

HOUSE BILL 202

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(PRE-FILED)

By: **Delegate Vogel**

Requested: August 13, 2025

Introduced and read first time: January 14, 2026

Assigned to: Health

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Public Health – Social Isolation and Loneliness Pilot Grant Program –**
3 **Establishment**

4 FOR the purpose of establishing the Social Isolation and Loneliness Pilot Grant Program
5 in the Maryland Department of Health to provide grants for the operating costs
6 associated with the maintenance or expansion of programs that target vulnerable
7 populations with socioemotional support addressing social isolation and loneliness;
8 and generally relating to the Social Isolation and Loneliness Pilot Grant Program.

9 BY adding to

10 Article – Health – General
11 Section 13–5901 and 13–5902 to be under the new subtitle “Subtitle 59. Social
12 Isolation and Loneliness Pilot Grant Program”
13 Annotated Code of Maryland
14 (2023 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

15 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
16 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

17 **Article – Health – General**

18 **SUBTITLE 59. SOCIAL ISOLATION AND LONELINESS PILOT GRANT PROGRAM.**

19 **13–5901.**

20 **(A) IN THIS SUBTITLE THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE MEANINGS**
21 **INDICATED.**

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



(B) "ELIGIBLE ENTITY" MEANS AN ENTITY OR ORGANIZATION THAT SERVES PATIENTS, CLIENTS, OR PROGRAMMING PARTICIPANTS VULNERABLE TO THE ADVERSE HEALTH EFFECTS OF SOCIAL ISOLATION AND LONELINESS, AS DETERMINED BY THE DEPARTMENT.

(C) "PROGRAM" MEANS THE SOCIAL ISOLATION AND LONELINESS PILOT GRANT PROGRAM.

13-5902.

(A) (1) THERE IS A SOCIAL ISOLATION AND LONELINESS PILOT GRANT PROGRAM IN THE DEPARTMENT.

(2) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL ADMINISTER THE PROGRAM.

(B) THE PURPOSES OF THE PROGRAM ARE TO:

(1) EXAMINE THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL ISOLATION AND LONELINESS ON VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES;

(2) ENCOURAGE PROGRAMMING TO ALLEVIATE THE ADVERSE MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH EFFECTS CAUSED BY SOCIAL ISOLATION AND LONELINESS;

(3) TARGET POPULATIONS IN THE STATE THAT ARE AT INCREASED RISK FOR SOCIAL ISOLATION AND LONELINESS; AND

(4) INFORM FUTURE POLICY AND PROGRAMMING TO REDUCE SOCIAL ISOLATION AND LONELINESS.

(C) (1) SUBJECT TO PARAGRAPHS (2) AND (3) OF THIS SUBSECTION, THE PROGRAM SHALL AWARD A GRANT TO FIVE ELIGIBLE ENTITIES FOR THE OPERATING COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE MAINTENANCE OR EXPANSION OF A PROGRAM THAT TARGETS VULNERABLE POPULATIONS WITH SOCIOEMOTIONAL SUPPORT ADDRESSING SOCIAL ISOLATION AND LONELINESS, INCLUDING VENUE FEES, PERSONNEL COSTS, AND LICENSING FEES.

(2) THE PROGRAM, IN COLLABORATION WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF AGING, THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE FOR CHILDREN, AND THE DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, SHALL PRIORITIZE YOUTH, SENIOR, AND RURAL POPULATIONS WHEN AWARDING GRANTS TO ELIGIBLE ENTITIES.

(3) A GRANT AWARDED BY THE PROGRAM MAY NOT EXCEED \$20,000.

1 **(D) AN ELIGIBLE ENTITY THAT RECEIVES A GRANT UNDER THIS SECTION**
2 **MAY NOT USE THE FUNDS FOR:**

3 **(1) RESEARCH OR DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS; OR**

4 **(2) CAPITAL EXPENDITURES.**

5 **(E) FOR FISCAL YEAR 2028, THE GOVERNOR SHALL INCLUDE IN THE**
6 **ANNUAL BUDGET BILL AN APPROPRIATION OF \$100,000 FOR THE PROGRAM.**

7 **(F) ON OR BEFORE DECEMBER 1, 2029, THE DEPARTMENT SHALL**
8 **CONDUCT AN EVALUATION OF THE PROGRAM AND REPORT ITS FINDINGS TO THE**
9 **GOVERNOR AND, IN ACCORDANCE WITH § 2-1257 OF THE STATE GOVERNMENT**
10 **ARTICLE, TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN A REPORT THAT INCLUDES:**

11 **(1) AN ACCOUNTING OF FINANCIAL RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURES;**

12 **(2) ANY PROGRESS MADE IN JURISDICTIONS THAT RECEIVED**
13 **PROGRAM GRANTS BASED ON THE OUTCOME METRICS PRODUCED BY THE GRANT**
14 **RECIPIENTS; AND**

15 **(3) THE IMPACT OF PROGRAM ACTIVITIES WITH RESPECT TO**
16 **TREATING AND SERVING PATIENTS, CLIENTS, AND PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS.**

17 **SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect**
18 **October 1, 2026. It shall remain effective for a period of 3 years and 6 months and, at the**
19 **end of March 31, 2030, this Act, with no further action required by the General Assembly,**
20 **shall be abrogated and of no further force and effect.**