

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2026 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 1609 (Frederick County Delegation)
Ways and Means

Frederick County - Gaming - Acceptance of Credit as Payment

This bill authorizes volunteer fire, rescue, and ambulance companies and their auxiliary organizations that are conducting gaming events in Frederick County for their own benefit to accept credit from a person as payment to play a gaming device at the gaming event. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2026.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None.

Local Effect: None. The bill does not affect Frederick County's finances, and local impact grants from gaming revenues are not materially affected.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: An organization that operates a gaming event authorized under current law may not accept credit from a person to play a gaming device at a gaming event. An organization that violates this is guilty of a misdemeanor and on conviction is subject to a fine of up to \$1,000 and/or loss of privileges to conduct a gaming event for up to 60 days. An organization is not prohibited from accepting a token instead of money from a person who has paid the organization money for the use of the token.

Frederick County Gaming Events

In Frederick County, an eligible organization must obtain a permit before conducting a gaming event including a bazaar, carnival, raffle, tip jar, punchboard, chance book, paddle wheel, wheel of fortune, and any other gaming device.

Eligible organizations include *bona fide* religious, fraternal, civic, war veterans', hospital, amateur athletic, patriotic, charitable, and educational organizations as well as volunteer fire, rescue, and ambulance companies and their auxiliary organizations in Frederick County.

Eligible organizations may hold in a year (1) four gaming events in which the major prize has a value greater than \$5,000 and (2) raffles in which the major prize is \$5,000 or less as many times as allowed by the county. Except as specified for tip jars and punchboards, an individual may not benefit financially from a gaming event. A gaming permit is valid for one year after the date that it is issued, and the permit is not transferable.

Frederick County may charge a fee for each permit and adopt regulations governing gaming event permit applications and the issuance of permits.

A person may not knowingly violate specified Frederick County local gaming laws, and a person who does so is guilty of a misdemeanor and on conviction, subject to imprisonment of up to one year and/or a fine of up to \$1,000.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has been introduced within the last three years. See HB 510 of 2025 and HB 1015 of 2024.

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Frederick County; Comptroller's Office; Maryland State Lottery and Gaming Control Agency; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 16, 2026
js/jrb

Analysis by: Heather N. MacDonagh

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