

DATE: March 1, 2022

BILL NUMBER: SB 719

COMMITTEE: Finance

BILL TITLE: Human Services – Office of Home Energy Programs – Uniform Redetermination

DHS POSITION: Letter of Information

The Department of Human Services (the Department) respectfully submits this letter of information regarding Senate Bill (SB 719). SB 719 requires the Office of Home Energy Programs (OHEP) within the Family Investment Administration (FIA) to develop a uniform redetermination process, to assist eligible energy customers who are at least 65 years old in enrolling in energy assistance programs.

OHEP’s current redetermination process is designed to ease the administrative burden faced by disabled applicants as well as applicants over the age of 65 who previously received benefits and whose income and living arrangements are unlikely to change year over year. This bill would open participation in the redetermination process to households with varying income.

The Department is currently working on technology updates as part of OHEP’s integration with the new Eligibility & Enrollment (E&E) system. While the current redetermination process is executed at the Local Administering Agency (LAA) level, automated redetermination distribution will be a feature of the OHEP system in E&E. Once transitioned, OHEP’s redetermination process will incorporate best-practices gathered from other programs, such as SNAP, including automated notice mailings and uniform implementation of the redetermination process.

The Department estimates that implementation of this bill would require 24 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) positions (one FTE for each Local Department of Social Services), creating a fiscal impact of \$1.5 million in FY 2023 and an annual estimate of \$1.8 million thereafter. In addition, there will be a cost of mileage for the home visits which cannot be determined at this time.

The Department appreciates the opportunity to share the aforementioned information regarding SB 719 and respectfully requests this information be taken into account during the Committee’s deliberations.

