

HOUSE BILL 801

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HB 815/24 – APP & W&M

51r0980

By: **Delegates Spiegel, Acevero, Crutchfield, Foley, D. Jones, Kaiser, Kaufman, Lopez, McComas, Terrasa, Tomlinson, Vogel, Wims, Wolek, and Wu**

Introduced and read first time: January 29, 2025

Assigned to: Ways and Means

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Maryland Financial Empowerment Center Network Pilot Program**
3 **– Establishment**

4 FOR the purpose of establishing the Maryland Financial Empowerment Center Network
5 Pilot Program within the Office of the Comptroller; and generally relating to the
6 Maryland Financial Empowerment Center Network Pilot Program.

7 BY adding to

8 Article – Tax – General

9 Section 1–501 through 1–505 to be under the new subtitle “Subtitle 5. Maryland
10 Financial Empowerment Center Network Pilot Program”

11 Annotated Code of Maryland

12 (2022 Replacement Volume and 2024 Supplement)

13 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
14 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

15 **Article – Tax – General**

16 **SUBTITLE 5. MARYLAND FINANCIAL EMPOWERMENT CENTER NETWORK PILOT**
17 **PROGRAM.**

18 **1–501.**

19 **(A) IN THIS SUBTITLE THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE MEANINGS**
20 **INDICATED.**

21 **(B) “CENTER” MEANS A FINANCIAL EMPOWERMENT CENTER ESTABLISHED**
22 **UNDER THE PILOT PROGRAM.**

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 (C) "PILOT PROGRAM" MEANS THE FINANCIAL EMPOWERMENT CENTER
2 NETWORK PILOT PROGRAM.

3 1-502.

4 (A) THERE IS A MARYLAND FINANCIAL EMPOWERMENT CENTER NETWORK
5 PILOT PROGRAM.

6 (B) THE PURPOSE OF THE PILOT PROGRAM IS TO ESTABLISH A STATEWIDE
7 NETWORK OF FINANCIAL EMPOWERMENT CENTERS IN DIFFERENT REGIONS OF THE
8 STATE.

9 (C) THE COMPTROLLER SHALL IMPLEMENT AND ADMINISTER THE PILOT
10 PROGRAM.

11 1-503.

12 (A) (1) EACH CENTER SHALL PROVIDE ONE-ON-ONE FINANCIAL
13 COUNSELING AND COACHING SERVICES FREE OF CHARGE, INCLUDING
14 INFORMATION ON HOW TO:

15 (I) INCREASE SAVINGS;

16 (II) PAY DOWN DEBT;

17 (III) ACCESS BANKING; AND

18 (IV) IMPROVE CREDIT SCORES.

19 (2) EACH CENTER SHALL MAKE THE INFORMATION PROVIDED UNDER
20 THIS SUBSECTION AVAILABLE IN ENGLISH, SPANISH, AND ANY OTHER LANGUAGE
21 REQUIRED BY THE OFFICE.

22 (B) EACH FINANCIAL COUNSELOR EMPLOYED BY A CENTER SHALL
23 COMPLETE TRAINING THAT MEETS OR EXCEEDS THE FINANCIAL EMPOWERMENT
24 CENTER COUNSELOR TRAINING STANDARDS DEVELOPED BY THE CITIES FOR
25 FINANCIAL EMPOWERMENT FUND.

26 1-504.

27 FOR FISCAL YEARS 2027 AND 2028, THE GOVERNOR SHALL INCLUDE IN THE
28 ANNUAL BUDGET BILL AN APPROPRIATION TO THE COMPTROLLER IN AN AMOUNT

1 SUFFICIENT TO COVER THE COSTS OF THE PILOT PROGRAM.

2 **1-505.**

3 THE COMPTROLLER SHALL ADOPT REGULATIONS TO CARRY OUT THIS
4 SUBTITLE.

5 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
6 October 1, 2025. It shall remain effective for a period of 3 years and, at the end of September
7 30, 2028, this Act, with no further action required by the General Assembly, shall be
8 abrogated and of no further force and effect.