

Department of Legislative Services
 Maryland General Assembly
 2021 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
 Third Reader - Revised

Senate Bill 631

(Senator Kagan, *et al.*)

Judicial Proceedings

Health and Government Operations

Workgroup to Study and Implement a Statewide 3-1-1 Nonemergency Telephone System

This bill establishes the Workgroup to Study and Implement a Statewide 3-1-1 Nonemergency Telephone System. The Maryland Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) must provide staff for the workgroup. Workgroup members may not receive compensation but are entitled to reimbursement for expenses. By November 1, 2021, the workgroup must report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly. **The bill takes effect June 1, 2021, and terminates June 30, 2022.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: General fund expenditures increase by \$175,000 in FY 2021 only, as discussed below. Revenues are not affected.

(in dollars)	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
GF Expenditure	175,000	0	0	0	0
Net Effect	(\$175,000)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

Note: () = decrease; GF = general funds; FF = federal funds; SF = special funds; - = indeterminate increase; (-) = indeterminate decrease

Local Effect: The bill is not anticipated to materially affect local operations or finances.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: The workgroup must:

- review the existing 3-1-1 services provided in the State;
- review the 3-1-1 services provided in other states and jurisdictions;
- review the best practices for implementing and providing a statewide 3-1-1 nonemergency telephone system;
- identify solutions to any limitations or feasibility issues with implementing or providing a statewide 3-1-1 nonemergency telephone system;
- study and develop a plan for implementing and providing a statewide 3-1-1 nonemergency telephone system; and
- identify the appropriate State agency to oversee a statewide 3-1-1 nonemergency telephone system.

Current Law: According to the Federal Communications Commission, the telephone number 3-1-1 is assigned nationwide for nonemergency police and other government services.

County Authorization to Establish a 3-1-1 System

Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS) regulations authorize a county or multicounty system in the State to establish a 3-1-1 system to reduce congestion on the 9-1-1 system. At a minimum, a 3-1-1 system must include the following: (1) switching or programming to direct a 3-1-1 call to a nonemergency answering position; (2) a 3-1-1 answering position that must be capable of immediately transferring an emergency call to a 9-1-1 answering position or an adjoining public safety answering point (PSAP), transferring a nonemergency call to an adjoining jurisdiction or appropriate agency, and providing an individual with a speech or hearing disability access to TTY services or who does not speak or understand the English language access to alternative communication services; and (3) a 3-1-1 call taker trained to handle nonemergency calls and to transfer emergency calls to a 9-1-1 call taker.

Maryland's 9-1-1 System and the Maryland 9-1-1 Board

The State's 9-1-1 system operates primarily through PSAPs. PSAPs are facilities that are generally owned and operated by local governments. 9-1-1 specialists working within PSAPs answer, redirect, and take action on 9-1-1 calls received based on the location of the originating 9-1-1 call. State and local governments are preparing for "next generation" 9-1-1 technology that will allow PSAPs to access not only more accurate information about caller location but also other information that will assist emergency personnel in

communicating with callers and responding more efficiently. Legislation has been enacted in recent years to, among other things, increase funding for the State's 9-1-1 system, provide additional training and oversight for 9-1-1 specialists, and make the changes necessary to implement the next generation system.

The Maryland 9-1-1 Board (previously known as the Emergency Number Systems Board) within DPSCS is responsible for administering the 9-1-1 Trust Fund and overseeing the State's 9-1-1 system. Its responsibilities include, among other things, (1) dispersing funds to local governments from the 9-1-1 Trust Fund; (2) reviewing and approving or disapproving requests for reimbursement of the costs of enhancing 9-1-1 systems; (3) ensuring the inspection of PSAPs; (4) auditing counties to ensure that 9-1-1 trust funds are being used for authorized purposes; and (5) establishing training standards for PSAP personnel based on national best practices and related to Next Generation 9-1-1.

2-1-1 Maryland

The three-digit number 2-1-1 is the primary information and referral telephone number for health and human services in the State. 2-1-1 Maryland is a private, nonprofit organization that maintains an information and referral service network that is available to Maryland residents via telephone and Internet. 2-1-1 Maryland offers 24/7 guidance in accessing health, crisis, and social services. The Health and Human Services Referral Board within the Maryland Department of Health provides oversight and guidance to the 2-1-1 Maryland system.

State Expenditures: General fund expenditures increase by \$175,000 in fiscal 2021 only for MEMA to hire a consultant to staff the workgroup and develop the required report. MEMA advises that it cannot absorb the workgroup duties with existing staff and resources, as the agency does not have experience or expertise with 3-1-1 telephonic systems. As the workgroup must submit its findings within a short timeframe, the Department of Legislative Services concurs. Even though the consultant likely does the much of the work during fiscal 2022, it is assumed that funds to hire the consultant are encumbered in fiscal 2021. To the extent there is a delay in hiring a consultant, costs are incurred in fiscal 2022 instead.

Expense reimbursements for workgroup members are assumed to be minimal and absorbable within existing budgeted resources.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Montgomery and Prince George's counties; Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services; Military Department; Federal Communications Commission; Department of Legislative Services

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