

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2025 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 597 (Delegate D. Jones)
Appropriations

Public Libraries - State Library Resource Center - Funding

This bill increases the per capita funding amount that must be provided to the State Library Resource Center (SLRC) beginning in fiscal 2027. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2025.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: General fund expenditures increase by approximately \$495,800 in FY 2027, increasing to \$2.2 million in FY 2030; future year increases reflect higher per capita funding amounts and population growth. Revenues are not affected. **This bill increases a mandated appropriation beginning in FY 2027.**

(in dollars)	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029	FY 2030
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
GF Expenditure	0	495,800	1,056,400	1,625,300	2,201,100
Net Effect	\$0	(\$495,800)	(\$1,056,400)	(\$1,625,300)	(\$2,201,100)

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

Local Effect: Although local library systems benefit from SLRC funding, local finances are not materially affected.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: The bill increases per capita State aid for SLRC beginning in fiscal 2027 by varying amounts (ranging from an additional 8 cents per capita in fiscal 2027 to an additional 45 cents per capita in fiscal 2031). **Exhibit 1** compares per capita State aid under current law and under the bill.

Exhibit 1
Per Capita State Library Resource Center Aid Increases under the Bill
Fiscal 2026-2031

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Current Law</u>	<u>Proposed</u>	<u>Difference</u>	<u>% Difference</u>
2026	\$2.07	\$2.07	\$0.00	0.0%
2027	2.07	2.15	0.08	3.9%
2028	2.07	2.24	0.17	8.2%
2029	2.07	2.33	0.26	12.6%
2030	2.07	2.42	0.35	16.9%
2031	2.07	2.52	0.45	21.7%

Source: Department of Legislative Services

Current Law:

State Library Network

Since 1888, the State has provided funds to support public libraries throughout the State under what is now known as the State library network. The network consists of the Central Library of the Enoch Pratt Free Library System in Baltimore City, three regional resource centers, and metropolitan cooperative service programs. All these systems receive State funding for operating expenses.

The Central Library of the Enoch Pratt Free Library operates as the designated SLRC. The funding level for SLRC is set at \$2.07 per resident. The fiscal 2026 State budget as introduced includes \$12.8 million in funding for SLRC.

Maryland State Library for the Blind and Print Disabled

The Maryland State Library for the Blind and Print Disabled (LBPD) provides comprehensive library services to eligible blind and physically disabled residents of Maryland, which includes individuals who are legally blind, visually or physically limited, or reading disabled. The library is part of the national network of the National Library Services for the Blind and Print Disabled through the Library of Congress. The National Library Services selects and produces recordings of full-length books and magazines for a network of libraries providing alternative format materials. LBPD supplements the National Library Service collection with large print books, descriptive videos, children's braille books, and tactile materials such as maps, atlases, and art books. Books are lent on

a wide range of subjects in braille, audio, and large type. The service is free, statewide, and can be provided to individuals via the U.S. mail. Approximately 8,400 Maryland residents receive the services provided by the library annually.

LBPB must receive an amount equivalent to at least 25% of the general fund appropriation received by SLRC under the required per capita funding amount. Based on the current budgeted amount for SLRC, the minimum State funding level for LBPB totals approximately \$3.2 million. However, the fiscal 2026 State budget as introduced includes \$3.7 million in funding for LBPB (\$3.4 million in general funds and \$345,370 in federal funds), which exceeds the minimum statutory required amount.

State Expenditures: As shown in **Exhibit 2**, State formula aid for SLRC increases by \$495,755 in fiscal 2027 and, based upon current projections for population growth, by \$2.2 million in fiscal 2030. Since the current State funding level for LBPB exceeds the minimum statutory required amount, the enhanced funding for SLRC is not projected to impact the level of State funding provided to LBPB.

Exhibit 2
Increase in Funding for SLRC and LBPB under the Bill
Fiscal 2026-2030

	<u>FY 2026</u>	<u>FY 2027</u>	<u>FY 2028</u>	<u>FY 2029</u>	<u>FY 2030</u>
SLRC	\$0	\$495,755	\$1,056,367	\$1,625,323	\$2,201,105
LBPB	0	0	0	0	0
Total	\$0	\$495,755	\$1,056,367	\$1,625,323	\$2,201,105

LBPB: Maryland State Library for the Blind and Print Disabled
SLRC: State Library Resource Center

Source: Department of Legislative Services

Additional Information

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

Designated Cross File: SB 515 (Senator King) - Budget and Taxation.

Information Source(s): Maryland State Library Agency; Department of Legislative Services

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rh/clb

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