Expedited Bill No. 20-26
Concerning: Fire and Rescue Services – Length of Service Awards Program for Volunteers - Amendments
Date: 11/17/2026 Draft No. 3
Introduced: May 5, 2026
Enacted: November 17, 2026
Executive:
Effective:
Sunset Date:
Ch. _____, Laws of Mont. Co. _____

COUNTY COUNCIL
FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND

By: Council President at the Request of the County Executive

AN EXPEDITED ACT to:

(1) expand eligibility for length of service benefits to certain local fire and rescue department volunteers;
(2) increase the amount of the length of service benefits to certain local fire and rescue department volunteers; and
(3) generally amend the law regarding local fire and rescue department volunteers.

By amending
Montgomery County Code
Chapter 21, Fire and Rescue Services
Section 21-21

Boldface	*Heading or defined term.*
Underlining	*Added to existing law by original bill.*
[Single boldface brackets**]**	*Deleted from existing law by original bill.*
Double underlining	*Added by amendment.*
[[Double boldface brackets**]]**	*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 21-21 is amended, as follows:

21-21. Length of service award program for volunteers.

There is a length of service award program for local fire and rescue department volunteers.

(a) *Definitions*. In this Section, the following words and phrases have the following meanings:

Active volunteer means a local fire and rescue department volunteer who accumulates at least 50 points in a calendar year under the point system in subsection (k).

Domestic partner means a person who was registered as a domestic partner of an active volunteer with the Fire Chief on or before June 27, 2016 in a domestic partnership that did not end before the active volunteer's death.

(b) *Eligibility*. Any local fire and rescue department volunteer is eligible for the length of service award program if the volunteer is at least 16 years old, and:

(1) (A) was an active volunteer on or after August 15, 1965; or

(B) on August 15, 1965 had completed 25 years as an active volunteer; and

(2) if less than 18 years old, meets any additional requirements established by Executive regulation under method (3).

(c) *Length of service benefits*.

(1) Volunteers Who Qualified Before 1985. Effective January 1, 1985, any volunteer who qualified for a monthly award payment before January 1, 1985, must receive monthly award payments equal to 150 percent of the pre-1985 monthly award payment. Effective July 1, 2023, any volunteer who receives a monthly award

payment under this subsection must receive an 8 percent increase in the amount of the monthly award.

(2) Volunteers Who Qualify in 1985 or Later — 25 Years of Service.

(A) Effective January 1, 1985, a volunteer qualifies for a 25-year award payment when the volunteer:

(i) is at least age 55, if the volunteer completed 25 years as an active volunteer before 1996; or

(ii) is any age, if the volunteer completed 25 years as an active volunteer on or after January 1, 2004.

(B) Effective July 1, 2025, **[**A**]** a volunteer who qualifies under this paragraph must receive an award payment of:

(i) $259.20 per month for life; and

(ii) $13.01 per month for life for each year of service as an active volunteer over 25 years (up to **[**$130.10**]** 40 years, or $195.15 per month). The maximum total benefit is **[**$389.35**]** $454.35 per month.

(3) Volunteers Who Qualify in 1985 or Later — 15 years of Service.

(A) Effective January 1, 1985, a volunteer qualifies for a 15-year award payment when the volunteer:

(i) has served 15 years as an active volunteer after January 1, 1955; and

(ii) is at least age 60.

(B) A volunteer who qualifies under this paragraph must receive an award payment of $10.37 per month for life for each year of service as an active volunteer.

(4) Volunteers Who Qualify in 1985 or Later — 10 Years of Service

(A) Effective January 1, 1985, a volunteer qualifies for a 10-year award payment when the volunteer:

(i) has served 10 years as an active volunteer; and

(ii) is at least age 65.

(B) A volunteer who qualifies under this paragraph must receive an award payment of $10.37 per month for life for each year of service as an active volunteer.

(5) All years of service, including past years of service, must be included.

(6) A volunteer who meets the criteria under paragraph (7) of this subsection must receive subject to a maximum LOSAP monthly benefit payment of **[[**$524.88**]]** $585.55 effective July 1, 2025:

(A) a 7.5 percent increase to his or her LOSAP benefit payment effective July 1, 2023;

(B) effective July 1, 2024, a 4 percent increase to their LOSAP benefit payment based on LOSAP point totals on December 31, 2023; and

(C) effective July 1, 2025, a 4 percent increase to their LOSAP benefit payment based on LOSAP point totals on December 31, 2024.

(7) A volunteer must receive the benefit increases under paragraph (6) of this Section if the volunteer:

(A) received LOSAP benefit payments in a prior year; and

(B) qualified for the higher nominal fee, as described in Article 12 of the fire and rescue volunteers collective bargaining agreement, for calendar year 2022, 2023, or 2024, respectively, by:

(i) being on the Integrated Emergency Command Structure (IECS) certified list;

(ii) receiving 30 LOSAP points for department or station responses; and

(iii) receiving 20 LOSAP points for sleep-in or stand-by service.

(8) Effective July 1, 2026, any volunteer who receives a monthly award payment under this subsection must receive annually a 3 percent increase, or the **[[**Montgomery County**]]** general wage adjustment applicable to County employees represented by the certified representative under Section 33-151, whichever is greater, to the amount of their monthly award. The annual increase under this paragraph (8) must **[[**not**]]** apply to the amount of any monthly award payment under this subsection, including the maximum LOSAP amounts under paragraphs (2) and (6) of this subsection.

(d) *Disability benefit*.

(1) A volunteer qualifies for a disability benefit if:

(A) the volunteer becomes disabled as the direct result of active participation as a local fire and rescue department volunteer;

(B) the disability prevents the volunteer from pursuing the volunteer's normal occupation; and

(C) a state worker's compensation commission finds that the disability is total and permanent**[**,**]** and is a direct result of active participation as a local fire and rescue department volunteer.

(2) A volunteer who qualifies under this subsection must receive an award payment of $345 per month for life.

(3) Length of service benefits under subsection (c) must not be paid to volunteers who are receiving award payments under this subsection.

(4) Effective July 1, 2025, any volunteer injured in the line of duty in MCFRS, who is partially or fully disabled due to the injury and can no longer participate operationally as either an EMS or fire member, shall receive 30 LOSAP points annually during the length of their disability, until their death. Upon the member's death their surviving spouse or domestic partner shall collect 50 percent of the LOSAP benefits for their lifetime or until they remarry.

(e) *Survivor's benefit*.

(1) A local fire and rescue department volunteer's surviving spouse or domestic partner qualifies for a survivor's benefit on the volunteer's death if:

(A) the surviving spouse or partner submits an application for the benefit; and

(B) the volunteer met the:

(i) years-of-service requirement for a length of service benefit under subsection (c); or

(ii) requirements for a disability benefit under subsection (d).

(2) The volunteer's surviving spouse or domestic partner must receive a monthly award payment until the spouse's death or remarriage, or partner's death, equal to 50 percent of the:

(A) length of service benefit for which the volunteer met the years-of-service requirement; or

(B) volunteer's disability benefit.

(3) The surviving spouse or domestic partner of a local fire and rescue department volunteer who suffered a service-connected death, regardless of years of service, shall qualify for maximum LOSAP benefit of $250.00 per month.

(f) *Death benefit*.

(1) Effective July 1, 2025, **[**A**]** a local fire and rescue department volunteer may designate a beneficiary to receive on the **[**volunteers's**]** volunteer's death a **[**$5,000**]** $10,000 death benefit. If the volunteer does not designate a beneficiary or if the designated beneficiary does not survive the volunteer, the death benefit must be paid to the volunteer's surviving spouse or domestic partner or the volunteer's estate if no spouse or partner survives. The designated beneficiary or the volunteer's surviving spouse or domestic partner or estate, whichever applies, qualifies on the volunteer's death for a **[**$5,000**]** $10,000 death benefit if:

(A) the designated beneficiary or the surviving spouse or partner or estate, whichever applies, submits an application for the benefit within one year after the volunteer's death; and

(B) the volunteer met the:

(i) years-of-service requirement for a length of service benefit under subsection (c); or

(ii) requirements for a disability benefit under subsection (d).

(g) *Other benefits*. An active volunteer may participate in the County's tuition assistance program to the extent federal tax laws permit volunteers to do so**[**,**]** and receive discounts at County transit and recreational facilities as if the volunteer were a County employee.

(h) *Funding*. The County must pay benefits to a volunteer under this section from fire tax funds.

(i) *Administration*.

(1) The County Executive or the Executive's designee must administer this Section under Executive Regulations adopted under method (3).

(2) The County must pay benefits under this section from the first day of the first month after the volunteer, surviving spouse or domestic partner, or volunteer's estate qualifies for the benefit, except that benefits must not be paid for any period before the application for the benefit is filed.

(3) The Executive or the Executive's designee may audit the records of participating local fire and rescue departments regarding volunteer participation.

(4) The Executive or the Executive's designee may correct clerical errors in volunteers' service records made by County staff in the administration of this Section.

(5) All LOSAP payments must be made by direct deposit.

(j) *Certification of volunteers*.

(1) Local fire and rescue departments. Each participating local fire and rescue department must:

(A) maintain a detailed and accurate record for each local fire and rescue department volunteer, in a form established by

the County Executive, of any activity that qualifies for credit toward active volunteer status;

(B) by March 31 each year, submit a record of all local fire and rescue department volunteers, certified by the secretary under oath, that identifies each active volunteer for the previous year; and

(C) post any list from the Executive or the Executive's designee of active volunteers for at least 30 days after receipt for review by members.

(2) Appeal. A volunteer may appeal a finding that the volunteer was not an active volunteer within 30 days after a written notice of the finding is mailed to the volunteer. The appeal must satisfy requirements established in regulations issued by the Executive under method (3). The decision of the Executive or the Executive's designee on the appeal is final.

(k) *Point system*. To qualify as an active volunteer under subsection (a), a volunteer accumulates points under this subsection during each calendar year that are not transferable to another year. An individual must not receive points for any activity performed as a County employee.

(1) Training Courses — 25 points maximum.

(A) Courses lasting less than 20 hours, such as a one-day course, seminar, or basic first-aid class, earn 5 points per course.

(B) Courses lasting 20 to 45 hours, such as a short course or regional fire school, earn 10 points per course.

(C) Courses lasting more than 45 hours, such as the basic, advanced, section III, and emergency care courses offered by the University of Maryland, or a fire science course

offered by Montgomery College or Prince George's Community College, earn 15 points per course.

(2) Drills — 20 points maximum: Each drill lasting at least 2 hours earns **[**1**]** one point.

(3) Stand-by — 20 points maximum. Integrated Emergency Command Structure (IECS) certified personnel may earn stand-by LOSAP points for performing on-duty activity at the rate of:

(A) one quarter point for every hour of stand-by service a volunteer is assigned to a unit available for response; and

(B) one point for every 4 hours of stand-by service the volunteer is available for response in the station, but is not assigned to a specific unit.

Stand-by service must be recorded in the data system provided by the County. A volunteer must not earn more than 3 points for stand-by service during any 24-hour period.

(4) (A) Elected and Appointed Position — 25 points maximum per calendar year for any combination of service in eligible and appointed positions as follows:

[(1)] (i) 25 points for completing a one-year term in an eligible elected or appointed position; and

[(2)] (ii) 2 points for each full month of service in any eligible elected or appointed position during a term of less than one year.

(B) The Fire Chief annually must designate a list of the elected and appointed positions eligible to earn points. The list must include:

(i) local fire and rescue department (LFRD) officer at the rank of lieutenant or higher;

(ii) director, trustee, or trial board member**[**, or auxiliary member**]** of an LFRD;

(iii) chair of fundraising or membership for an LFRD;

(iv) chaplain of an LFRD;

(v) delegate, alternate, or officer for the **[**Fire Board, the**]** Montgomery County Volunteer Fire-Rescue Association, the LFRD representative, or any similar organization;

(vi) member of a committee of the Commission or the Maryland State Firemen's Association (MSFA);

(vii) officer of the MSFA auxiliary; or

(viii) officer of an LFRD auxiliary.

(5) Attendance at Meetings — 20 points maximum per year: Attendance earns **[**1**]** one point for each official meeting of an organization listed in Executive regulations issued under method (3) as affiliated with the Fire and Rescue Service.

(6) Participation in Department or Station Responses — 30 points maximum for responding on at least the number of calls indicated in the appropriate column below:

Total department/station call responses per year	000 to 999	1000 to 7499	7500 or more
Responses required to earn 1 point, if not qualified for maximum 30 points	2	4	5
Responses per year required to receive maximum 30 points	50	100	120

The Chief annually must determine for each LFRD whether the total annual calls must be computed by department or by station.

(7) Military Service — 50 points maximum per year, prorated for a partial year of service, for qualified military service that interrupts voluntary fire service. Qualified service means full-time extended obligatory military service or a single voluntary enlistment, not to exceed 4 years in the armed forces of the United States.

(8) Collateral Duties — 25 points maximum: Each qualified activity for the LFRD that lasts at least 4 hours earns **[**1**]** one point. The Chief annually must designate a list of the collateral duties under which a volunteer may perform qualified activities, such as apparatus and building maintenance; fire prevention and education activities; fundraising activities; and administrative or auxiliary duties.

(9) A volunteer who does not accumulate 50 LOSAP points for calendar year 2021 may submit a list consisting of canceled meetings, drills, standbys, or other collateral duties during 2021 that the volunteer was not able to attend or complete. The volunteer's President and the Division Chief of Volunteer Services must certify this list and award points.

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

Approved:

Natali Fani

November 17, 2026

Natali Fani-González, President, County Council — Date

Approved:

Marc Elrich, County Executive — Date

This is a correct copy of Council action.

Sara R. Tenenbaum, Clerk of the Council — Date