

Department of Legislative Services
 Maryland General Assembly
 2017 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
 First Reader

House Bill 1188 (Delegate Rosenberg)
 Appropriations

Advisory Council on Couples Qualifying for Family Investment Administration
 Benefits

This bill establishes the Advisory Council on Couples Qualifying for Family Investment Administration (FIA) Benefits. The Department of Human Resources (DHR) must provide staff for the council and \$25,000 funding from its budget to support the council’s duties. The bill also establishes reporting requirements.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2017, and terminates June 30, 2018.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: General fund expenditures increase by \$25,000 in FY 2018 only to reflect the required funding from DHR to support the council. Any reimbursements for council members are assumed to be minimal and absorbable within existing budgeted resources. Revenues are not affected.

(in dollars)	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
GF Expenditure	25,000	0	0	0	0
Net Effect	(\$25,000)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

Note: () = decrease; GF = general funds; FF = federal funds; SF = special funds; - = indeterminate increase; (-) = indeterminate decrease

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: The Secretary of Human Resources must designate the chair of the council and appoint members, as specified. The council must:

- identify and analyze current practices and procedures of FIA, local departments of social services, the Child Support Enforcement Administration (CSEA), and any other local or State policy, whether authorized by statute, regulation, or practice, which may adversely impact or impede the progress of couples who qualify for FIA services and benefits;
- research, document, assess, and recommend to the Secretary of Human Resources best practices for and policy changes to be made to FIA, CSEA, and any other local or State body that will enable couples striving to navigate social service systems, including (1) income qualification guidelines for FIA cash assistance and (2) the model demonstrated by the Couples Advancing Together Pilot Program; and
- enter into a data-sharing agreement with DHR, as specified.

The council must be appointed and begin its work before August 1, 2017. It must meet regularly and, by January 1, 2018, report its findings and recommendations to the Secretary of Human Resources. By January 31, 2018, the Secretary of Human Resources must submit a report to the General Assembly advising of DHR's decision to adopt or decline the council's recommendations and the reasons why the recommendations were or were not adopted.

A member of the council may not receive compensation but is entitled to reimbursement for expenses under the standard State travel regulations, as provided in the State budget.

Current Law/Background: DHR's FIA is the central coordinating and directing agency of all public assistance programs in the State, including (1) the Family Investment Program (FIP) and the related temporary cash assistance programs; (2) public assistance to adults; (3) emergency assistance; (4) food stamps; (5) medical assistance eligibility determinations; and (6) energy assistance programs.

Couples Advancing Together Pilot Program: Chapter 367 of 2013 established the Couples Advancing Together Pilot Program, which terminated June 30, 2016. The purpose of the program was to assist couples that qualify as a family eligible for FIP to move toward stable relationships and family-friendly employment, for one or both parents of a child who resides with the family, in order to improve their economic circumstances and provide support for lasting family units. To be eligible for the program, a couple must have been

raising together a child younger than age 14. Among other components, the pilot program included a six-week participation period during which couples received education on and were provided with the tools needed for achieving success at home, in the workplace, and in society.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Baltimore City; Montgomery County; Department of Human Resources; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 3, 2017
fn/jc

Analysis by: Jennifer K. Botts

Direct Inquiries to:
(410) 946-5510
(301) 970-5510