

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2026 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

Senate Bill 860
Finance

(Senator Zucker, *et al.*)

Department of Aging – Aging Resilience Fund – Establishment

This bill establishes the Aging Resilience Fund as a special, nonlapsing fund to support implementation of the Maryland Department of Aging’s (MDOA) mission. The Secretary of Aging must administer the fund, which consists of (1) investment earnings; (2) any fees collected by MDOA; and (3) any other money from any other source accepted for the benefit of the fund. The fund may be used for administrative expenses that align with the department’s mission, including personnel; partnership development; and programs services, or activities within MDOA. Expenditures from the fund may be made only in accordance with the State budget. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2026.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: MDOA can administer the fund with existing budgeted resources. Special fund revenues and expenditures increase by an indeterminate amount beginning in FY 2027, as discussed below.

Local Effect: Revenues and expenditures for local area agencies on aging (AAAs) may increase to the extent that funds become available.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: MDOA functions as the State Unit on Aging as federally designated through the Older Americans Act of 1965 and receives federal and State funding to serve older adults and their families and caregivers. MDOA coordinates, evaluates, and plans the delivery of services for, and advocates on behalf of, older adults at all levels of government.

MDOA distributes funding and provides fiscal and programmatic oversight to the aging services network across the State, including to 19 local AAAs. Services funded through MDOA and administered by the aging services network include information and referral services, nutrition services, community-based supportive services, and assisted living subsidies.

The Secretary of Aging must:

- evaluate the service needs of seniors in the State;
- determine the extent to which existing public and private programs meet the needs of seniors;
- establish priorities for meeting the needs of seniors;
- coordinate, assess and evaluate, and educate the public and professionals about all State and local programs and services, both public and private, that relate and are important to the well-being of seniors in the State, including in the areas of income maintenance, public health, mental health, housing and urban development, employment, education, recreation, and rehabilitation of seniors with physical or mental disabilities;
- develop a statewide plan incorporating local plans for a comprehensive and coordinated system of health, social, and community services for seniors, including housing, and institutional and noninstitutional care;
- represent the interests of seniors by serving as an advocate at all levels of government;
- consult with and advise the secretaries of the principal departments of State government about the programs and services for seniors that are the primary responsibility of those departments;
- consult with the Commission on Aging on all matters pertaining to programs for seniors;
- provide consultation and technical assistance to communities and civic groups developing local services for seniors;
- maintain a clearinghouse of information related to the interests of seniors; and
- review and recommend policies to the Governor on publicly funded plans and programs that affect seniors.

State Fiscal Effect: MDOA special fund revenues increase by an indeterminate amount beginning in fiscal 2027, reflecting any fees collected by MDOA, investment earnings of the fund, or any other money accepted for the benefit of the fund. Special fund expenditures likely increase accordingly, in accordance with the authorized uses of the fund. MDOA advises that the extent of the increase in special fund revenues and expenditures cannot be reliably estimated.

MDOA notes that the department has limited authority to accept and spend philanthropic or private funds, and that the department is working with philanthropies to generate new investments to align with MDOA grantmaking, initiatives, services, or other efforts for the benefit of older Marylanders, caregivers and their families. MDOA projects initial investments to the fund will be modest.

Additional Information

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

Designated Cross File: HB 804 (Delegate Wolek) - Health.

Information Source(s): Maryland Department of Aging; Department of Budget and Management; Department of Legislative Services

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sj/jc

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