



WES MOORE  
GOVERNOR  
COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

STATE OF MARYLAND  
MILITARY DEPARTMENT  
FIFTH REGIMENT ARMORY  
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND 21201-2288

JANEEN L. BIRCKHEAD  
MAJOR GENERAL  
THE ADJUTANT GENERAL

. Th

Maryland Military Department  
Fiscal Year 2026 Operating Budget  
Response to Department of Legislative Services Analysis

Budget and Taxation Committee  
Health and Human Services Subcommittee  
Senator Cory V. McCray, Chair  
January 30, 2025

Appropriations Committee  
Public Safety and Administration Subcommittee  
Delegate Jazz Lewis, Chair  
January 29, 2025

Honorable Chair and distinguished members of the Subcommittee, I am Dave Paolucci, and I serve as the Chief of Staff of the Maryland Military Department. I bring greetings from the Adjutant General, Major General Janeen L. Birckhead.

Our department thanks Governor Moore, Lieutenant Governor Miller, the Department of Budget and Management (DBM), the Department of Legislative Services Analyst Ms. Yashodhara Rai, and the Budget Committees for their support.

It is an honor for the Maryland National Guard to serve the people of Maryland, from being called to duty flying search and rescue missions at the Key Bridge, to domestic operation missions such as Hurricane Helene in North Carolina, to putting out wildfires in Baltimore and Harford Counties.

It is an honor for the Maryland Military Department to give back to our communities while our citizen-soldiers and citizen-airmen remain ready to fight and win our nation's wars.

With my remaining time, I want to focus on the most critical asset of our agency, our people. We aggressively search for people to join our MMD family. The Department has filled 6 of the long-term vacancies and two selections pending. MMD does not concur with the recommendation of losing these PINS.

Under Governor Moore's leadership, Maryland launched **Health Care for Heroes** last year. The program has exceeded our expectations and has enrolled 75% of eligible service members!

As our senior leaders state, Health Care for Heroes helps us to make sure our soldiers and airmen are medically ready for the fight, available to be “Always Ready, Always There.”

The Maryland Military Department’s Freestate Challenge Academy is the only fully preventative program in the juvenile space managed by the State of Maryland. The 30+ year-old academy provides a tuition-free 22-week residential program that accepts 300 cadets, and through program attrition typically graduates 200 cadets per year.

Together, the critical budgetary investment in public safety by the Moore-Miller Administration's FY 2026 budget will ensure more healthy military families, develop good habits in our young people and contribute to a safer and more sustainable Maryland.

Thank you.