



UMBC

THE SHRIVER CENTER

House Appropriations Committee
House Bill 0809

Public Service Internship Scholarship Program – Renaming and Funding
February 20, 2026
Favorable with Amendments

Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Kaiser, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in strong support of House Bill 0809, which increases funding for the Public Service Internship Scholarship Program. Referred to as the Maryland Public Service Scholars (MPSS) programs and administered by The Shriver Center at UMBC, these programs have a long history of preparing students for impactful careers in public service. Each year, these opportunities receive hundreds of applications from students eager to support Maryland's public service sector: from 2022-2025, over 750 applicants competed for spots in the program, with the applicant pool increasing by an average of 35% per year. The investment proposed in House Bill 0809 will help meet this demand by expanding internship slots and providing stipends that make public service careers accessible to all students.

Current allocations fund 24 students between the Governor's Summer Internship (GSIP) and Sondheim Nonprofit Leadership (SNLP) programs at a stipend of \$5,000 each, with an additional 5 Law students at a stipend of \$3,500. With the allocations in House Bill 0809, our programs can offer 15 additional annual positions in GSIP and SNLP, for a total of 39 internships where student demand is highest. These funds would also afford the option to raise future stipends to \$6,000, which will allow students to earn minimum wage (\$15/hour) for their work and fund our participants on par with their peers in the Maryland Technology Internship Program. Even with increased individual stipends, these allocations would allow us to expand our programs to support additional students (32 over the current 24). Paying a living wage makes the program more accessible to students from a greater variety of socio-economic backgrounds and affirms the value of public service work in Maryland.

Since its inception, MPSS fellows have contributed more than \$15.9 million in value to Maryland. Created in 1987, MPSS has supported over 1,300 Maryland students from 134 institutions, including 35 in Maryland, to contribute 535,000+ hours of service to 193 nonprofit organizations, 52 Maryland state departments and agencies, and 19 federal and local entities. Program alumni have gone on to hold elected office and serve Maryland as cabinet secretaries, nonprofit executives, public interest attorneys, educators, healthcare leaders, and much more. These internships provide real-world experience, build leadership skills, and help students form professional networks that lead to lasting careers in public service.

The state, in turn, benefits from a diverse and talented workforce prepared to tackle pressing social challenges; the Moore-Miller administration's commitment to building Maryland's identity as the State that Serves and emphasis on workforce development both reinforce the Maryland Public Service Scholars Program's enduring value and affirm the importance of increased financial support. As public service faces both funding and rhetorical headwinds on the national level, support for these programs asserts strong belief in the value of this work in our state.

MPSS cultivates public servants who are self-aware, critical thinkers, and effective problem-solvers. Through structured mentorship, skill-building seminars, and professional exposure, MPSS fellows leave this program with a deeper commitment to careers that advance public good. Fellows contribute increased capacity to their host organizations, allowing them to tackle special projects and address critical needs. Additionally, fellows present final policy papers and nonprofit strategy plans, providing valuable insights and recommendations on public service challenges.

The investment proposed in House Bill 0809 is essential to sustaining and expanding this vital program.

We urge a favorable report on House Bill 0809. Thank you for your consideration.