

Executive Summary

The 2025 Maryland General Assembly concluded with significant legislative action aligned with local municipal priorities, including election modernization, veterans' support, youth prevention services, and tenant protections. Governor Wes Moore signed **805 bills** into law, while **25 were vetoed**, reflecting a generally cooperative legislative session between the General Assembly and the Executive Branch.

This year, the **State of Maryland** also confronted a budget deficit projected at **\$761 million** for FY26. Despite this fiscal pressure, the Governor's budget preserved key funding streams for education, public safety, and community redevelopment. Meanwhile, **Prince George's County** advanced legislation focused on tenant rights, senior affordability, and public infrastructure, reinforcing the County's strategic emphasis on equity and long-term livability.

Bladensburg stands to benefit from many of these statewide measures and should act now to align its local policies, fiscal priorities, and legislative agenda for 2026.

2025 Maryland Legislative Session Overview

Key Session Stats:

- 3,075 bills introduced
 - 805 bills passed and signed by Governor Moore
 - 25 bills vetoed
 - Session Focus Areas: Youth crime prevention, housing stability, public safety, workforce development, and environmental protections.
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Priority Legislation Affecting Municipalities

HB 322 – Enhanced State Support for Municipal Elections

- **Summary:** Enables municipalities to lease voting equipment and enter MOUs with the State Board of Elections.
- **Bladensburg Impact:**

- Greater professionalism and security in election administration.
 - Estimated cost for equipment leasing: ~\$23,400/election.
 - Recommendation: Begin MOU discussions with the State in advance of the 2026 election cycle.
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HB 699 – Expansion of “Honorable Discharge” Definition for Veterans

- **Summary:** Broadens eligibility for Maryland veterans’ benefits to include those discharged due to sexual orientation, PTSD, or related trauma.
 - **Bladensburg Impact:**
 - Potential outreach to underserved veteran populations.
 - Enhances access to housing, job training, and mental health support.
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HB 1443 – Families Serve Act

- **Summary:** Authorizes municipalities to adopt local hiring preferences for veterans and their families.
 - **Bladensburg Recommendation:**
 - Draft and pass a local ordinance implementing hiring preferences for eligible groups.
 - Aligns with equity-based workforce development and Governor Moore’s “Leave No One Behind” platform.
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HB 814 – Youth Services Bureau Reporting

- **Summary:** Requires the Department of Juvenile Services to produce an annual report on Youth Services Bureaus (YSBs), increasing accountability and access to funding.
 - **Bladensburg Advocacy Talking Points:**
 - Prevention-oriented approach to youth crime.
 - Critical pathway for securing sustainable funding for local youth programs.
 - Opportunities for collaboration with other Prince George’s County municipalities and school partners.
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Prince George’s County Legislative and Budget Highlights

County Budget Overview (CB-022-2025):

- **\$10.79M** in supplementary appropriations passed.
- Key adjustments:
 - **\$44.8M reduction** in Police Department budget.
 - **\$12.3M increase** to Health Department.
 - **\$4.1M** more for Housing & Community Development.
 - **\$30.1M** added to non-departmental grants (possible funding source for local initiatives).

Key Bills Passed:

- **CB-006-2025:** Permanent Rent Stabilization for Senior Housing.
- **CB-009-2025:** Expansion of Elderly Property Tax Credit.
- **CB-005-2025:** Minimum Wage Indexing (max 5% increase tied to CPI).
- **CB-003-2025:** Creation of Permitting Ombudsman Office.
- **CB-019-2025:** Neighborhood Traffic Management Program.

Maryland State Budget & Fiscal Outlook

Governor Moore's FY26 Budget:

- Total Budget: **\$63.1 billion**
- Structural Deficit: **\$761 million**, expected to increase in FY27 without revenue changes.
- Prioritized Spending:
 - K-12 Education and Blueprint for Maryland's Future
 - Public Transit and Infrastructure Investment
 - Housing and Community Development
 - Public Safety and Gun Violence Prevention

Impact on Municipalities:

- Increased competition for state grant dollars.
- Pressure to demonstrate program performance and regional collaboration.
- Likely legislative action in 2026 to address revenue shortfalls or modify spending formulas.

Strategic Recommendations for Bladensburg

1. Prepare a Local Ordinance on Veteran Hiring (HB 1443 Implementation)

- Engage legal counsel to draft ordinance language.
- Include preference language, points system, and procedural safeguards.

2. Initiate MOU with the State Board of Elections (HB 322)

- Begin coordination with the State Administrator to determine election equipment, cost-sharing, and staffing needs.

3. Develop a Veteran & Youth Services Communication Campaign

- Partner with the Maryland Department of Veterans and Military Families and Juvenile Services.
- Ensure newly eligible residents are aware of their benefits and how to access services.

4. Advocate for Continued Youth Program Investment (HB 814)

- Use upcoming DJS reports to demonstrate the need and position Bladensburg for pilot funds or new programming support.

5. Prepare for 2026 Legislative Session

- Launch a Legislative Working Group (Q4 2025) to:
 - Draft Bladensburg's legislative priorities.
 - Engage Prince George's County Delegation members early.
 - Consider legislation focused on affordable housing, broadband, pedestrian safety, and stormwater infrastructure.

Conclusion

The 2025 General Assembly delivered actionable wins for Bladensburg, especially in veterans' services, election support, and youth prevention. While state and county budgets will face growing fiscal challenges in 2026, Bladensburg should align early with state priorities and prepare its advocacy strategies so that it will be best positioned to compete for limited resources.

By beginning implementation planning now, Bladensburg can turn legislative victories into visible community improvements and prepare to lead on local innovation and state partnership.