

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2025 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

Senate Bill 246

(Chair, Education, Energy, and the Environment
Committee)(By Request - Departmental - Military)

Education, Energy, and the Environment

**Maryland Veterans Trust - Assistance to Members of the Maryland National
Guard**

This departmental bill expands the purposes of the Maryland Veterans Trust to include providing monetary and other assistance to members of the Maryland National Guard (MDNG) and their families and authorizes the Maryland Veterans Trust to expend money from the Maryland Veterans Trust Fund (MVTF) to provide grants or loans to MDNG members and their families.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: MVTF nonbudgeted expenditures increase by an indeterminate but likely minimal amount beginning in FY 2026 to the extent that the Maryland Veterans Trust issues additional grants and loans. Revenues are not affected.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: The Military Department has determined that this bill has minimal or no impact on small business (attached). The Department of Legislative Services concurs with this assessment.

Analysis

Current Law: Chapter 742 of 2009 established the Maryland Veterans Trust and MVTF to provide monetary and other assistance to veterans and their families and public and private programs that support veterans and their families. Generally, MVTF consists of (1) gifts and grants; (2) contributions from the sale of tickets from instant ticket lottery

machines, donations from video lottery facility players, designated fees from specified special registration plates, and specified civil penalties related to persons providing veterans benefits and veterans benefits appeals services; and (3) the net proceeds from contributions under a State income tax checkoff.

MVTF is maintained by the Maryland Veterans Trust, which is staffed by the Department of Veterans and Military Families (DVMF). Money in the fund may be used to provide grants and loans to veterans and their families, public and private programs that support veterans and their families, or any other programs that the trust considers to be within the purposes for which the trust is established. Money in the fund may also be invested as specified and used to pay the costs of administering the fund. Money expended from the fund is supplemental to and not intended to take the place of funding otherwise appropriated to DVMF.

Background: The Military Department advises that adding MDNG members and their families as potential recipients of assistance from the Maryland Veterans Trust is intended to better reflect Maryland's military community and ensure that MDNG members serving the State have access to support during periods of temporary, nonemergency financial difficulties.

State Fiscal Effect: The Maryland Veterans Trust is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, so its funds are not reported as part of State fund balances. However, DVMF staffs the trust and processes grant and loan applications. Therefore, the department may experience a minimal operational impact to the extent that applications increase under the bill.

As of January 2025, there are about 6,000 MDNG members and 321,000 veterans in Maryland. Accordingly, DVMF estimates that the bill may cause a 2% increase in grant and loan applications. Thus, nonbudgeted MVTF expenditures increase by an indeterminate but likely minimal amount beginning in fiscal 2026 to the extent that the trust issues more grants and loans.

As of December 31, 2024, the balance of MVTF was \$729,225.

Additional Information

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

Designated Cross File: HB 228 (Chair, Appropriations Committee)(By Request - Departmental - Military) - Appropriations.

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

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - January 21, 2025
km/jc

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ANALYSIS OF ECONOMIC IMPACT ON SMALL BUSINESSES

TITLE OF BILL: Maryland Veterans Trust - Assistance to Members of the Maryland National Guard

BILL NUMBER: SB 246

PREPARED BY: Dr. Tony Campbell

PART A. ECONOMIC IMPACT RATING

This agency estimates that the proposed bill:

WILL HAVE MINIMAL OR NO ECONOMIC IMPACT ON MARYLAND SMALL BUSINESS

OR

WILL HAVE MEANINGFUL ECONOMIC IMPACT ON MARYLAND SMALL BUSINESSES

PART B. ECONOMIC IMPACT ANALYSIS

The proposed bill will have NO economic impact on Maryland Small Businesses