

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

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

Senate Bill 96

(Senator Simonaire)

Finance

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**Sheila E. Hixson Behavioral Health Services Matching Grant Program for Service Members and Veterans - Terminology - Active Service Members**

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This bill broadens the definition of “eligible individual” under the Sheila E. Hixson Behavioral Health Services Matching Grant Program for Service Members and Veterans by allowing additional service members and their spouses, children, and stepchildren to participate. More specifically, the bill removes the limitation that a participant be an *active* service member or the spouse, child, or stepchild of an *active* service member. Eligibility for veterans and their family members is not changed.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** Broadening eligibility for the program is not anticipated to materially affect State finances. Overall funding for the program is unchanged.

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

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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**Analysis**

**Current Law:** Chapters 785 and 786 of 2021 established the Sheila E. Hixson Behavioral Health Services Matching Grant Program for Service Members and Veterans. The purpose of the program is to provide funds to local nonprofit organizations to establish and expand community behavioral health programs to serve *active* service members, veterans, and their families. Under the program, “eligible individual” means an (1) *active* service member;

(2) a veteran; (3) the spouse of an *active* service member or veteran; (4) the child of an *active* service member or veteran; or (5) a stepchild of an *active* service member or veteran.

The program must award competitive matching grants to local nonprofit organizations to establish and expand community behavioral health programs that (1) serve the behavioral health needs of eligible individuals in the locality serviced by the nonprofit organization; (2) meet national standards; (3) integrate the delivery of mental health and substance use treatment; and (4) connect eligible individuals to appropriate community-based care in a timely manner on discharge from the community behavioral health program. The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) must submit an annual report to the Governor and the General Assembly regarding program activity. MDH's most recent annual report can be read [here](#).

The Governor is authorized to include in the annual budget bill an appropriation of \$2.5 million for the program. The fiscal 2026 budget includes a total of \$3.0 million in general funds for the program, with \$2.4 million available for grants. The fiscal 2027 budget, as introduced, includes \$3.0 million for the program.

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## **Additional Information**

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

**Designated Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Maryland Department of Health; Department of Veterans and Military Families; Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - January 23, 2026  
sj/jc

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