



"Being here for Maryland's Children, Youth, and Families"

House Appropriations Committee

February 18, 2020

House Bill 709 - Human Services - Youth Services Bureaus - Funding

SUPPORT

House Bill 709 will secure existing funding for mental health and delinquency prevention services for at-risk youth and their families. The bill:

- Creates a line item in the State budget for Youth Service Bureaus (YSBs) at a statewide total of \$1.8 million, which was the level of funding earmarked through budget language by the legislature for this purpose in fiscal years 2011 through 2017;
- Requires a minimum of \$100,000 be awarded to each YSB, which allows for expansion of services into additional jurisdictions;
- Continues the current process that directs the Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) to approve YSBs; and
- Allows money from the Children's Interagency Fund to bypass Local Management Boards at the direction of the local government providing the matching funds.

What are Youth Service Bureaus?

Maryland's YSBs are State and Local Government Partnerships that provide a safety net of effective prevention services to address the mental health concerns of children and adolescents. YSBs are established in the Human Services article of the Maryland Annotated Code (§ 9-233) and regulated under COMAR (16.17.01). YSBs currently receive funds from the Children's Interagency Fund, passed through Local Management Boards that submit proposals to the Governor's Office for Children.

Youth Service Bureaus are Effective

DJS annually conducts a two-year follow-up study to determine the effectiveness of YSBs in diverting youth from deeper involvement in the juvenile justice system. The most recent analysis, released in January 2020, demonstrated that **99% of youth served were not re-adjudicated within 2 years after ending treatment at a YSB.**

(over)

State Funding Leverages Other Funds

Every \$1 in State funds leverages an additional \$8 from county governments, municipalities, and private sources for YSB services.

Youth Service Bureaus Provide Essential Interventions

- Youth Mental Health Services (for depression, suicide, anxiety, trauma, etc.)
- Youth & Family Violence Services
- Support to Disconnected & Transition-Age Youth
- Substance Use Assessment, Referral and Treatment Services
- Services to Immigrants

Over the last 4 years, several YSBs have closed or reduced services due to budget reductions and funding uncertainties. This has left youth and families in those communities without access to these critical resources. This bill re-establishes the State's commitment to support this network of prevention and mental health services to children.

We urge a favorable report on House Bill 709.

Respectfully Submitted:

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