

Department of Legislative Services
 Maryland General Assembly
 2017 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Enrolled - Revised

Senate Bill 625

(Senator Benson, *et al.*)

Finance and Education, Health, and
 Environmental Affairs

Ways and Means and Appropriations

**Public Schools and Shelters - Homeless Girls and Women - Feminine Hygiene
 Products**

This bill requires the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) to make available, as specified, a supply of feminine hygiene products sufficient to meet the needs of (1) female residents in homeless shelters and (2) qualifying female students in schools who are determined to be homeless children or youth. The bill also adds a contingency provision regarding legislation to transfer functions of the Bureau of Homeless Services, currently within the Department of Human Resources (DHR), to DHCD.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2017.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: General fund expenditures increase by as much as \$268,200 annually beginning in FY 2018 for DHCD to supply the required feminine hygiene products. Revenues are not affected.

(in dollars)	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
GF Expenditure	268,200	268,200	268,200	268,200	268,200
Net Effect	(\$268,200)	(\$268,200)	(\$268,200)	(\$268,200)	(\$268,200)

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

Local Effect: Local school system revenues and expenditures may increase to the extent DHCD awards grants to local boards of education for the purchase of feminine hygiene products rather than providing such products directly.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: The feminine hygiene products must be made available for free to service providers, local administering agencies for service providers, and female residents in shelters. A “local administering agency” is the agency designated by DHCD or a local government to manage the programs for transitional housing services, including the Homeless Women – Crisis Shelter Home Program, and to provide a service directly or by contract with a service provider. A “service provider” is a public or private nonprofit entity that contracts with DHCD or a local administering agency to provide shelter services for homeless individuals.

DHCD must also make available to local boards of education a free supply of feminine hygiene products sufficient to meet the needs during the normal school year of female students who are determined to be homeless children or youth under the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. Each local board of education, through school nurses, must make the products available to qualifying female students in schools.

The bill also establishes that if House Bill 134 of 2017, which transfers the functions, powers, and duties of the Bureau of Homeless Services, as well as associated employees, from DHR to DHCD takes effect, DHCD is responsible for providing the feminine hygiene products as specified by the bill. House Bill 134 was signed by the Governor as Chapter 105 and takes effect July 1, 2017. Accordingly, this fiscal and policy note reflects that action.

Current Law/Background: DHR must adopt regulations to govern the development, implementation, and evaluation of policies and programs to make homelessness rare and, if it occurs, of brief duration. DHR’s Bureau of Homeless Services oversees efforts to reduce homelessness in the State. DHR does not provide direct housing placement or emergency support services specifically to homeless individuals; instead, it coordinates with and awards grant funding to local administering agencies and service providers to support various programs. For example, the Emergency and Transitional Housing and Services Program provides funds for shelter operations and support services. The Homeless Women – Crisis Shelter Home Program supports facilities that provide temporary shelter, meals, information and referral services, and counseling to homeless women and their children.

Pursuant to the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, homeless children and youth are individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, and include those who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reasons. School systems across the State identified more than 14,691 homeless students in their schools during the 2011-2012 school year, up from approximately 13,000 only two years earlier.

State Expenditures: The fiscal 2018 budget includes \$2.8 million in grant funding for emergency transition housing services and \$1.2 million for the Homeless Women – Crisis Shelter Home Program. In order to avoid diverting these funds from shelter operations to meet the bill’s requirements, it is assumed that general fund expenditures increase by *as much as* \$268,237 annually to provide feminine hygiene products. This estimate is based on available information regarding the number of female homeless shelter residents, the average length of stay in shelters, and the number of qualifying female students in schools, as well as the estimated cost of procuring feminine hygiene products. To the extent that a portion of female residents in shelters do not require such products (*e.g.*, women who are postmenopausal or pregnant), estimated costs decrease. DHCD also notes that a number of shelters and local school districts may already be providing feminine hygiene products to homeless individuals that are acquired through other means, such as donations, which would further decrease the estimated cost.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: Although not designated as a cross file, HB 1067 (Delegate A. Miller, *et al.* – Appropriations) is identical.

Information Source(s): Montgomery County; Department of Human Resources; Department of Housing and Community Development; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 28, 2017
mm/jc Third Reader - March 15, 2017
Revised - Amendment(s) - March 15, 2017
Revised - Clarification - March 15, 2017
Enrolled - May 9, 2017
Revised - Amendment(s) - May 9, 2017
Revised - Updated Information - May 9, 2017

Analysis by: Jennifer K. Botts

Direct Inquiries to:
(410) 946-5510
(301) 970-5510