

Council Resolution 23-2026 Fiscal Analysis

Introduced: January 5, 2026

Fiscal Manager: Melinda Massey

Legislative Intent: This resolution is proposing to amend the Howard County's Charter to make the language of the Charter gender neutral.

ANALYSIS

Fiscal Impact:

In 2025, the Howard County LGBTQIA+ Commission's provided a [letter](#) to the County Council and County Executive recommending a review of the County Charter to implement gender-neutral language. This is to ensure the County Charter reflects the true diversity of the officials, employees, and residents it governs. By following the lead of peer jurisdictions—such as Anne Arundel, Baltimore, and Prince George's Counties, this proposed legislation would implement gender neutral and uniform language for the Charter. The goal of adopting gender-neutral terminology is to reflect that all Charter provisions apply clearly and equally to every individual, regardless of gender identity.

Specifically, this Charter amendment amends the Howard County Charter by replacing gender-specific pronouns (e.g., "he," "she," "his," "her") with gender-neutral terminology (e.g. "They/Them/Their/That person"). This initiative aims to align the County's foundational governing document with contemporary standards of inclusivity and clarity.

Budget Implications:

Adoption of this resolution will not have a substantial impact on the budget. According to Office of Law, the estimated cost to update the Charter with gender neutral language will be approximately \$2,600.00. The Office of Law (OoL) budgets for the regular updates to the Howard County Charter and Code. According to the OoL, funding for the Charter Amendment is contingent upon the Executive's upcoming FY27 budget proposal. If approved, the OoL expects to see the costs reflected in the contractual services line item of the Operational budget within the Office of Law.

Other Notes:

Following the resolution's passage, gender-neutral updates to the Charter will be voted on by the citizens of Howard County in the 2026 General Election. If the Charter amendment passes, then the County's Code company will make the approved changes to the digital version of the Charter.