

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2016 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Third Reader - Revised

House Bill 593
Appropriations

(Delegate M. Washington, *et al.*)

Finance

Human Services - Interagency Council on Homelessness - Membership

This bill alters the composition of the Interagency Council on Homelessness by (1) increasing, from six to nine, the number of representatives from diverse geographical regions of the State who are engaged in homeless advocacy with a focus on housing, employment, and access to health care and (2) adding the Secretary of Disabilities to the council. The bill also repeals existing provisions regarding the election and qualifications of the council's chair; instead, the Governor must designate as chair a member who is a secretary or a secretary's designee with decision making authority on issues that relate to the work of the council. The bill expresses the intent of the General Assembly that any designee of a department secretary or the State Superintendent have decision making authority on issues that relate to the council's work.

The bill takes effect June 1, 2016.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Any expense reimbursements for the additional council members can be handled with existing resources.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

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.

The Department of Human Resources 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.

In addition to representatives from numerous State and local entities, the council includes advocates for the homeless and a community representative who has personally experienced homelessness. The council elects its own chair, who serves a two-year term.

Members of the council may not receive compensation but are entitled to reimbursement for expenses under the standard State travel regulations, as provided in the State budget.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: SB 22 (Senator Benson) - Finance.

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

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 8, 2016
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