

Department of Legislative Services
 Maryland General Assembly
 2022 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Enrolled - Revised

House Bill 662
 Appropriations

(Delegate Guyton)

Finance

**Advisory Stakeholder Group on Autism-Related Needs and the State
 Coordinator for Autism Strategy - Membership, Staffing, and Appointment**

This bill requires the State Coordinator for Autism Strategy in the Governor’s Office of Community Initiatives (GOCI) to be appointed by the Governor. The bill alters the membership of the Advisory Stakeholder Group on Autism-Related Needs by including (1) one member of the Senate of Maryland, appointed by the President of the Senate and (2) two members of the House of Delegates, appointed by the Speaker of the House. The coordinator may appoint additional members as necessary. The appointing authority must consider the geographical diversity of the advisory stakeholder group, as specified. GOCI, rather than the Department of Disabilities (MDOD), must provide staff to the advisory stakeholder group. Beginning in fiscal 2024, the Governor must include in the annual budget bill an amount sufficient to fund one support staff position for the coordinator.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: No effect in FY 2023. GOCI general fund expenditures increase by \$92,200 in FY 2024 to hire a support staff position. Revenues are not affected.

(in dollars)	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
GF Expenditure	0	92,200	88,100	90,400	92,800
Net Effect	\$0	(\$92,200)	(\$88,100)	(\$90,400)	(\$92,800)

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

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law:

State Coordinator and Advisory Stakeholder Group

Chapter 341 of 2020 established a State Coordinator for Autism Strategy in MDOD to (1) identify and evaluate existing services for individuals with autism and their families; (2) develop a strategic plan for addressing autism-related needs by July 1, 2021; (3) identify national benchmarks and other performance measures; and (4) monitor and evaluate the implementation of the strategic plan and the success of the State in addressing autism-related needs. Chapter 341 required, by July 1, 2021, and each year thereafter, the coordinator to submit a report to the Secretary of Disabilities, the Governor, and the General Assembly on the development, implementation, and effectiveness of the strategic plan.

Chapter 341 also established the Advisory Stakeholder Group, which comprises the State Superintendent of Schools; the Secretary of Disabilities, the Secretary of Human Services, and the Secretary of Health; the State Coordinator for Autism Strategy; several members from relevant associations; and additional members appointed by the Governor. The Advisory Stakeholder Group was to be staffed by MDOD and chaired by the coordinator. The advisory group must work with the coordinator to (1) identify and evaluate existing services for individuals with autism and their families; (2) develop a strategic plan for addressing autism-related needs in the State; (3) promote, monitor, and evaluate implementation of the strategic plan; and (4) recommend and implement changes to the strategic plan. Although the coordinator position was established under Chapter 341, implementation during the 2020 interim was delayed due to lack of funding and the COVID-19 state of emergency.

Chapter 389 of 2021 moved the coordinator position from MDOD to GOCI and required, beginning in fiscal 2023, that the Governor fund the position and the Advisory Stakeholder Group. The coordinator position was filled in December 2021. The fiscal 2022 budget includes a general fund appropriation of \$53,330 to provide a salary for the coordinator position for nine months. Beginning in fiscal 2023, the Governor must include in the annual budget bill an appropriation to fund the position of the coordinator and the stakeholder advisory group.

State Fiscal Effect: The bill requires the Governor to include in the annual budget bill an appropriation sufficient to fund one support staff position for the coordinator beginning in fiscal 2024. However, the bill's language does not meet the requirements necessary to establish a mandated appropriation. Generally, any legislation mandating funding of a

program must include either an exact dollar figure or a funding formula that makes it possible to compute the level of funding required.

GOCI advises that, to hire a support staff position for the coordinator, general fund expenditures increase by \$92,192 in fiscal 2024. This estimate includes a salary, fringe benefits, one-time start-up costs, and ongoing operating expenses.

Position	1.0
Salary and Fringe Benefits	\$84,578
Operating Expenses	<u>7,614</u>
Total FY 2024 State Expenditures	\$92,192

Future year expenditures reflect a full salary with annual increases and employee turnover as well as annual increases in ongoing operating expenses.

GOCI advises that they can staff the advisory stakeholder group with existing budgeted resources.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Governor's Office; Maryland Department of Disabilities; Department of Legislative Services

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