

Department of Legislative Services
 Maryland General Assembly
 2024 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Enrolled - Revised

Senate Bill 475
 Finance

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

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 includes \$2.0 million in general funds for MDH contingent on passage of legislation establishing the center; accordingly, general fund expenditures increase by \$2.0 million in FY 2025. Future years assume \$8.0 million in discretionary funding for the center in FY 2026, increasing to \$10.0 million annually beginning in FY 2027. Federal fund expenditures increase by \$0.2 million in FY 2025 for specified costs that exceed the general fund appropriation, as discussed below; in addition, federal fund revenues and expenditures increase beginning in FY 2025 to the extent the center secures additional federal funds.

(\$ in millions)	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029
FF Revenue	-	-	-	-	-
GF Expenditure	\$2.0	\$8.0	\$10.0	\$10.0	\$10.0
FF Expenditure	\$0.2	-	-	-	-
Net Effect	(\$2.2)	(\$8.0)	(\$10.0)	(\$10.0)	(\$10.0)

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

Local Effect: Beginning in FY 2026, 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, individuals or organizations with expertise in firearm safety and training, 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 includes \$2.0 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, MDH general fund expenditures increase by \$2.0 million in fiscal 2025 as the bill satisfies this contingency. Federal fund expenditures also increase by \$171,387 in fiscal 2025 for specified eligible costs that exceed the amount included in the fiscal 2025 budget, as discussed below.

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 health policy analyst 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 are assumed to 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 \$1.9 million on contractual services to develop the preliminary State Plan for a Public Health Approach to Reducing Firearm Violence by May 1, 2025, as detailed below.

Positions	3.0
Contractual Services	\$1,900,000
Salaries and Fringe Benefits	249,619
Other Operating Expenses	<u>21,768</u>
Total FY 2025 State Expenditures	\$2,171,387

MDH notes that the \$1.9 million in anticipated costs for contractual services includes (1) \$725,000 for community violence prevention; (2) \$725,000 for trauma-informed community care; (3) \$250,000 for information technology infrastructure; and (4) \$200,000 for community engagement.

MDH further advises that it plans to use public health infrastructure federal grant funds to cover eligible public health infrastructure-related costs for the center in fiscal 2025 that exceed the \$2.0 million general fund appropriation.

Ongoing Expenditures for the Center

Once the preliminary State Plan is completed, MDH advises that it anticipates general fund expenditures of \$10.0 million in fiscal 2026 to expand the center’s activities, including \$8.7 million in anticipated costs for contractual services, approximately \$1.0 million to award grants (to LHDs and community-based organizations to implement firearm violence prevention activities and to academic partners to provide expertise, research-to-practice translation, and evaluation), and ongoing personnel and associated operating costs (reflecting full salaries with annual increases and employee turnover as well as annual increases in ongoing operating expenses).

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.

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 2026 (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 broad authority provided to the center by the bill. Furthermore, 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." Therefore, it is assumed that general fund expenditures increase by \$8.0 million in fiscal 2026 for initial implementation of the preliminary State plan – which reflects the expected completion of the plan by May 1, 2025 – including \$6.8 million in contractual services, approximately \$0.9 million in grants, and approximately \$0.3 million in ongoing personnel-related costs.

Fiscal 2026 contractual services are assumed to include (1) \$5.3 million to implement firearm prevention activities; (2) \$800,000 for State agency partners, as discussed above; and (3) \$750,000 for infrastructure and information technology capacity, as discussed above.

This analysis further assumes that ongoing general fund expenditures for the center increase to \$10.0 million annually beginning in fiscal 2027, including (1) ongoing personnel and associated operating costs; (2) annual contractual service costs of \$8.7 million (reflecting the anticipated costs discussed above); and (3) a relatively stable level of grant awards (approximately \$0.9 million annually).

If, however, the center implements an even more robust plan, 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, particularly in the out-years.

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 beginning in fiscal 2026, 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: HB 583 (The Speaker, *et al.*) (By Request - Administration) - Judiciary.

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
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ANALYSIS OF ECONOMIC IMPACT ON SMALL BUSINESSES

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

BILL NUMBER: SB 475

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