

Department of Legislative Services
 Maryland General Assembly
 2024 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Third Reader - Revised

Senate Bill 439

(Senator Elfreth, *et al.*)

Judicial Proceedings and Budget and Taxation

Judiciary

Family Law - Victims of Domestic Violence Program - Certification and Grant Fund

This bill establishes the Victims of Domestic Violence Program Grant Fund, a special fund administered by the Governor’s Office of Crime Prevention and Policy (GOCPP), formerly the Governor’s Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services, to provide grants to public or private nonprofit comprehensive domestic violence programs certified by the federally recognized State domestic violence coalition. The Governor may include in the annual budget bill an appropriation of \$5.0 million for the fund. The bill further requires domestic violence programs, as established under existing statute, to be certified by the federally recognized State domestic violence coalition as a comprehensive domestic violence program.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: General fund expenditures increase by \$2.9 million annually beginning in FY 2025, under the assumptions discussed below. Special fund revenues increase by \$5.0 million annually beginning in FY 2025, reflecting receipt of existing funding assumed to be available for the Victims of Domestic Violence Program Grant Fund (and not shown below) and additional funding assumed to be provided; special fund expenditures increase correspondingly for grant awards.

(\$ in millions)	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029
SF Revenue	\$5.0	\$5.0	\$5.0	\$5.0	\$5.0
GF Expenditure	\$2.9	\$2.9	\$2.9	\$2.9	\$2.9
SF Expenditure	\$5.0	\$5.0	\$5.0	\$5.0	\$5.0
Net Effect	(\$2.9)	(\$2.9)	(\$2.9)	(\$2.9)	(\$2.9)

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

Local Effect: The bill does not materially affect local government operations or finances.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: The fund consists of money appropriated in the State budget to the fund, any interest earnings of the fund, and any other money from any other source accepted for the benefit of the fund. Grants from the fund may be used by programs certified by the federally recognized State domestic violence coalition for program operations, including establishing additional shelters. GOCPP must establish procedures for awarding grant funding. The Executive Director of GOCPP must attempt to secure funding for the fund, including in-kind contributions from the federal government, local governments, and private sources.

Current Law: Statute requires the establishment of a program within GOCPP to help victims of domestic violence and their children. Specifically, the program's purpose is to provide, for victims of domestic violence and their children in each region of the State, temporary shelter or help in obtaining shelter, counseling, information, referral, and rehabilitation. GOCPP is responsible for, among other tasks, supervising the program, setting standards of care and admission policies, and monitoring the operation of the program and annually evaluating its effectiveness.

State Fiscal Effect: As part of the Maryland Domestic Violence (DOMV) program, as established within GOCPP, State funds are provided to comprehensive domestic violence programs, including private and nonprofit organizations. The fiscal 2025 budget as introduced includes \$2.1 million in general funds for the DOMV program, similar to amounts provided in recent years. Given the similarities between the existing DOMV program and the purposes of the special grant fund created by the bill, for purposes of this analysis, it is assumed that (1) though discretionary, general funds consistent with the *authorized* appropriation of \$5.0 million are provided each year to the newly created special fund beginning in fiscal 2025; (2) a portion of the discretionary funding is made available from general funds that would have otherwise been provided *directly* to the DOMV program and are instead distributed via the special fund established by the bill (and continue to be used to provide grants to comprehensive domestic violence programs); and (3) funding for the DOMV program would have continued in the same amount in the absence of the bill. Accordingly, general fund expenditures *increase* by \$2.9 million annually beginning in fiscal 2025, reflecting the difference in general funds historically provided to the DOMV program and those assumed to be provided under the bill to the special fund. Special fund revenues increase by \$5.0 million annually, reflecting the receipt of the general funds assumed to be provided/appropriated to the fund each year; special fund expenditures correspondingly increase as the fund is used to provide grants. Despite the bill's effective date of October 1, 2024, this analysis assumes discretionary funding of the full authorized amount (\$5.0 million) is provided in fiscal 2025 and distributed via the special fund established in the bill.

Because this analysis assumes that grant funding currently managed under the DOMV program is instead administered via the new special fund, it is also expected that GOCPP can administer the fund using existing resources. Although higher awards are possible if the funding assumed in this analysis is provided, the bill does not appear to materially expand the pool of potential grantees (comprehensive domestic violence programs).

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

Designated Cross File: HB 656 (Delegate Ivey) - Judiciary.

Information Source(s): Governor's Office of Crime Prevention and Policy; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 15, 2024
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