HB 1245

Department of Legislative Services

Maryland General Assembly
2026 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 1245 (Delegate Edelson)
Ways and Means

Baltimore First Responders Child Care Support and Accessibility Program - Establishment

This bill establishes the Baltimore First Responders Child Care Support and Accessibility Program within the Maryland State Department of Education's (MSDE) Office of Child Care to support and expand a pilot program in Baltimore City that provides monthly child care allowances to first responders to access quality child care that aligns with the demands of a career in public safety. Beginning in fiscal 2028, the Governor must include in the annual budget bill an appropriation of $600,000 to the program. MSDE must report annually to the Governor and the General Assembly on the program beginning September 1, 2028, as specified. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2026.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: No assumed effect in FY 2027. General fund expenditures increase by approximately $718,900 in FY 2028 for staff and due to the mandated appropriation. Future years reflect inflation, mandated funding, and ongoing operating costs. State revenues are not affected. **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	718,900	717,100	722,300	727,700
Net Effect	$0	($718,900)	($717,100)	($722,300)	($727,700)

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

Local Effect: Baltimore City did not respond to multiple requests for information on the fiscal and operational impact of the bill. Therefore, the Department of Legislative Services is unable to reliably estimate any fiscal and/or operational impacts on Baltimore City agencies.

Small Business Effect: Potential meaningful.

Analysis

Bill Summary: MSDE must administer the program in consultation with (1) the Baltimore Police Department; (2) the Baltimore City Fire Department, including emergency medical services personnel; and (3) any nonprofit organization partners.

The funds must be used to provide child care allowances to first responders in Baltimore City to (1) support dependent children in early childhood development; (2) recruit and retain first responders; and (3) promote public safety.

The annual report must provide information on the following:

- the number of first responders who received a child care allowance under the program during the immediately preceding fiscal year disaggregated by local public safety agency that provides emergency response services;
- the number of children served during the immediately preceding fiscal year;
- impacts on first responder recruitment and retention and public safety, including attendance, reliability, and wellness; and
- any other relevant information.

Current Law: The State oversees a variety of early education services that are provided to Maryland children and their families in cooperation with local governments, local school systems, and private child care providers. The Division of Early Childhood coordinates the State's early childhood care and education system and is composed of three subdivisions: (1) the Office of Child Care; (2) the Office of Early Learning and Instruction; and (3) the Office of Family Support Services.

Child Care Centers

Subject to limited exception, child care centers may not operate in the State unless they are licensed. The State Board of Education is required to adopt regulations that relate to the licensing and operation of child care centers. A child care center is an agency, institution, or establishment that, for part or all of a day, or on a 24-hour basis on a regular schedule, and at least twice a week, offers or provides child care to children who do not have the same parentage except as otherwise provided for in law or regulation.

Family Child Care Homes and Large Family Child Care Homes

Generally, family child care homes and large family child care homes may not operate in the State unless they are registered. The State Board of Education is required to adopt regulations that relate to the registration of family child care homes and large family child care homes. A family child care home is a residence in which family child care is provided for up to 8 children. A large family child care home is a residence in which family child care is provided for at least 9 children, but not more than 12 children.

State Expenditures: MSDE advises that the payment model established by the bill (direct payments to individuals) differs from its experience managing a provider-based model (*e.g.*, the model used for the Child Care Scholarship Program, which provides payments directly to child care providers). Therefore, additional staff are likely necessary to determine eligibility and issue monthly child care allowances directly to eligible first responders in Baltimore City. Despite the bill's July 1, 2026 effective date, this estimate assumes that the program isn't implemented until fiscal 2028 when the mandated funding becomes available. General fund expenditures therefore increase by $718,948 in fiscal 2028, which accounts for the grant program commencing operation on July 1, 2027 once the mandated funding is available.

This estimate reflects the cost of hiring one program manager to assist with managing the new program. It includes a salary, fringe benefits, one-time start-up costs, and ongoing operating expenses. The estimate also reflects the bill's mandated appropriation of $600,000 that must be used to provide child care allowances to first responders in Baltimore City.

Position	1.0
Salary and Fringe Benefits	$109,085
Operating Expenses	9,863
Grant Expenditures	600,000
Total FY 2028 State Expenditures	**$718,948**

Future year expenditures reflect continued mandated funding and a full salary with annual increases and employee turnover as well as annual increases in ongoing operating expenses.

Small Business Effect: Small businesses that provide child care likely benefit under the bill, as grant funds provided to first responders must be used for child care expenses.

Additional Information

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

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland State Department of Education; Department of Budget and Management; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 9, 2026
jg/jkb

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