



Committee: PS
Committee Review: At a future date
Staff: Christine Wellons, Chief Legislative Attorney
Purpose: To receive testimony – no vote expected

AGENDA ITEM #9
February 24, 2026
Public Hearing

SUBJECT

Expedited Bill 6-26, Fire and Rescue Services - Emergency Medical Services Insurance Reimbursement Program - Use of Revenues

Lead Sponsors: Councilmembers Luedtke, Katz, and Mink

Co-Sponsors: Council President Fani-González, Councilmember Stewart, Council Vice-President Balcombe, and Councilmembers Jawando, Sayles, Friedson, Evans, and Glass

EXPECTED ATTENDEES

Members of the Public

COUNCIL DECISION POINTS & COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

- Receive public testimony.

DESCRIPTION/ISSUE

Expedited Bill 6-26 would:

- (1) permit the authorized local fire and rescue department (LFRD) representative to receive revenues collected under the Emergency Medical Services Insurance Reimbursement Program under certain circumstances;
- (2) specify certain permitted uses of the revenues; and
- (3) generally amend the laws regarding emergency medical services in the County.

SUMMARY OF KEY DISCUSSION POINTS

- A worksession of the Public Safety (PS) Committee is scheduled for March 9, 2026.

This report contains:

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Racial Equity and Social Justice Impact Statement	© 5
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*The Economic Impact Statement was not available at the time of publication of this staff report. It can be found at the below address when available: [Racial Equity and Social Justice, Economic, and Climate Impact Statements - Office of Legislative Oversight- Montgomery County, Maryland \(montgomerycountymd.gov\)](https://montgomerycountymd.gov/legis/legisative-oversight/legisative-oversight-statement)

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MEMORANDUM

February 19, 2026

TO: County Council

FROM: Christine Wellons, Chief Legislative Attorney

SUBJECT: Expedited Bill 6-26, Fire and Rescue Services - Emergency Medical Services Insurance Reimbursement Program - Use of Revenues

PURPOSE: Public Hearing – receive testimony

Expedited Bill 6-26, Fire and Rescue Services - Emergency Medical Services Insurance Reimbursement Program - Use of Revenues, was introduced on February 3, 2026. The Lead Sponsors are Councilmembers Luedtke, Katz, and Mink. The Co-Sponsors are Council President Fani-González, Councilmember Stewart, Council Vice-President Balcombe, and Councilmembers Jawando, Sayles, Friedson, Evans, and Glass.

A public hearing is scheduled for February 24 at 1:30 p.m. A worksession of the Public Safety (PS) Committee is scheduled for March 9.

Expedited Bill 6-24 would:

- (1) permit the authorized local fire and rescue department (LFRD) representative to receive revenues collected under the Emergency Medical Services Insurance Reimbursement Program under certain circumstances;
- (2) specify certain permitted uses of the revenues; and
- (3) generally amend the laws regarding emergency medical services in the County.

BACKGROUND

Effective January 1, 2013, [Bill 17-12E](#) and [Bill 17-13](#) authorized the Montgomery County Fire & Rescue Service (MCFRS) to seek reimbursement for ambulance transports from private health insurance companies, Medicare, or Medicaid. Under the law, Montgomery County residents are not required to pay any out-of-pocket expenses (co-payment, deductible, or uninsured portion of the cost of each emergency medical services transport) relating to emergency medical services transport services provided by MCFRS.

The revenue generated from the program (*i.e.*, the reimbursements from health insurance programs) is used to provide equipment, enhancement, and training for MCFRS and volunteer local fire and rescue departments (LFRDs) without additional cost and increased taxes on county residents. See [Emergency Medical Transportation Insurance Reimbursement Act: keeping the County Safe and Sound - Montgomery County, Maryland](#) and [Frequently Asked Questions - Emergency Medical Transportation Insurance Reimbursement Act - Montgomery County, Maryland](#).

The County law (Code Section 21-23A) contemplates that fifteen percent of the net EMST revenues will be allocated annually, through the County operating budget resolution, to support local fire and rescue departments (LFRDs). Historically, the authorized LFRD representative has entered into contracts with the County regarding the distribution of EMST funds. In 2025, however, a report from the Office of the Inspector General opined that any distribution of funds directly to the LFRD representative was inconsistent with the provisions of County Code as written. See [Improper Allocation of EMST funds to MCVFRA](#)

The purpose of Expedited Bill 6-26 is to explicitly permit the distribution of funds to the LFRD representative, for certain purposes in support of LFRDs, in accordance with the County's annual budget resolutions and any contracts entered into between the County and the LFRD representative.

BILL SPECIFICS

In accordance with the purpose described above, Expedited Bill 6-26 would provide that the annual operating budget resolution may require or authorize the distribution of EMST revenue for certain purposes to either or both: (i) the authorized LFRD representative; and (ii) individual local fire and rescue departments.

Furthermore, the Executive would expressly be permitted to enter into one or more contracts on behalf of the County to effectuate the distribution of the funds pursuant to the operating budget resolution.

The funds would continue to be used for the specific purposes of supporting LFRDs enumerated under Section 21-23A, including for:

- apparatus for LFRD;
- facilities for LFRDs;
- training for volunteers;
- gear and equipment for volunteers;
- administrative staff;
- volunteer recruitment and retention; and
- volunteer stand-by support.

This packet contains:

Expedited Bill 6-26

RESJ Impact Statement

Circle #

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*The Economic Impact Statement was not available at the time of publication of this staff report. It can be found at the below address when available: [Racial Equity and Social Justice, Economic, and Climate Impact Statements - Office of Legislative Oversight- Montgomery County, Maryland \(montgomerycountymd.gov\)](https://montgomerycountymd.gov/legislativeservices/legislativeservices/Pages/Racial-Equity-and-Social-Justice-Economic-and-Climate-Impact-Statements.aspx)

Expedited Bill No. 6-26
Concerning: Fire and Rescue Services –
Emergency Medical Services
Insurance Reimbursement Program –
Use of Revenues
Revised: 2/3/2026 Draft No. 2
Introduced: February 3, 2026
Expires: December 7, 2026
Enacted: _____
Executive: _____
Effective: _____
Sunset Date: None
Ch. _____, Laws of Mont. Co. _____

COUNTY COUNCIL FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND

Lead Sponsors: Councilmembers Luedtke, Katz, and Mink
Co-Sponsor: Council President Fani-González, Councilmember Stewart, Council Vice-President
Balcombe, and Councilmembers Jawando, Sayles, Friedson, Evans, and Glass

AN EXPEDITED ACT to:

- (1) permit the authorized local fire and rescue department (LFRD) representative to receive revenues collected under the Emergency Medical Services Insurance Reimbursement Program under certain circumstances;
- (2) specify certain permitted uses of the revenues; and
- (3) generally amend the laws regarding emergency medical services in the County.

By amending

Chapter 21, Fire and Rescue Services
Section 21-23A

Boldface

Underlining

[Single boldface brackets]

Double underlining

[[Double boldface brackets]]

* * *

Heading or defined term.

Added to existing law by original bill.

Deleted from existing law by original bill.

Added by amendment.

Deleted from existing law or the bill by amendment.

Existing law unaffected by bill.

The County Council for Montgomery County, Maryland approves the following Act:

Sec. 1. Section 21-23A is amended as follows:

21-23A. Emergency Medical Services Insurance Reimbursement Program.

* * *

(c) *Imposition of reimbursement.* The County must impose a reimbursement charge for any emergency medical services provided in the County, and, unless prohibited by other law, outside the County under a mutual aid agreement.

* * *

(f) *County Residents - Payment of Uninsured Portion of the Emergency Medical Services Reimbursement.*

(1) County residents must not be required to pay any out-of-pocket expense relating to any emergency medical services because residents are deemed to have paid any co-payment, deductible, or uninsured portion of the cost of emergency medical services through taxes paid to the County.

(2) Tax revenues the County receives must be treated as payment, on behalf of County residents, of the balance of each resident's portion of the emergency medical services charge that is not covered by the resident's insurance.

(3) The County Council must annually transfer from the General Fund to the Consolidated Fire Tax District Fund an amount that the Council estimates will not be covered by residents' insurance as payment of all residents' uninsured portion of the emergency medical services charge.

(g) *Restriction on Local Fire and Rescue Departments.* A local fire and rescue department must not impose a separate charge for emergency medical services.

(h) *Use of Revenue.*

(1) Except for the transfer received from the General Fund under subsection (f), the revenues collected from the emergency medical services reimbursement must be used to supplement, and must not supplant, Fiscal Year 2013 expenditures appropriated in the annual operating budget resolution (not including any expenditures of revenue collected under this program in Fiscal Year 2013) for emergency medical services and other related fire and rescue services provided by the Fire and Rescue Service.

(2) The Fire Chief must create a dedicated account in the fire fund for the revenues collected from reimbursements under this Program. This amount must only be used for increased or enhanced fire and rescue services above the level appropriated in Fiscal Year 2013, as provided in paragraph (1), including new field service positions related to expansion of 4 person staffing or opening of new fire stations; increased training classes or capacity; facility maintenance and repair; new or replacement apparatus, gear, or equipment. Not more than 30 percent of this account may be spent for personnel costs.

(3) (A) Fifteen percent of the net Emergency Medical Services Insurance Reimbursement Program revenue must be allocated under a procedure specified in the annual operating budget resolution for [the benefit of local fire and rescue departments for]:

(i) replacement or augmentation of apparatus [owned] used by [a] one or more local fire and rescue [department] departments;

- (ii) facilities [owned] used by [a] one or more local fire and rescue [department] departments;
- (iii) training for volunteers;
- (iv) gear and equipment for volunteers;
- (v) administrative staff, including administrative staff of the authorized LFRD representative, to support [a] one or more local fire and rescue [department] departments;
- (vi) volunteer recruitment and retention; and
- (vii) volunteer stand-by support.

(B) Any administrative staff hired or retained by a local fire and rescue department or the authorized LFRD representative using revenue allocated under this Section is not a County employee or a member of the separate merit system referred to in Section 21-16(a).

(C) The annual operating budget resolution under subparagraph (A) may require or authorize the distribution of revenue to either or both:

- (i) the authorized LFRD representative; and
- (ii) individual local fire and rescue departments.

(D) The Executive may enter into one or more contracts on behalf of the County to effectuate the distribution of funds as specified under subparagraph (C).

* * *

Sec. 2. Expedited Effective Date. The Council declares that this Act is necessary for the immediate protection of the public interest. This Act takes effect on the date on which it becomes law.

Racial Equity and Social Justice (RESJ) Impact Statement

Office of Legislative Oversight

EXPEDITED BILL 6-26: FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES - EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES INSURANCE REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM - USE OF REVENUES

SUMMARY

The Office of Legislative Oversight (OLO) anticipates Expedited Bill 6-26 will have a minimal impact on racial equity and social justice (RESJ) in the County. Codifying the County's existing practice of distributing emergency medical services transport revenues to the Montgomery County Volunteer Fire and Rescue Association is not likely to meaningfully benefit or burden community members by race or ethnicity nor impact racial and social inequities in the County.

PURPOSE OF RESJ IMPACT STATEMENTS

RESJ impact statements (RESJIS) evaluate the anticipated impact of legislation on racial equity and social justice in the County. RESJ is a **process** that focuses on centering the needs, leadership, and power of Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color (BIPOC) and communities with low incomes. RESJ is also a **goal** of eliminating racial and social inequities. Applying a RESJ lens is essential to achieve RESJ.¹ This involves seeing, thinking, and working differently to address the racial and social inequities that cause racial and social disparities.²

PURPOSE OF EXPEDITED BILL 6-26

The Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service (MCFRS) provide emergency medical, fire and rescue services across the County. MCFRS provides these services through a combined career and volunteer system that operates out of 37 fire stations.³ Nineteen of these stations are local fire and rescue departments (LFRD) staffed by volunteer firefighters.⁴

To provide ambulance transports – or emergency medical services transports (EMST) – MCFRS bills health insurance providers. EMST revenues are used to provide equipment, enhancement, and training for MCFRS and LFRDs. County law requires that 15 percent of net EMST revenues be allocated annually to support LFRDs.⁵ Historically, the County has distributed these funds to the representative for the LFRDs, the Montgomery County Volunteer Fire and Rescue Association (MCVFRA).^{6,7}

In 2025, the County's Office of the Inspector General (OIG) found distributing EMST funds to the MCVFRA was inconsistent with County Code.⁸ The purpose of Bill 6-26 is to update County Code to respond to the OIG's finding. If enacted, Bill 6-26 would explicitly allow the distribution of EMST funds to the LFRD representative. The funds could continue to be used for the following purposes already established in County law:⁹

- Apparatus for LFRDs;
- Facilities for LFRDs;
- Training for volunteers;
- Gear and equipment for volunteers;
- Administrative staff;
- Volunteer recruitment and retention; and
- Volunteer stand-by support.

The Council introduced Expedited Bill 6-26 on February 3, 2026.

RESJ Impact Statement

Expedited Bill 6-26

In April 2024, OLO published a RESJIS for Bill 9-24, Group G Pension – Social Security Integration.¹⁰ Please read this RESJIS for background on fire personnel and racial equity.

ANTICIPATED RESJ IMPACTS

To consider the anticipated impact of Bill 6-26 on RESJ in the County, OLO recommends the consideration of two related questions:

- Who would primarily benefit or be burdened by this bill?
- What racial and social inequities could passage of this bill weaken or strengthen?

OLO anticipates Bill 6-26 will have a minimal impact on RESJ in the County. Bill 6-26 would codify the County's existing practice of distributing EMST revenues to the MCVFRA. This is not likely to meaningfully benefit or burden community members by race or ethnicity nor impact racial and social inequities in the County.

RECOMMENDED AMENDMENTS

The County's RESJ Act requires OLO to consider whether to recommend amendments to bills that could reduce racial and social inequities and advance RESJ.¹¹ OLO anticipates Expedited Bill 6-26 will have a minimal impact on RESJ in the County. As such, OLO does not offer recommended amendments.

CAVEATS

Two caveats to this RESJIS should be noted. First, predicting the impact of bills on RESJ is challenging due to data limitations, uncertainty, and other factors. Second, this RESJIS is intended to inform the Council's decision-making process rather than determine it. Thus, any conclusion made in this statement does not represent OLO's endorsement of, or objection to, the bill under consideration.

¹ Definition of racial equity and social justice adopted from [Marlysa Gamblin et al., "Applying Racial Equity to U.S. Federal Nutrition Programs," Bread for the World](#) and [Racial Equity Tools](#).

² Ibid.

³ ["Fire and Rescue Service,"](#) Operating Budget, Montgomery County Government.

⁴ [Home](#), Montgomery County Volunteer Fire Rescue Association.

⁵ [Introduction Staff Report for Expedited Bill 6-26](#), Montgomery County Council, Introduced February 3, 2026, pgs. 1-2.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ ["Councilmembers Luedtke, Katz, and Mink Introduce Bill to Support Volunteer Firefighters,"](#) Press Release, Montgomery County Council, February 3, 2026.

⁸ [Introduction Staff Report for Expedited Bill 6-26](#), pg. 2.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ [RESJIS for Bill 9-24](#), Office of Legislative Oversight, April 26, 2024.

¹¹ [Bill 27-19, Administration – Human Rights – Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice – Racial Equity and Social Justice Advisory Committee – Established, Montgomery County Council.](#)



Fiscal Impact Statement

Office of Management and Budget

Bill 6-26	Fire and Rescue Services - Emergency Medical Services Insurance Reimbursement Program - Use of Revenues
Bill Summary	Expedited Bill 6-26 amends Section 21-16 of the County Code to clarify the permissible distribution of Emergency Medical Services Transport (EMST) revenues allocated to Local Fire and Rescue Departments (LFRDs). The bill authorizes the annual operating budget resolution to require or permit distribution of the 15 percent LFRD allocation either directly to individual LFRDs and/or to the authorized LFRD representative. The bill further authorizes the Executive to enter into one or more contracts to implement this distribution. The amendment also clarifies that administrative staff funded through this allocation, whether hired by an individual LFRD or by the authorized LFRD representative, are not County employees and are not subject to the County merit system.
Fiscal Impact Summary	The bill clarifies and authorizes distribution mechanisms for existing EMST revenues but does not modify the EMST rate, the 15 percent allocation formula, or the allowable uses of those funds. Based on the bill language, there appears to be no direct fiscal impact to the County. The amendment does not create new appropriations, new revenue, or new programmatic requirements. Any administrative actions associated with contract execution or oversight are expected to be absorbable within existing resources.
Fiscal Impact Analysis	The bill does not require new positions, appropriations, or budget adjustments. The amendment relates solely to the distribution mechanism of existing EMST revenues and does not increase the overall funding allocation or expand allowable uses beyond those already permitted under current law. The Office of the Inspector General previously identified concerns related to oversight and financial management of EMST funds distributed to the Montgomery County Volunteer Fire and Rescue Association. While this bill does not create a direct fiscal impact, oversight, reporting, and financial controls are central to mitigate continued fiscal risk exposure.
Staff Impact	The bill is not expected to materially impact staffing levels. Any contract administration or oversight responsibilities are anticipated to be managed within existing departmental resources.
Actuarial Analysis	The bill is not expected to impact retiree pension or group insurance costs.
Information Technology Impact	The bill is not expected to impact the County Information Technology (IT) or Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems.
Other Information	
Later actions that may impact revenue or expenditures if future spending is projected	The bill does not authorize future spending.
Sources of information	Montgomery County Fire and Rescue





Climate Assessment

Office of Legislative Oversight

EXPEDITED BILL 6-26: FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES – EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES INSURANCE REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM – USE OF REVENUES

SUMMARY

The Office of Legislative Oversight (OLO) anticipates Expedited Bill 6-26 will have no impact on the County's contribution to addressing climate change as it is proposing a change to the County Code to reflect an existing practice of distributing emergency medical services transports revenue.

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF EXPEDITED BILL 6-26

The Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service (MCFRS) provide emergency medical, fire and rescue services across the County. MCFRS provides these services through a combined career and volunteer system that operates out of 37 fire stations.¹ Nineteen of these stations are local fire and rescue departments (LFRD) staffed by volunteer firefighters.²

To provide ambulance transports – or emergency medical services transports (EMST) – MCFRS bills health insurance providers. EMST revenues are used to provide equipment, enhancement, and training for MCFRS and LFRDs. County law requires that 15 percent of net EMST revenues be allocated annually to support LFRDs.³ Historically, the County has distributed these funds to the representative for the LFRDs, the Montgomery County Volunteer Fire and Rescue Association (MCVFRA).^{4,5}

In 2025, the County's Office of the Inspector General (OIG) found distributing EMST funds to the MCVFRA was inconsistent with County Code.⁶ The purpose of Bill 6-26 is to update County Code to respond to the OIG's finding. If enacted, Bill 6-26 would explicitly allow the distribution of EMST funds to the LFRD representative. The funds could continue to be used for the following purposes already established in County law:⁷

- Apparatus for LFRDs;
- Facilities for LFRDs;
- Training for volunteers;
- Gear and equipment for volunteers;
- Administrative staff;
- Volunteer recruitment and retention; and
- Volunteer stand-by support.

The Council introduced Expedited Bill 6-26 on February 3, 2026.

ANTICIPATED IMPACTS

As the Bill is proposing a change to the County Code to reflect an existing practice of distributing emergency medical services transports revenue, OLO anticipates Expedited Bill 6-26 will have no impact on the County's contribution to addressing climate change, including the reduction and/or sequestration of greenhouse gas emissions, community resilience, and adaptative capacity.

RECOMMENDED AMENDMENTS

The Climate Assessment Act requires OLO to offer recommendations, such as amendments or other measures to mitigate any anticipated negative climate impacts.⁸ OLO does not offer recommendations or amendments as Expedited Bill 6-26 is likely to have no impact on the County's contribution to addressing climate change, including the reduction and/or sequestration of greenhouse gas emissions, community resilience, and adaptative capacity.

CAVEATS

OLO notes two caveats to this climate assessment. First, predicting the impacts of legislation upon climate change is a challenging analytical endeavor due to data limitations, uncertainty, and the broad, global nature of climate change. Second, the analysis performed here is intended to inform the legislative process, not determine whether the Council should enact legislation. Thus, any conclusion made in this statement does not represent OLO's endorsement of, or objection to, the bill under consideration.

PURPOSE OF CLIMATE ASSESSMENTS

The purpose of the Climate Assessments is to evaluate the anticipated impact of legislation on the County's contribution to addressing climate change. These climate assessments will provide the Council with a more thorough understanding of the potential climate impacts and implications of proposed legislation, at the County level. The scope of the Climate Assessments is limited to the County's contribution to addressing climate change, specifically upon the County's contribution to greenhouse gas emissions and how actions suggested by legislation could help improve the County's adaptative capacity to climate change, and therefore, increase community resilience.

While co-benefits such as health and cost savings may be discussed, the focus is on how proposed County bills may impact GHG emissions and community resilience.

CONTRIBUTIONS

OLO staffer Kaitlyn Simmons drafted this assessment.

¹ ["Fire and Rescue Service,"](#) Operating Budget, Montgomery County Government.

² [Home](#), Montgomery County Volunteer Fire Rescue Association.

³ [Introduction Staff Report for Expedited Bill 6-26](#), Montgomery County Council, Introduced February 3, 2026, pgs. 1-2.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ ["Councilmembers Luedtke, Katz, and Mink Introduce Bill to Support Volunteer Firefighters,"](#) Press Release, Montgomery County Council, February 3, 2026.

⁶ [Introduction Staff Report for Expedited Bill 6-26](#), pg. 2.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Bill 3-22, Legislative Branch – Climate Assessments – Required, Montgomery County Council, Effective date October 24, 2022