

Department of Legislative Services
 Maryland General Assembly
 2022 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 1213 (Delegates Metzgar and McComas)
 Health and Government Operations

Human Services - Commission on Fatherhood (Fatherhood Protection Act)

This emergency bill establishes the Commission and Fatherhood in the Department of Human Services (DHS). The Secretary of Human Services must appoint an executive director of the commission who must be a merit employee of DHS. The commission must annually elect a chair and vice chair. Members may not receive compensation but are entitled to reimbursement for expenses under standard State travel regulations as provided in the State budget. The commission may not adopt regulations. By December 1 each year, the commission must submit a report on its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: General fund expenditures increase by \$134,700 in FY 2023 to hire an executive director for the commission. Future years reflect elimination of one-time costs and ongoing operating expenses. Revenues are not affected.

(in dollars)	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
GF Expenditure	134,700	124,400	127,800	131,200	134,600
Net Effect	(\$134,700)	(\$124,400)	(\$127,800)	(\$131,200)	(\$134,600)

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

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: The commission consists of 25 members appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate. Of the 25 members, 12 must be appointed from among applicants who have been nominated and recommended for appointment by organizations located in the State whose missions include a focus on fatherhood or supporting fathers and 13 must be appointed from among members of the public applying on their own behalf. In selecting members of the public, the Governor must (1) give priority to applicants who have advocated, volunteered, or otherwise worked to promote fathers and fatherhood for at least 18 months and (2) to the extent practicable, nominate members whose residencies reflect the full geographic diversity of the State. The Secretary of Human Services and the Secretary of Health (or their designees) may participate as *ex officio* nonvoting members.

The term of a member is four years. A member may not serve for more than two consecutive terms. At the end of a term, a member continues to serve until a successor is appointed and qualifies. A member who is appointed after a term has begun must serve for the remainder of the term or until a successor is appointed and qualifies.

The commission must meet at least six times each year and must:

- study and review the status of fatherhood in the State;
- strengthen home life by directing attention to critical problems confronting men as husbands and fathers;
- recommend methods of overcoming attitudes denigrating fatherhood;
- recommend alternatives to family law outcomes that harm the ability of men to offer loving supportive homes for their children;
- highlight outstanding examples of fathers and their accomplishments and contributions to the State; and
- inform the Executive and Legislative branches on current issues that impact fathers, including by offering testimony on proposed regulations and legislation.

The commission may also develop surveys and appoint advisory committees in fields including education, social services, labor and employment, law enforcement, health and safety, legal rights, family relations, human relations, and volunteer services.

Current Law:

National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse

The [National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse](#) within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Family Assistance promotes and encourages the

appropriate involvement of fathers in their children’s lives to strengthen fathers and families. The clearinghouse provides access to webinars, research, and other resources specifically for fathers.

Montgomery County Fatherhood Initiative

The Housing Opportunities Commission of Montgomery County (HOC) has a [Fatherhood Initiative](#) that seeks to strengthen families by offering curriculum developed by the [National Fatherhood Initiative](#) (a nonprofit organization) that teaches responsible parenting, healthy relationship education, employment stability and mobility, and provides case management. The program is open to any father that has children (1) living within HOC housing; (2) participating in HOC housing programs; or (3) on the waitlist for HOC housing, regardless of age.

State Expenditures: Under the bill, the Secretary of Human Services must appoint an executive director of the commission. Therefore, DHS general fund expenditures increase by \$134,710 in fiscal 2023. This estimate reflects the cost of hiring one executive director to lead the Commission on Fatherhood. The estimate assumes that the bill takes effect on April 1, 2022 (given the bill’s emergency status), and that the executive director begins on July 1, 2022. It includes a salary, fringe benefits, one-time start-up costs, and ongoing operating expenses, including travel.

Position	1.0
Salary and Fringe Benefits	\$127,102
Operating Expenses	<u>7,608</u>
Total FY 2023 Personnel Expenditures	\$134,710

This estimate does not reflect any costs for expense or travel reimbursement of the executive director or the 25 members of the commission for a minimum of six meetings annually or any potential commission activities.

Future year expenditures reflect a full salary with annual increases and employee turnover and annual increases in ongoing operating expenses.

Additional Comments: [Ohio](#) and [Hawaii](#) each have a commission on fatherhood.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: HB 1156 of 2020, a similar bill, received a hearing in the House Health and Government Operations Committee, but no further action was taken. Its cross file, SB 807 of 2020, received hearing in the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee, but no further action was taken.

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Department of Human Services; Department of Legislative Services

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