

Department of Legislative Services
 Maryland General Assembly
 2012 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 958 (Delegates Rosenberg and Haynes)
 Appropriations

Family Investment Program - Couples Advancing Together Pilot Program

This bill requires the Department of Human Resources (DHR) to establish a “Couples Advancing Together” Pilot Program in at least three counties. The program’s purpose is to assist couples that qualify for the family investment program (FIP) to move toward stable relationships and family friendly employment, for one or both partners, in order to improve their economic circumstances and provide support for lasting family units.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2012, and terminates June 30, 2014.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: General and federal fund expenditures increase by \$153,000 in FY 2013 and by \$204,000 in FY 2014 to implement the pilot program. No effect on revenues.

(in dollars)	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
GF Expenditure	61,200	81,600	0	0	0
FF Expenditure	91,800	122,400	0	0	0
Net Effect	(\$153,000)	(\$204,000)	\$0	\$0	\$0

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

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: The pilot program must be established in cooperation with directors of local departments of social services and in consultation with the Commission on Responsible Fatherhood. An individual must be an adult under the age of 36 to participate. The pilot program must include:

- implementation of policies and procedures in the local departments of social services that encourage increased participation of fathers at the beginning of the process for determining the eligibility of a family or custodial parent for benefits, including temporary cash assistance, unless the department believes the father has a history of domestic violence; and
- development of a local department referral process or integrated partnerships with other local or State agencies through which couples may jointly access programs and services that target economic stability, healthy relationships, and parenting.

The program must also include a six-week participation period during which couples receive education on, and are provided with the tools needed for, achieving success at home, in the workplace, and in society. With the assistance of subject matter experts, couples must (1) develop a written family focused career plan; (2) learn competitive skills for the job market; and (3) attend couples-focused group sessions that teach skills in employment and financial literacy, aid couples in achieving economic stability, and build healthy relationships.

The Secretary of Human Resources must report annually to the Senate Finance Committee and the House Appropriations Committee on the effectiveness of the program, including (1) the number of couples participating in the program; (2) the number of couples successfully completing the program; and (3) factors that affect program participation.

Current Law: FIP within local departments of social services has the primary purpose of supporting family efforts to achieve and maintain self-sufficiency through services and financial aid geared to individual family needs. FIP for a recipient must include supportive services activities, appropriate referrals to family planning counseling and services, and temporary cash assistance, as a last resort. A recipient must also agree to cooperate with child support enforcement efforts and to comply with reasonable requests for cooperation by case management workers in seeking and using available programs and community and family resources. The agreement must also specify the necessary support services that the local department will assist in providing and specify the work activities in which the recipient will participate.

State Fiscal Effect: General and federal fund expenditures increase by \$153,000 in fiscal 2013, which accounts for a 90-day start-up delay, and by \$204,000 in fiscal 2014 to implement the pilot program. The assumptions used in calculating the estimate are stated below:

- a total of 150 couples each year will participate in the pilot program;
- contractual services to provide the required education, training, and materials will be \$1,000 per couple;
- costs associated with providing childcare will be necessary for 30% of the couples to allow them to participate in the program. Costs to provide child care for 45 couples over a six-week period are estimated at \$54,000; and
- program costs will be supported with general and federal funds, split 40%/60%.

Legislative Services notes that the above expenditures are a preliminary estimate only, as actual expenditures will depend on how the pilot program is implemented and the number of couples who participate. The implementation of policies and procedures to encourage increased paternal participation and the development of a local department referral process, as required under the bill's provisions, can be handled with existing resources. DHR can also use existing resources to complete the required reports.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Department of Human Resources; Kent, Montgomery, Washington, and Worcester counties; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 2, 2012
mc/mwc

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