

Department of Fiscal Services  
Maryland General Assembly

FISCAL NOTE

House Bill 1467 (Delegate Valderrama)  
Ways and Means

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Citizenship Program Center

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This bill establishes a Citizenship Program Center in the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) for the purpose of encouraging and assisting eligible immigrants to become U.S. citizens. The Citizenship Program Center is required to (1) provide immigrants with information about the naturalization process through statewide and local publicity and media; (2) conduct multilingual direct mailing and visits to immigrants who have lost Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits; (3) conduct citizenship classes; (4) assist in the preparation and review of citizenship application forms; (5) provide transportation services to immigrants participating in the program; (6) recruit and train volunteers, including qualified interpreters; (7) train State employees for the administration of the citizenship programs; (8) conduct special naturalization ceremonies; and (9) provide any other necessary services to assist eligible immigrants become naturalized.

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Fiscal Summary

**State Effect:** Assuming 5,000 program participants, general fund expenditures could increase by \$3.6 million in FY 1998. Future year expenditures reflect annualization and inflation. Revenues would not be affected.

(in millions)	FY 1998	FY 1999	FY 2000	FY 2001	FY 2002
GF Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
GF Expenditures	3.6	3.7	3.8	3.9	4.0
Net Effect	(\$3.6)	(\$3.7)	(\$3.8)	(\$3.9)	(\$4.0)

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

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** Minimal impact on small businesses as discussed below.

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## Fiscal Analysis

**Background:** The Maryland Office for New Americans (MONA) in the Department of Human Resources administers federal grants providing cash assistance and health, education, and employment services to Maryland's refugee population. MONA currently administers the State's Citizenship Promotion Program which provides education services, application assistance, instruction in history and civics, and promotion of civic involvement. MONA's fiscal 1998 budget allowance totals approximately \$2.7 million.

### **State Effect:**

#### *Administrative Expenditures*

MSDE does not currently provide direct services to immigrants; thus the bill would require the department to establish a special division to administer the Citizenship Program Center. General fund administrative expenditures could increase by an estimated \$122,427 in fiscal 1998, which reflects the bill's October 1, 1997 effective date. This estimate includes the cost of hiring one Administrator, one Staff Specialist, and one Office Secretary to administer the center and to coordinate volunteer services for immigrants. It includes salaries, fringe benefits, one-time start-up costs, and ongoing operating expenses.

Salaries and Fringe Benefits	\$104,569
Equipment	13,740
Other Operating Expenses	<u>4,118</u>
<b>Total FY 1998 Administrative Expenditures</b>	<b>\$122,427</b>

Future year expenditures reflect (1) full salaries with 3.5% annual increases and 3% employee turnover; and (2) 2% annual increases in ongoing operating expenses.

#### *Program/Service Expenditures*

MONA projects that only 5,000 of the 190,000 eligible immigrants will have been helped through group application workshops in fiscal 1996. Accordingly, a large segment of Maryland's immigrant community would still need application assistance and information about the naturalization process. This fiscal note assumes that the Citizenship Program Center would provide assistance to only 5,000 immigrants each year.

#### *Citizenship/Language Classes*

Based on current programs provided by MONA, providing English language classes and workshops on citizenship preparation would cost approximately \$500 per participant, or \$2.5 million for the 5,000 program participants.

#### *Citizenship Application Forms*

Based on current programs provided by MONA, providing workshops to assist immigrants in preparing citizenship application forms would cost approximately \$40 per participant, or \$200,000 for the 5,000 program participants.

#### *Transportation Services*

Providing transportation services could cost approximately \$750 per participant, or \$750,000 in fiscal 1998. This estimate is based on 1,000 participants receiving a \$6 a day stipend for 125 days.

#### *Information Packages*

Providing information packages to 5,000 eligible immigrants and would cost approximately \$7,250. This includes the cost of (1) reproducing three brochures on the benefits of citizenship and available services for immigrants and refugees; and (2) reproducing 1,000 copies of the Directory of Maryland Ethnic Organizations and Resources. The brochures and directory are currently prepared and distributed by MONA.

#### *Assistance to Former SSI Recipients*

It is projected that around 7,000 immigrants would lose SSI benefits due to changes in federal eligibility requirements. This bill would require MSDE to conduct multilingual direct mailings and visits to such individuals in order to inform them about the naturalization process and citizenship programs. Notification costs to SSI recipients could total around \$3,150 in fiscal 1998.

#### *Staff Training*

Providing training sessions for State employees could cost approximately \$12,500 annually, which is based on 50 employees being served at a cost of \$250.

*Total Expenditures*

General fund expenditures could increase by approximately \$3.6 million in fiscal 1998 and \$4.0 million by fiscal 2002. Future year expenditures reflect (1) analyzation of administrative expenses; and (2) 2% annual increases in program expenditures.

Type of Expenditures	FY 1998 Costs
Administrative Expenses	\$122,400
Information Packages	\$7,250
Information Packages to Former SSI Recipients	\$3,150
Citizenship/Language Classes	\$2,500,000
Citizenship Application Forms	\$200,000
Transportation Services	\$750,000
Staff Training	\$12,500
Total Expenditures	\$3,595,300

**Small Business Effect:** Since most of the Citizenship Program Center's services would be contracted out to private providers, small businesses providing language and citizenship promotion programs could benefit. However, based on the State's current citizenship program administered by MONA, the majority of service contracts have been awarded to governmental agencies, such as local school systems and social services departments.

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**Information Source(s):** Department of Fiscal Services, Department of Human Resources, Maryland State Department of Education

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