

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2025 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 1293
Judiciary

(Delegate Smith, *et al.*)

Baltimore City - Office of the Sheriff - Neighborhood Services Unit

This bill establishes the Neighborhood Services Unit within the Office of the Sheriff of Baltimore City and requires the unit to (1) work in partnership with the Board of License Commissioners of Baltimore City to enforce the alcoholic beverages laws of Baltimore City and (2) perform any other duties as directed by the Sheriff. The unit and board must enter into a memorandum of understanding that specifies the respective roles and responsibilities of the parties in connection with the partnership. In addition, the bill expands the authorized uses of revenue generated from a certain surcharge on filing fees collected by the District Court in Baltimore City to include the work of the unit.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill is not anticipated to materially affect State finances or operations.

Local Effect: Potential significant increase in Baltimore City expenditures to implement the bill's requirements, as discussed below. Baltimore City revenues are not materially affected. **This bill imposes a mandate on a unit of local government.**

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law:

Board of License Commissioners for Baltimore City

The board or the board's designee governs, administers, and enforces laws relating to alcoholic beverages in Baltimore City, including:

- supervising the activities and investigations of the inspectors and other employees of the board;
- examining the location and general character of license holders in Baltimore City;
- reviewing the zoning of applicants and license holders during the license application, license transfer, and license renewal processes; and
- adopting regulations concerning zoning of license holders and methods of enforcement to carry out the purposes and enforcement relating to the sale, storage, and distribution of alcoholic beverages in Baltimore City.

Sheriff of Baltimore City

The Office of the Sheriff of Baltimore City is responsible for, among other tasks, serving and enforcing all court orders within the city. The deputies working in the office are sworn law enforcement officers who must meet and maintain the same training and background requirements as any other police officer or sheriff deputy in the State. They have the power to enforce the law and to arrest and detain individuals who violate the law.

Surcharges for Landlord-tenant and Civil Cases

In Baltimore City, in addition to other surcharges authorized under statute, a surcharge of up to \$10 per case is applied to District Court cases involving summary ejection, tenant holding over, breach of lease, and warrant of restitution. The revenue generated must be remitted quarterly to the Baltimore City Director of Finance and used to fund the enhancement of sheriff benefits and the increase in sheriff personnel to enhance the service of domestic violence orders.

Local Fiscal Effect: The bill does not affect the overall revenue generated from the surcharge on filing fees collected by the District Court in Baltimore City. Although the bill authorizes surcharge fee revenues to be used to support the work of the newly established unit, Baltimore City did not provide information on the extent to which revenues from this source may be sufficient to support the unit without decreasing funding otherwise needed for authorized purposes under current law. Because, however, Baltimore City further advises that the Office of the Sheriff ended fiscal 2024 with a \$4.6 million deficit driven by overtime costs and unbudgeted purchasing activity, this analysis assumes additional funding is needed to implement the bill.

Baltimore City advises that the board currently includes a staff of 10 Inspectors (1 Chief Inspector and 9 Inspector positions). While the bill does not establish required staffing levels for the new unit, Baltimore City estimates expenditures of approximately \$1.1 million annually, which reflects costs associated with hiring 10 additional positions within the Office of the Sheriff.

Additional Information

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

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Baltimore City; Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts); Department of Legislative Services

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caw/jkb

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