

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
1999 Session

FISCAL NOTE

House Bill 398 (Delegate Zirkin. *et al.*)

Ways and Means

Public Libraries - Technology Centers - Establishment

This bill establishes a network of technology centers under the Division of Library Development and Services to focus on educational programs and exhibits. The technology centers must include Internet access and training, virtual reality technology, satellite technology, and other technological programs and exhibits. The Governor is required to include funds in the State budget to cover the total cost of developing, implementing, and maintaining the centers beginning in fiscal 2000.

This bill takes effect June 1, 1999.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Indeterminate significant increase in State expenditures. The actual impact depends upon the type and the number of technology centers that are developed. Revenues would not be affected.

Local Effect: None. The State is required to fully fund the technology centers.

Small Business Effect: None.

Fiscal Analysis

State Effect: Establishing technology centers across the State could cost approximately \$10 million in the first year (\$5.5 million in equipment cost and \$4.5 million in instructional cost). This estimate assumes the establishment of 37 technology centers across the State: four centers per jurisdiction in Baltimore City and Baltimore, Montgomery, and Prince George's counties; two centers in Anne Arundel County; and one center in each of the remaining 19

counties. Equipment costs for each technology center could total \$150,000 and instructional costs could total \$117,000. Each center would be equipped with 25 computer work stations at a cost of \$5,000 each and two instructors. Depending upon the jurisdiction, additional costs for computer wiring, technology upgrades, and additional facility space may be required. These costs cannot be determined at this time.

This estimate is based on expenditures at the Pratt Center for Technology Training in Baltimore. The Pratt Center for Technology Training is part of the Enoch Pratt Free Library in Baltimore City and provides computer literacy programs and Internet access to the public. The Pratt Center is funded jointly by the city and grants from the Gates Library Foundation, the Annie Casey Foundation, and MCI WorldCom. The initial start-up cost at the Pratt Center totaled \$535,000 and annual operating costs total \$200,000. The Pratt Center operates one main computer center with 25 personal computers and four satellite branches with a total of 36 personal computers. The start-up cost also included \$200,000 for installation of a fiber optic system. Staffing includes one full-time instructor at a cost of \$45,500 and three part-time instructors at around \$55,000. The center also relies heavily on volunteers to provide services.

Information Source(s): Maryland State Department of Education, Enoch Pratt Free Library, Department of Legislative Services

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