

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2016 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 1501
Appropriations

(Delegate Stein)

Governor's Office for Children - Family Navigators Program

This bill establishes a Family Navigators Program in the Governor's Office for Children (GOC), which local management boards (LMBs) must oversee and support. In each fiscal year, the Governor must include in the annual budget an appropriation for the program at a level not less than the level of funding provided for the same purposes in fiscal 2016.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: General fund expenditures may increase by up to \$1.7 million annually beginning in FY 2018 to meet the bill's mandated appropriation, as discussed below. Revenues are not affected. **This bill establishes a mandated appropriation beginning in FY 2018.**

Local Effect: The bill ensures that a minimum level of funding for the specified purpose of family navigator services is provided to LMBs.

Small Business Effect: None. While the bill ensures that a minimum level of funding for the specified purpose of family navigator services is provided to LMBs, four of which are nonprofit entities, they are not considered small businesses.

Analysis

Bill Summary: A “family navigator” is a parent or other caregiver of a child or youth with mental or behavioral health needs or developmental disabilities who is familiar with State and local resources and has received training to support, educate, and assist other parents and caregivers under the program. A family navigator must support, educate, and assist a parent or caregiver in (1) understanding and addressing the child’s or youth’s mental or behavioral health needs or developmental disabilities; (2) identifying community resources; and (3) obtaining needed services.

The program’s purposes are to support parents and other caregivers of children or youth with mental or behavioral health needs or developmental disabilities and to address the following priorities: (1) reducing the impact of parental incarceration on children, families, and communities; (2) preventing youth between the ages of 16 and 24 from becoming disconnected youth; and (3) preventing youth homelessness.

Current Law/Background: Each county must establish and maintain an LMB, which plans, coordinates, implements, and manages local interagency service delivery systems for children, youth, and families. A county may designate as an LMB a quasi-public nonprofit corporation that is not an instrumentality of the county government (nonprofit entity) or a public agency that is an instrumentality of the county government. Only four of the State’s LMBs are nonprofit entities: Baltimore City and Allegany, Caroline, and Montgomery counties. Funding for LMBs generally comes from State agencies, the Children’s Cabinet Interagency Fund, local funds, and a combination of other sources, including federal funds and private grants. Although LMBs receive State funding, they have significant latitude in determining the types of programs to support within their communities. The Governor’s proposed fiscal 2017 budget contains base funding of \$16.1 million for LMBs. Although there is no centralized program, many LMBs offer family navigator services.

Disconnected youth are individuals between the ages of 16 and 24 who are neither working nor in school. According to GOC, there are approximately 94,000 disconnected youth in the State.

State Expenditures: Although funding is not specifically provided in the State budget for the express purpose of supporting family navigator services, for purposes of this estimate, it is assumed that the Governor is required to include an appropriation that reflects the level of spending by LMBs on such services in fiscal 2016. GOC advises that in fiscal 2016, 19 jurisdictions provided family navigator services, with estimated expenditures of \$1,665,915. Accordingly, general fund expenditures may increase by up to \$1,665,915 annually beginning in fiscal 2018 in order to ensure that at least that amount is provided in the annual budget for the program. However, because LMBs have typically

received State funding in the annual budget, some of which has been used by LMBs for family navigator programs, overall State funding for LMBs does not necessarily increase; the Governor may choose to meet the bill's mandated appropriation by specifically designating \$1.7 million for the program while not increasing the overall amount of funding provided to LMBs.

Under the bill, GOC is responsible for ensuring that this funding, which is provided as grants to LMBs, is used for family navigator services. The Department of Legislative Services notes that the bill does not require LMBs that do not currently support family navigator services to develop or implement such a program; rather, the bill merely requires funding for this purpose to be included in the collective budget for distribution to LMBs that elect to offer such services.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Charles, Frederick, and Montgomery counties; Governor's Office for Children; Department of Budget and Management; Department of Disabilities; Department of Health and Mental Hygiene; Department of Legislative Services

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