



# BARRY GLASSMAN

HARFORD COUNTY EXECUTIVE

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For more information, contact:

Cindy Mumby

Director of Governmental & Community Relations

410-340-5376

[camumby@harfordcountymd.gov](mailto:camumby@harfordcountymd.gov)

## **Harford County Celebrates First Responders Day, Expands Eligibility for Volunteer Fire & EMS Pensions, Continues Student Loan Repayment Assistance**

**BEL AIR, Md.**, (Oct. 27, 2022) - Harford County is celebrating National First Responders Day, October 28, with a proclamation in honor of those who help others in an emergency.

In addition, legislation proposed by County Executive Barry Glassman, and approved by the County Council earlier this month, will expand eligibility for the county's volunteer fire and EMS providers to qualify for pension benefits. The [new law](#) lowers the eligibility age from 55 to 50 years old for those with 25 or more years of service and lowers the age from 70 to 60 years old for those with five consecutive years of service and at least 10 active years. The legislation also removes the monthly cap on benefits that can be earned by longtime volunteers.

Harford County relies entirely on volunteers for its fire service and has a combination of paid county paramedics, along with Harford County Foundation EMS providers operating in 12 volunteer fire and ambulance companies.

To attract and retain active volunteers, Harford County's NEXT GEN Responder program offers student loan repayment assistance of up to \$5,000 per year for up to four years. The program was initiated last year by County Executive Glassman, a former EMT with the Level Volunteer Fire Company, and is believed to be the first of its kind in Maryland.

Qualifications and applications are online at <https://www.harfordcountymd.gov/2976/NEXT-GEN-Responders-Student-Loan-Relief>.


Since inception, Harford's NEXT GEN Responder program has helped pay down student loans for 76 volunteer EMTs and firefighters.

"We are blessed to have volunteer firefighters and dedicated professionals, including EMTs, paramedics, 911 dispatchers and law enforcement officers, who answer calls around the clock to help their fellow citizens," County Executive Glassman said. "On what may be someone's worst day, these skilled responders protect and save lives. We appreciate their service on National First Responders Day and every day in Harford County."



*Harford County Executive Barry Glassman presenting a proclamation to first responders in recognition of National First Responders Day. Pictured, from left, are Michael Brunicke, Tami Wiggins, Laura Porrovcchio, Forney Buchanan, County Executive Glassman, Ross Coates, Amanda Gorsuch.*

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