

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2008 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

Senate Bill 773

(Senators Pugh and McFadden)

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Ways and Means

State Department of Education - Adult Education and Family Literacy Services

This bill requires the Maryland State Department of Education to annually compile a list by county of adult education and literacy services offered to the public. MSDE must distribute the list to the local boards of education and superintendents of schools and must post the list on its public web site.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: MSDE could comply with the bill's requirements within existing budgeted resources.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: MSDE must distribute competitive grants for adult education and literacy services in accordance with the State plan for adult education and family literacy. The grants are based on need and performance. There is no specific requirement that a list of adult education service providers be distributed or posted on the Internet.

Background: In response to ongoing legislative concerns about the waiting lists for adult education and literacy services, a Superintendent's Panel on Excellence in Adult Education was established in 2004 and released a final report, *Stepping Up to the Future*, in December 2005. The panel found that there are approximately one million

Marylanders who need adult education services and that the State's capacity to serve the needs of these individuals was insufficient. Furthermore, the panel found that the State's financial support for adult education programs is considerably lower than contributions made by other states. The panel recommended using a formula to determine annual State appropriations for adult education.

MSDE currently publishes a list of adult education and family literacy providers on the web site for its Adult Literacy Resource Center. The list can be found at http://www.umbc.edu/alrc/Literacy_Awareness/LWagenci.html, and MSDE advises that the list is updated regularly. The list indicates that the local school systems provide adult education programs in most counties, but there are also a number of counties where local community colleges provide the services. In addition, some jurisdictions use community groups to provide the educational programs, and Howard County provides some adult education services through its public library system. The proposed fiscal 2009 State budget includes \$6.9 million in State general funds and \$7.5 million in federal funds for adult education programs. Local governments also provide support for adult education and literacy services.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland State Department of Education, Department of Legislative Services

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