

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2019 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 2 (Delegate Glenn)
Environment and Transportation

**Task Force to Improve Baltimore City Homeless Transitions From Low-Barrier
Shelters to Permanent Housing**

This bill establishes the Task Force to Improve Baltimore City Homeless Transitions from Low-Barrier Shelters to Permanent Housing. The Baltimore City Mayor's Office must provide staff for the task force. The task force must report its findings and recommendations to the Mayor of Baltimore City, the Baltimore City Council, the Governor, and the Maryland General Assembly by December 31, 2019. **The bill takes effect June 1, 2019, and terminates June 30, 2020.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Any expense reimbursements for task force members are assumed to be minimal and absorbable within existing budgeted resources. Revenues are not affected.

Local Effect: Any expense reimbursements for task force members and staffing costs for Baltimore City are assumed to be minimal and absorbable within existing local resources. Revenues are not affected.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: The task force must:

- identify all “low-barrier shelters” (shelters that generally do not drug-test or screen homeless individuals before providing shelter) funded by or located in Baltimore City;

- gather the data necessary to estimate the average number of days a homeless individual spends in low-barrier shelters;
- examine low-barrier shelters funded by or located in Baltimore City to identify their intake policies and practices, resident services, on-site security measures, and discharge policies and practices;
- identify opportunities for homeless advocates to provide services in low-barrier shelters in order to lower the average length of stay of low-barrier shelter residents and facilitate the transition to permanent housing; and
- make recommendations for requirements that advocacy organizations seeking to serve in low-barrier shelters must meet before providing volunteer services.

A member of the task force may not receive compensation but is entitled to reimbursement for expenses under the standard State travel regulations, as provided in the State budget.

Current Law/Background: The Baltimore City Office of Homeless Services must publish an annual report on the number of homeless people desiring overnight shelter, in addition to current shelter availability and adequacy. As of January 2017, there were an estimated 2,669 homeless people in Baltimore City. As of January 2019, there were 85 homeless shelters within the city.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: HB 1797 of 2018 was referred to the House Rules and Executive Nominations Committee, but no further action was taken.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Baltimore City; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 5, 2019
an/mcr

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