

WES MOORE
Governor

ARUNA MILLER
Lieutenant Governor



YAAKOV "JAKE" WEISSMANN
Acting Secretary

MARC L. NICOLE
Deputy Secretary

TITLE: HB 0809 Walter Sondheim Jr. Public Service Internship Scholarship Program - Funding

DATE: February 24th 2026

COMMITTEE: Appropriations

POSITION: Letter of Information

SUMMARY OF BILL: The legislation would mandate an appropriation beginning in FY 2028 of at least 150% of the FY 2026 appropriation level for the Walter Sondheim Jr. Public Service Internship Scholarship Program at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. The bill also specifies that the program consists of: 1. the Governor's Summer Internship Program, 2. the Sondheim Maryland Nonprofit Leadership and Internship Program, and 3. the Sondheim Public Service Law Fellows Program.

EXPLANATION: In FY 2026, the program was funded at \$350,000, so the mandated appropriation would be \$525,000 beginning in FY 2028, an increase of \$175,000. The bill does not specify that the state provide general funds; however, this could lead to an increase in general fund expenditures because the mandated current unrestricted (CUR) appropriation would be increased beginning in FY 2028.

Given the significant uncertainty in federal policy and the escalating fiscal shortfalls forecasted through Fiscal Year 2028, the Department urges caution against legislation that increases expenditures or diverts revenue without sustainable funding offsets. In light of the current fiscal crisis, the State must remain disciplined and strategic in its funding decisions to protect essential services for all Marylanders.

45 Calvert Street • Annapolis, MD 21401-1907

Tel: 410-260-7041 • Fax: 410-974-2585 • Toll Free: 1-800-705-3493 • TTY Users: Call via Maryland Relay

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**For additional information, contact Dana Phillips at
(410) 260-6068 or dana.phillips@maryland.gov**

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