

**Department of Legislative Services**  
Maryland General Assembly  
2016 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**  
**First Reader**

House Bill 1500  
Appropriations

(Delegate Carter)

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**Human Resources - Homeless Shelters - Safety and Security Measures**

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This bill requires the Interagency Council on Homelessness to study issues relating to the safety and security of individuals who stay in homeless shelters and recommend to the Department of Human Resources (DHR) measures that should be adopted by providers of homeless shelters. DHR must include in regulations measures for homeless shelters to adopt, including any recommendations made by the council, in order to provide individuals with safety and security while staying in a shelter.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** The bill's requirements can be handled with existing budgeted resources.

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** While the bill itself has no impact on small businesses, homeless shelter providers could be affected by the regulations adopted by DHR as a result of the bill.

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**Analysis**

**Current Law/Background:** The Governor's Interagency Council on Homelessness was created pursuant to executive order in 2002. The council coordinated State policy regarding the homeless and devised strategies by which State agencies could collaborate to help those without shelter and prevent homelessness in Maryland. Chapter 341 of 2014 created the Interagency Council on Homelessness, which must:

- coordinate State policy and working relationships among State, local, and nonprofit agencies concerning efforts to remedy and prevent homelessness;
- coordinate data sharing between local Continuums of Care (regional or local planning bodies that coordinate housing and services funding for homeless families and individuals);
- coordinate outreach to each Continuum of Care to develop joint strategies that impact State and federal funding efforts to remedy and prevent homelessness;
- determine comprehensive and effective collaborative strategies and best practices for remediation and prevention of homelessness in the State, in particular addressing the differing needs of the State's geographic areas;
- review and analyze the need for and availability of affordable and accessible housing resources to address the needs of homeless individuals throughout the State;
- recommend changes necessary to alleviate or prevent homelessness, including making recommendations to the General Assembly and appropriate State agencies and organizations regarding effective policies, effective distribution of resources, and access to available services and programs;
- identify supportive services for special populations, including veterans, youth, families, and individuals with behavioral health problems;
- disseminate information and educate the public about the prevalence and causes of and responses to homelessness;
- solicit input from the advocacy community, the business community, the faith community, and consumers regarding policy and program development; and
- determine best practices and models for providing emergency shelter and shelter diversion, including ensuring the health, safety, and security of shelter residents; providing client-centered and trauma-informed support services; and ensuring equal access to protected classes under applicable federal, State, and local civil rights laws.

DHR provides staff assistance to the council and is required to adopt regulations to govern the development, implementation, and evaluation of policies and programs to make homelessness rare and, if it occurs, of brief duration.

## **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** This bill is identical to HB 852 of 2015, as introduced. HB 852 was subsequently amended and enacted as Chapter 460 of 2015.

**Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Department of Human Resources, Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - March 4, 2016  
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