

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2026 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

Senate Bill 199
Finance

(Senator Simonaire)

**Individuals With Disabilities and Service-Disabled Veterans Boating Fund -
Eligible Companions**

This bill expands the purpose of the Individuals with Disabilities and Service-Disabled Veterans Boating Fund to include providing boating opportunities for an “eligible companion” of an individual with disabilities or a service-disabled veteran. The Maryland Department of Disabilities (MDOD) may provide grants for boating opportunities for individuals with disabilities or service-disabled veterans *and their eligible companions*.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None. The change is technical in nature and does not directly affect governmental finances.

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

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: “Eligible companion” means an accompanying family member or direct support professional of an individual with disabilities or of a service-disabled veteran participating in sailing, boating, kayaking, canoeing, paddleboarding, or surfing activities.

Current Law: Chapters 193 and 194 of 2024 established the Individuals with Disabilities and Service-Disabled Veterans Boating Fund, administered by MDOD, to provide sailing, boating, kayaking, canoeing, paddleboarding, and surfing opportunities for individuals with disabilities and service-disabled veterans.

MDOD may use the fund for administrative expenses and to provide a grant of up to \$40,000 in a fiscal year to a grantee to provide specified boating opportunities for individuals with disabilities or service-disabled veterans. The fund is a special, nonlapsing fund that consists of money appropriated in the State budget to the fund and any other money from any other source accepted for the benefit of the fund. Interest accrues to the general fund.

MDOD may only provide grants to a nonprofit organization in good standing that:

- is qualified under § 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code;
- has been in operation for at least three years, notwithstanding a cessation of operations during a national or public health emergency, as specified; and
- has engaged individuals with disabilities or service-disabled veterans in sailing, boating, kayaking, canoeing, paddleboarding, or surfing activities on State waters at least 25 times in each of the past three years.

Additional Comments: MDOD advises that the Individuals with Disabilities and Service-Disabled Veterans Boating Fund has not yet received funding and no grants have been provided. Should funding be provided, MDOD notes that grants should not be affected by allowing the inclusion of eligible companions for individuals with disabilities and service-disabled veterans as grants will not be allocated on a per person basis but rather as a lump sum to the grantee.

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 Disabilities; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - January 20, 2026
caw/jc

Analysis by: Amberly E. Holcomb

Direct Inquiries to:
(410) 946-5510
(301) 970-5510