action on 9-1-1 calls received based on the location of the originating 9-1-1 call. State and local governments are preparing for "next generation" 9-1-1 technology that will allow PSAPs to access not only more accurate information about caller location but also other information that will assist emergency personnel in communicating with callers and responding more efficiently. Legislation has been enacted in recent years to, among other things:

- transfer the Maryland 9-1-1 Board that is responsible for administering the 9-1-1 Trust Fund and overseeing the State's 9-1-1 system from the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services to the Maryland Department of Emergency Management;
- expand the uses of the 9-1-1 Trust Fund to include providing funding for 9-1-1 specialist training activities; and
- increase funding for the State's 9-1-1 system.

The Maryland 9-1-1 Board's other responsibilities include (1) dispersing funds to local governments from the 9-1-1 Trust Fund for authorized costs; (2) reviewing and approving or disapproving requests for reimbursement of the costs of enhancing 9-1-1 systems; (3) ensuring the inspection of PSAPs; (4) auditing counties to ensure that 9-1-1 trust funds are being used for authorized purposes; and (5) establishing training standards for PSAP personnel based on national best practices and related to Next Generation 9-1-1.

9-1-1 Trust Fund – State and Local Fees

The 9-1-1 Trust Fund is funded through a State 9-1-1 fee and county 9-1-1 fee. Telephone companies, wireless carriers, and other 9-1-1 accessible service providers collect and remit the fees monthly to the Comptroller for deposit into the fund. The State 9-1-1 fee is distributed to counties at the discretion of the Maryland 9-1-1 Board in response to county 9-1-1 system enhancement requests. The county fee, the prepaid wireless 9-1-1 fee remittances, and any investment earnings of the fund are all distributed quarterly to each county in prorated amounts according to the level of fees collected in each jurisdiction.

Local Expenditures: As noted above, PSAPs are generally owned and operated by local governments and, thus, each local government PSAP is responsible for the implementation and administration of its own registry program, as well as the associated costs. While the 9-1-1 Trust Fund can be used to reimburse counties for certain 9-1-1 system costs, the

Maryland 9-1-1 Board advises that costs related to the registry are not likely to be eligible for reimbursement.

Since local governments operate their own PSAPs, costs to implement the bill vary by jurisdiction; below is a summary of the costs anticipated by the counties that responded to a request for information regarding the fiscal effect of the bill. Other local governments are likely to experience similar effects.

- Anne Arundel County advises that it currently has a registry system, but it requires the registrant (or the registrant's representative) to re-register each year. Since the bill requires the PSAP to contact each registrant annually to confirm the registrant information, the county advises that it plans to hire a full-time employee (at an estimated annual cost of approximately \$80,000) to handle the new responsibility.
- Baltimore County advises that its current system can likely track the information required by the bill and existing staff can likely handle the additional responsibilities associated with the registry program.
- Charles County anticipates needing one full-time employee to administer the program (at an estimated annual cost of approximately \$72,000).
- Frederick County anticipates needing to procure a reliable database system to receive, store, and recall the registry information. The county also anticipates needing additional staff to administer the program. Overall, the county anticipates costs of approximately \$142,700 in fiscal 2023 and approximately \$185,300 annually thereafter.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland Department of Emergency Management; Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems; Department of State Police; Maryland Department of Transportation; Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Charles, Frederick, Montgomery, and Somerset counties; cities of Frederick and Havre de Grace; Department of Legislative Services

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Analysis by: Richard L. Duncan

Direct Inquiries to:
(410) 946-5510
(301) 970-5510