

## **Council Bill 20-2026 Fiscal Analysis**

**Introduced:** March 2, 2026

**Fiscal Manager:** Melinda Massey

**Legislative Intent:** This legislative act formalizes the transition of the Howard County Interfaith Advisory Council into a permanent, codified Commission. The move aims to solidify the partnership between Howard County government and the County's diverse faith communities to address social inequities, combat religious intolerance, and streamline the delivery of essential services.

### **ANALYSIS**

#### **Fiscal Impact:**

The Howard County Office of Human Rights and Equity (OHRE) is formally supporting the establishment of the Interfaith Advisory Commission under County Code Section 12.219. This initiative seeks to transition the temporary workgroup formed in 2024 into a permanent, codified body.

The establishment of the Interfaith Advisory Commission builds upon a legacy of service, where faith-based communities in Howard County have historically acted as essential anchors for disaster relief, food security, and community health. To ensure this partnership is effective, the Commission focuses on several core objectives: providing expert guidance on policies affecting diverse religious groups, promoting dialogue and resilience during times of crisis, and developing proactive strategies to confront hate, bias, and discrimination.

#### **Budget Implications:**

During the first year, this Commission will focus on setting priorities, evaluating community needs, data collection, and establishing strategy and structure for outreach, initiatives, partnerships, and programming.

According to Administration, they do not anticipate any additional staffing or full-time equivalent (FTE) costs to support the Interfaith Advisory Commission, as existing staff will take on the roles of Executive Secretary and County Liaison as part of their current responsibilities. Additionally, OHRE will utilize current County's technologies services to conduct meetings and produce the annual report. OHRE is requesting a minimal budget allocation of \$5,000 to cover the development and distribution of educational materials, marketing, and outreach essential to establishing and publicizing the work of the Commission.

#### **Other Notes:**

- N/a