

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
1999 Session

FISCAL NOTE

House Bill 1140 (Delegate Franchot)

Judiciary

Child Abuse and Neglect Center of Excellence Technology Initiative

This bill establishes a Child Abuse and Neglect Center of Excellence Technology Initiative in the Department of Human Resources (DHR) to provide for interdisciplinary consultation to improve the assessment and treatment of abused and neglected children and children in need of assistance (CINA). The center consists of at least 17 members. DHR must provide the center with funding from the State budget and administrative support. In particular, DHR must provide funding to establish by fiscal 2001 a secure Intranet for case consultation and for dissemination of training materials, policies, and protocols. The center must submit an annual report on its activities and recommendations to the Governor and General Assembly by October 1 of each year.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: General fund expenditures could increase by up to \$130,200 beginning in either FY 2000 or 2001, depending on the intent of the bill. Future year expenditures would reflect one-time expenditures, annualization, and inflation. Revenues would not be affected.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: Potential meaningful.

Fiscal Analysis

Bill Summary: The bill provides that access to the Intranet is restricted to local departments

of social services, members of panels established by the center, officers of the court, and other persons and agencies involved with the center. It specifies that center members are entitled to reimbursement for travel expenses and compensation, as the DHR budget allows, for meetings, testimony, and case consultation for time spent in excess of 1.5 days per month.

State Expenditures: DHR advises that general fund expenditures could increase by an estimated \$130,195 in fiscal 2000, which accounts for the bill's October 1, 1999 effective date. This estimate reflects the cost of: (1) 0.5 computer network specialist to set up and maintain the Intranet system; (2) computer equipment for a teleconferencing system with one central communication site and four regional sites at \$7,000 per site; and (3) five dedicated phone lines for the teleconferencing system at \$1,500 per month per site. It includes salaries, fringe benefits, one-time start-up costs, and ongoing operating expenses.

Salaries and Fringe Benefits	\$14,885
Computer/Teleconferencing Equipment	35,000
Dedicated Phone Lines	67,500
Other Operating Expenses	<u>12,810</u>
Total DHR Estimate	\$130,195

The Department of Legislative Services (DLS) advises, however, that expenditures could increase by considerably less than \$130,195 in fiscal 2000 or 2001, depending on the interpretation of the bill's Intranet requirement and the extent to which existing computer and teleconferencing equipment is available. An Intranet system is a computer network that uses Internet technology and is internal to an organization. It does not necessarily include teleconferencing capacity. If the bill's intent is for DHR to establish a new Intranet system to be used for teleconferences, then expenditures could increase by \$130,195. If the bill's intent does not include establishment of new teleconferencing capacity, then expenditures would increase by much less than \$130,195. The \$35,000 for computer equipment and \$67,500 for dedicated phone lines could be substantially lower if implementation assumes an Intranet system without teleconferencing capability or assumes that the center's primary objective is to inventory existing teleconferencing equipment.

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

Small Business Effect: Assuming that some or all of the teleconferencing and computer equipment purchased to establish a secure Intranet may come from small businesses, this bill would yield some meaningful business opportunities.

Information Source(s): Department of Human Resources, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (Community and Public Health Administration), Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 18, 1999

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