

# SENATE BILL 518

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CF HB 676

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By: Senator King

Introduced and read first time: February 3, 2026

Assigned to: Budget and Taxation

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## 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 2025 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.**

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EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



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

3 1-502.

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.

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 2028 AND 2029, THE GOVERNOR SHALL INCLUDE IN THE  
28 ANNUAL BUDGET BILL AN APPROPRIATION TO THE COMPTROLLER IN AN AMOUNT  
29 SUFFICIENT TO COVER THE COSTS OF THE PILOT PROGRAM.

1 **1-505.**

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

4 **SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED**, That this Act shall take effect  
5 October 1, 2026. It shall remain effective for a period of 3 years and, at the end of September  
6 30, 2029, this Act, with no further action required by the General Assembly, shall be  
7 abrogated and of no further force and effect.