



Howard County

Internal Memorandum

February 20, 2025

Subject: Council Testimony and Fiscal Impact Statement Re:
Police Corps Service Purchase Option in the Howard County Police and Fire Employees'
Retirement Plan

To: Brandee Ganz, Chief Administrative Officer

From: Jamar Herry
Deputy Chief Administrative Officer

Anju A. Bennett, 
Chair Joint Pension Committee
Administrator, Office of Human Resources

Requested Action

County Administration requests the approval of proposed legislation which would allow participants to buy eligibility service and creditable service in the Howard County Police and Fire Employees' Retirement Plan for participation in the Maryland Police Corps program which lasted 5 months. The legislation will apply to Officers who were actively employed by Howard County as of January 1, 2025, and were participants of the Maryland Police Corps between 1999 and 2003. The proposed legislation also addresses implementation of this service time on initial participation in the Deferred Retirement Option Program (DROP) II.

The proposed legislation was drafted by the Howard County Pension Counsel and reviewed by the Pension Oversight Commission. The Pension Oversight Commission considered the legislation at its meeting on February 14, 2025. The Commission supports the legislation and issued a letter which is provided as Attachment A.

Background

The County has examined the handling of retirement service credit for the training period completed as a condition of becoming a Police Officer.

Entry level Police Officers who joined Howard County had the option of completing training either through:

- The Maryland accredited police academy operated by Howard County, or
- The Maryland Police Corps, which served as an interim measure, was developed through partnership between the Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention and participating police agencies, including the Howard County Police Department, and funded by the U.S. Department of Justice.

Both programs covered similar training and resulted participants becoming Howard County Police Officers.

- The Maryland Police Corps was utilized as a supplement to the County's Police Academy with the intent of having participants hired into specified County positions upon graduation. Participants in Maryland Police Corps were identified with different Maryland law enforcement agencies during their participation in the Police Corps.

- The Maryland Police Corps participants identified with Howard County utilized equipment and uniforms issued by Howard County.
- The Maryland Police Corps participants underwent the same intensive training covered in the Police Academy operated by Howard County.

The programs differed in the handling of retirement service credits. Police recruits in the Howard County academy were automatically enrolled in the Howard County Police and Fire Employees' Retirement Plan and received eligibility and creditable service for the full period of their academy training per Howard County Code requirements. The Plan did not give Maryland Police Corps trainees the same credit, even though participants entered the Police Corps with the understanding that they would be required to complete the training in order to qualify for an entry level police position with Howard County. Sixteen of our current police officers completed their training with the Maryland Police Corps between 1999 and 2003 and were subsequently employed by Howard County in the Howard County Police Department.

Due to the similarities in the training programs, County Administration requests the approval of proposed legislation which would recognize the 5 months served in the Maryland Police Corps for purposes of eligibility and creditable service within the Howard County Police and Fire Employees' Retirement Plan.

The proposed legislation would apply to Officers who were actively employed by the County as of January 1, 2025. This service credit will be provided only to covered Officers who elect to have this period credited, as they will be responsible for paying their normal employee contributions that would have been collected while they served in the Police Corps.

Fiscal Impact: This legislation will only apply to a maximum of 16 Officers. These Officers will be asked to elect by September 30, 2025, whether they wish to purchase the 5 months of service time. If an Officer elects to purchase this time, they will be asked to make their normal contribution that would have been due at the time of their participation in the Police Corps. Depending on the period in which the Officer served in the Police Corp, the contribution will be approximately \$1,192 to \$1,905.

cc: Jennifer Sager



Pension Oversight Commission

February 14, 2025

Dr. Calvin Ball, County Executive
Howard County Government
3430 Court House Drive
Ellicott City, MD 21043

Ms. Liz Walsh, Chairperson
Howard County Council
3430 Court House Drive
Ellicott City, MD 21043

Dear Dr. Ball and Ms. Walsh:

I write on behalf of the Pension Oversight Commission regarding the currently unnumbered bill to amend the Howard County Police & Fire Employees' Retirement Plan to authorize Police Officers with Maryland Police Corps service, to purchase an additional 5 months of retirement eligibility and creditable service.

The Commissioners reviewed the bill and discussed its provisions at their February 14, 2025 meeting,

The Pension Oversight Commission supports the proposed legislation.

Sincerely,

Signed by:

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Jae Chon
Chair

cc: Mr. Dave Jordan, Commission Member
Mr. Lou Hutt, Jr., Commission
Member
Ms. Michelle RhodesBrown, Commission Member
Ms. Anju A. Bennett, Chair, Retirement Plan Committees
Mr. Scott Southern, Howard County
Mr. Norman Parker, Howard County