

Department of Legislative Services
 Maryland General Assembly
 2024 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Third Reader - Revised

House Bill 583
 Judiciary

(The Speaker, *et al.*) (By Request - Administration)

Finance

Center for Firearm Violence Prevention and Intervention - Establishment

This Administration bill establishes the Center for Firearm Violence Prevention and Intervention in the Maryland Department of Health (MDH). The purpose of the center is to reduce firearm violence, harm from firearm violence, and misuse of firearms in the State by partnering with federal, State, and local agencies and affected communities to implement a public health approach to firearm violence reduction. The center must (1) work in consultation with specified State agencies and stakeholders; (2) solicit and consider recommendations from specified communities and experts; and (3) submit to the Governor and General Assembly a preliminary State Plan for a Public Health Approach to Reducing Firearm Violence (by May 1, 2025), and a State Strategic Plan for Firearm Violence Reduction Using Public Health Strategies (by May 1, 2029, and every four years thereafter).

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The FY 2025 budget as introduced includes \$10.0 million in general funds for MDH contingent on the passage of legislation establishing the center; accordingly, general fund expenditures increase by \$10.0 million in FY 2025. Future years assume ongoing discretionary funding of \$10.0 million annually for the center, as discussed below. Federal fund revenues and expenditures increase to the extent the center secures federal funds, as discussed below.

(\$ in millions)	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029
FF Revenue	-	-	-	-	-
GF Expenditure	\$10.0	\$10.0	\$10.0	\$10.0	\$10.0
FF Expenditure	-	-	-	-	-
Net Effect	(\$10.0)	(\$10.0)	(\$10.0)	(\$10.0)	(\$10.0)

Note:() = decrease; GF = general funds; FF = federal funds; SF = special funds; - = indeterminate increase; (-) = indeterminate decrease

Local Effect: Revenues and expenditures increase to the extent that local health departments (LHDs) apply for and receive grants from the center, as discussed below. Any effect on other local entities is speculative, as discussed below.

Small Business Effect: The Administration has determined that this bill has minimal or no impact on small business (attached). The Department of Legislative Services (DLS) concurs with this assessment. (The attached assessment does not reflect amendments to the bill.)

Analysis

Bill Summary: The Secretary of Health must appoint the executive director of the center who must (1) coordinate and direct any planning related to the center initiated by MDH and (2) appoint and remove all staff in accordance with the provisions of the State Personnel and Pensions Article.

The center must (1) work in consultation with the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention and Policy (GOCCP), the Department of State Police (DSP), and any other relevant State or local agency to ensure a multidepartmental approach to reducing firearm violence and (2) solicit and consider recommendations from communities disproportionately impacted by firearm violence, public health experts, and any other experts, groups, or organizations the executive director determines to be appropriate and necessary.

The center may:

- apply for, receive, and spend federal funds made available to MDH for use in carrying out the powers and duties of the Secretary or MDH;
- offer training and technical assistance to State and local agencies, health care professionals, and community and faith-based organizations to increase capacity to implement evidence-based firearm violence prevention and intervention strategies;
- issue best practice guidance and model processes in consultation with affected communities regarding implementation of evidence-based firearm violence prevention and intervention strategies;
- facilitate cross-jurisdictional data and information sharing in consultation with GOCCP;
- conduct public awareness campaigns;
- share data and collaborate with higher education and research institutions regarding the prevention of firearm violence;

- promote the development of evidence-based firearm violence prevention initiatives in affected communities throughout the State; and
- engage in any other activity consistent with the center’s mission.

For fiscal 2026 and each fiscal year thereafter, the Governor may include in the annual budget bill a general fund appropriation sufficient to fund the center.

Current Law:

Maryland State Police Gun Center

The Maryland State Police Gun Center within DSP is a statewide firearms enforcement center for the tracking, screening, and vetting of all firearm crimes committed in the State and firearms surrendered under final protective orders in the State. The center must (1) create and maintain a statewide database to track information on crimes committed with crime firearms and firearms surrendered under final protective orders in the State; (2) coordinate with DSP and law enforcement agencies to screen and vet all firearm crimes committed in the State; and (3) assist DSP and law enforcement agencies with firearm enforcement and firearm violation reduction efforts. Each law enforcement agency must report specified information to the center on both crimes committed in the jurisdiction with crime firearms and firearms surrendered under final protective orders issued in the jurisdiction.

Executive Order on Reducing Gun Violence and Making Our Communities Safer

On March 14, 2023, President Joseph R. Biden, Jr. issued an [executive order](#) requiring specified entities to take specific actions to reduce gun violence, including among other things, (1) expanding existing federal campaigns and other efforts to promote safe storage of firearms; (2) encouraging effective use of extreme risk protective orders; and (3) issuing a proposal on how the federal government can better support the recovery, mental health, and other needs of survivors of gun violence, families of victims and survivors of gun violence, first responders to incidents of gun violence, and communities affected by gun violence.

Background: The American Public Health Association (APHA) reports that gun violence is a leading cause of premature death in the United States, resulting in more than 39,000 deaths and nearly 85,000 nonfatal injuries nationwide each year. APHA labels gun violence as a public health crisis and recommends a public health approach that involves (1) data collection and surveillance; (2) research to understand which policies and programs are effective in decreasing gun violence; (3) initiatives to implement those measures that are shown to work; and (4) continued surveillance and evaluation.

Additional data obtained from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and reported by EveryStat.org indicates that between 2012 and 2021, an average of 796 people died and 1,363 people were wounded by firearms in Maryland each year. Of those who died, 63% were homicides, 35% were suicides, 1% were police shootings, and 1% were either unintentional or undetermined. Moreover, guns are the leading cause of death among children and teens in the State.

In April 2019, Anne Arundel County Executive Steuart Pittman, Jr. created the Gun Violence Prevention Task Force through executive order. The task force issued a final [report](#) on June 5, 2020. Following the report, the Anne Arundel County Department of Health launched the Gun Violence Intervention Team to address gun violence as a public health issue. The team is managed by a full-time health planner and meets monthly to discuss the work of subcommittees focused on three priority areas: data; public awareness; and crisis response.

State Fiscal Effect:

Fiscal 2025 Expenditures

The fiscal 2025 budget as introduced includes \$10.0 million in general funds for MDH’s Prevention and Health Promotion Administration contingent on passage of legislation establishing the Center for Firearm Violence Prevention and Intervention. Thus, general fund expenditures for MDH increase by \$10.0 million in fiscal 2025 as the bill satisfies this contingency.

MDH advises that implementation of the center requires additional personnel. Thus, this estimate reflects the cost of hiring (1) one executive director to coordinate center activities; (2) one epidemiologist to support the collection, analysis, interpretation, and investigation of firearm-related data; and (3) one program manager to conduct policy review and analysis with partners, identify specific policies and practices for improvement, and attend State and national conferences and site visits. Positions begin October 1, 2024, consistent with the bill’s effective date. The estimate includes salaries, fringe benefits, one-time start-up costs, and ongoing operating expenses. MDH advises that the center also plans to expend \$8.7 million on contractual services and provide approximately \$1.0 million in grants, as detailed below.

Positions	3.0
Contractual Services	\$8,700,000
Grants	1,010,457
Salaries and Fringe Benefits	267,775
Other Operating Expenses	<u>21,768</u>
Total FY 2025 State Expenditures	\$10,000,000

MDH notes that the \$8.7 million in anticipated costs for contractual services includes (1) \$6.7 million to implement data-driven, strategic, place-based, and evidence-based firearm violence prevention activities; (2) \$1.0 million for State agency partners to ensure capacity and technical assistance for coordination and collaboration for addressing shared risk and protective factors; and (3) \$1.0 million for infrastructure and information technology capacity, including applying predictive analytics to a cross-sector data dashboard.

MDH advises that it plans to use approximately \$1.0 million of the fiscal 2025 appropriation to award grants to (1) LHDs and community-based organizations to implement firearm violence prevention activities and (2) academic partners to provide expertise, research-to-practice translation, and evaluation. Although not explicitly authorized by the bill, this analysis assumes the center may award grants in furtherance of the center's mission under the bill's authorization to engage in "any other activity consistent with the center's mission."

Ongoing Expenditures for the Center

To ensure a comprehensive and sustainable public health approach to firearm violence prevention, MDH advises that it plans to continue the activities specified for fiscal 2025 on an ongoing annual basis at a cost of approximately \$13.0 million in fiscal 2026, \$17.0 million in fiscal 2027, \$21.0 million in fiscal 2028, and \$25.0 million in fiscal 2029. These anticipated expenditures include (1) ongoing personnel costs; (2) annual contractual services costs of \$8.7 million; and (3) increasing grant awards of \$4.0 million in fiscal 2026, \$8.0 million in fiscal 2027, \$12.0 million in fiscal 2028, and \$16.0 million in fiscal 2029.

DLS notes that the bill only requires MDH to (1) work in consultation with specified State agencies and stakeholders; (2) solicit and consider recommendations from specified communities and experts; and (3) submit to the Governor and General Assembly, a preliminary State Plan for a Public Health Approach to Reducing Firearm Violence (by May 1, 2025) and a State Strategic Plan for Firearm Violence Reduction Using Public Health Strategies (by May 1, 2029, and every four years thereafter). DLS further advises that a majority of the activities (and associated expenditures) the center plans to carry out in fiscal 2025, (including the entirety of the \$8.7 million in contractual costs and the grant awards) are *authorized* (not required) activities and expenditures under the bill.

Nevertheless, this analysis assumes the center implements a fairly robust plan, given the level of funding provided in the fiscal 2025 budget as introduced and the broad authority provided to the center by the bill. Accordingly, it is assumed that \$10.0 million annually is provided for the center, including (1) ongoing personnel and associated operating costs (full salaries with annual increases and employee turnover as well as annual increases in

ongoing operating expenses); (2) annual contractual service costs of \$8.7 million; and (3) a relatively stable level of grant awards (approximately \$1.0 million in fiscal 2026, decreasing to approximately \$0.9 million in fiscal 2027 through 2029).

If, however, the center implements an even more robust plan, with significant annual growth in grant awards (as advised and discussed above), costs are higher. If a less robust plan is implemented, costs may be less.

Federal Funds

To the extent that the center secures federal grants-in-aid or other federal funds, federal fund revenues and expenditures increase and the need for general funds may decrease.

Effects on Other Agencies

DSP and GOCCP advise that they can work in consultation with the center using existing budgeted resources.

Local Fiscal Effect: Based on MDH's current plan to award grants, local revenues and expenditures increase as LHDs apply for and receive grants from the center to implement place- and evidence-based firearm violence prevention activities.

Depending on the contents of the required plan, other local entities (*e.g.*, local law enforcement) may also be affected. However, any such effect results from the plan developed under the bill and not directly from the bill.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

Designated Cross File: SB 475 (The President, *et al.*) (By Request - Administration) - Finance.

Information Source(s): Howard and Prince George's counties; Maryland Association of Counties; City of Annapolis; Maryland Municipal League; Governor's Office of Crime Prevention and Policy; University System of Maryland; Morgan State University; St. Mary's College of Maryland; Maryland Department of Health; Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services; Department of State Police; American Public Health Association; U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; EveryStat.org; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 13, 2024
rh/jc Third Reader - March 19, 2024
Revised - Amendment(s) - March 19, 2024

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ANALYSIS OF ECONOMIC IMPACT ON SMALL BUSINESSES

TITLE OF BILL: **Center for Firearm Violence Prevention and Intervention - Establishment**

BILL NUMBER: HB0583

PREPARED BY: Governor's Legislative Office

PART A. ECONOMIC IMPACT RATING

This agency estimates that the proposed bill:

WILL HAVE MINIMAL OR NO ECONOMIC IMPACT ON MARYLAND SMALL BUSINESS

OR

WILL HAVE MEANINGFUL ECONOMIC IMPACT ON MARYLAND SMALL BUSINESSES

PART B. ECONOMIC IMPACT ANALYSIS