

**Department of Legislative Services**  
 Maryland General Assembly  
 2026 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**  
**First Reader**

Senate Bill 924 (Senator Harris)  
 Finance

**Department of Social and Economic Mobility - Maryland Chamber of Commerce  
 Grant Program - Established (Business Networks Access Act)**

This bill establishes a Maryland Chamber of Commerce Grant Program within the Department of Social and Economic Mobility (DoSEM) to provide grants to chambers of commerce in the State for membership subsidies for underrepresented individuals and for inter-chamber events. DoSEM is responsible for developing the grant application and distributing awards. The bill also specifies eligibility and reporting requirements for the two types of grants. The Governor must include an annual appropriation of \$100,000 in the budget for the grant program.

**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** General fund expenditures increase by \$100,000 beginning in FY 2028 due to the mandated appropriation. Out years reflect the continuing mandate. DoSEM can handle the bill’s requirements with existing resources. No effect on revenues. **This bill establishes a mandated appropriation beginning in FY 2028.**

(in dollars)	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029	FY 2030	FY 2031
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
GF Expenditure	0	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000
Net Effect	\$0	(\$100,000)	(\$100,000)	(\$100,000)	(\$100,000)

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

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** Meaningful.

## Analysis

**Bill Summary:** DoSEM must develop a unified application that requires the following information:

- grant type;
- chamber programming and capacity to support grant activities;
- point of contact responsible for grant administration;
- projected timeline;
- proposed budget;
- any additional information as specified by DoSEM; and
- for membership subsidies, a brief justification of why a potential member is underrepresented in a chamber.

DoSEM is responsible for reviewing applications, determining award amounts, and notifying chambers regarding an award.

To be eligible for a membership grant, a chamber must demonstrate (1) opportunities for programming, services, mentoring, or networking for newly enrolled members and (2) annual funding for at least one full-time paid position. Membership grants may be used for one year of the lowest-tier chamber membership at no cost to underrepresented individuals, and DoSEM must disburse a membership grant to a chamber within 14 days after the chamber enrolls a member. Chambers that receive membership grants must submit an annual report to DoSEM detailing the number of individual awards made and participant feedback on the utility of the chamber's programming.

Two or more chambers may apply jointly for an inter-chamber grant. The application must include a plan for the proposed event, expected attendance, and cost. Eligible uses of inter-chamber grants include venue expenses, event promotion, staff support, and related costs. After each event, chambers receiving inter-chamber grants must submit a report to DoSEM that includes the attendance at the event, event activities, and receipts for event expenditures.

**Current Law:** There is no relevant current law related to a grant program for chambers of commerce in Maryland.

**State Expenditures:** The bill's funding mandate takes effect in fiscal 2028, as the General Assembly cannot mandate expenditures for the next fiscal year. As there is no compelling need for the funding prior to that date, discretionary funding is not anticipated in fiscal 2027.

**Small Business Effect:** Small businesses that are otherwise underrepresented as members of chambers of commerce benefit from direct grants supporting their membership.

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### **Additional Information**

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

**Designated Cross File:** HB 1033 (Delegate Wolek) - Economic Matters.

**Information Source(s):** Department of Social and Economic Mobility; Department of Budget and Management; Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 27, 2026  
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