

SB 142

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2026 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

Senate Bill 142

(Chair, Education, Energy, and the Environment
Committee)(By Request - Departmental - Military)

Education, Energy, and the Environment

Maryland Military Department - National Guard - Tuition Assistance

This departmental bill, for the purposes of tuition assistance provided by the Military Department, (1) expands the definition of “institution” to include any trade or career school recognized by the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) or the Maryland Apprenticeship and Training Council (MATC), including by removing the requirement that private schools provide a minimum tuition waiver; (2) expands the assistance the Military Department may provide to include “training assistance,” as defined under the bill; and (3) establishes that existing two-year post-course service obligation requirements apply to career courses.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill is not anticipated to materially affect State operations or finances, as described below.

Local Effect: The bill is not anticipated to materially affect local government operations or finances.

Small Business Effect: The Military Department has determined that this bill has minimal or no impact on small business (attached). The Department of Legislative Services concurs with this assessment.

Analysis

Current Law/Background:

Tuition Assistance to the Members of the National Guard

To the extent that funds are provided in the State budget, the Military Department is authorized to provide assistance to a National Guard member certified as eligible by the Adjutant General equal to 100% of the cost of in-State tuition for any regularly scheduled course, as specified. Members who receive the benefit must remain active members for a specified amount of time after the course is completed. For example, a member who receives assistance for an undergraduate credit, vocational-technical, or trade course must remain an active member for at least two years following the completion of the course. However, there are exceptions when a member does not need to remain active. Even so, the Adjutant General may not certify a member as eligible unless the member is committed to serve for a minimum of 24 months following the first day of classes for the semester.

The following are eligible institutions:

- any campus of the University System of Maryland, Morgan State University, St. Mary's College of Maryland, Baltimore City Community College, and any local community college in the State;
- any private institution of higher education that grants a member a tuition waiver of at least 50%;
- any public postsecondary vocational-technical or trade school; and
- any private postsecondary vocational-technical or trade school that grants a member a tuition waiver of at least 50%.

“Tuition” is defined as the basic instructional charge for undergraduate, graduate, professional, vocational-technical, and trade school credit courses and related fees at an institution. “Tuition” does not include charges for self-supporting programs.

List of Partnership Schools

MHEC must maintain a list of State higher education institutions, including community colleges, offering tuition waivers to members of the Maryland National Guard. The list must include the tuition waiver policy of each institution and a contact name and telephone number, be updated annually, and be shared with the Military Department for distribution to members of the Maryland National Guard.

Private Career Schools

“Private career school” is defined in statute as a privately owned and privately operated institution of postsecondary education other than an institution of higher education that furnishes or offers to furnish programs, whether or not requiring a payment of tuition or fee, for the purpose of training, retraining, or upgrading individuals for gainful employment as skilled or semiskilled workers or technicians in recognized occupations or in new and emerging occupations.

To operate in Maryland, a private career school must be approved by MHEC (*i.e.*, have a certificate of approval); some are also accredited by national associations. Private career school programs generally provide training in one of the following areas: allied health; audio visual methods; cosmetology; barbering; bartending; computers; massage; the Montessori Method of education; real estate; truck driving; or mechanics. There are also programs in cooking, dog grooming, dry cleaning, maritime studies, photography, polygraph, travel, and trade schools.

Maryland Apprenticeship and Training Council

MATC is a 12-member body that reviews standards and policies for the approval and registration of apprenticeship programs in the State. The Maryland Department of Labor’s Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning works with MATC to oversee registered apprenticeship programs in the State, and MATC acts in an advisory role for legislation and regulations. MATC also recommends changes to update apprenticeship laws. Additional information about MATC can be found on its [website](#).

Maryland Military Department

The Military Department provides overall direction and maintenance of the Maryland National Guard, which is comprised of the Maryland Army National Guard and the Maryland Air National Guard. The Maryland National Guard may be called up by the Governor during State emergencies or may be activated by the U.S. Department of Defense.

The Military Department advises the bill is intended to enable the department in supporting service members by reimbursing career-related overhead expenses. The Military Department further advises the bill will allow the department to reimburse career-related overhead expenses for service members participating in State-certified apprenticeship programs, which is not authorized under current law.

State Fiscal Effect: The bill removes the requirement that private postsecondary vocational-technical schools provide a tuition waiver of at least 50% in order to qualify as

an institution under the program. The bill also expands the program to cover the cost of training assistance for program participants. However, statute explicitly authorizes the Military Department to provide assistance *to the extent that funds are provided in the State budget*. The fiscal 2025 and 2026 budgets included \$600,000 for tuition assistance to members of the National Guard, and the fiscal 2027 budget as introduced also includes \$600,000. As the bill does not require the Military Department to provide assistance beyond that provided in the State budget, the bill is not anticipated to materially affect State finances.

Additional Information

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

Designated Cross File: HB 232 (Chair, Appropriations Committee)(By Request - Departmental - Military) - Appropriations.

Information Source(s): Maryland Higher Education Commission; Maryland Department of Labor; Military Department; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - January 26, 2026
jg/clb

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ANALYSIS OF ECONOMIC IMPACT ON SMALL BUSINESSES

TITLE OF BILL: Maryland Military Department - National Guard - Tuition Assistance

BILL NUMBER: SB 142

PREPARED BY: Dr. Tony Campbell

PART A. ECONOMIC IMPACT RATING

This agency estimates that the proposed bill:

X 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