

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2011 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

Senate Bill 336

(Senator Stone)

Finance

Transition of Developmentally Disabled Youth from Foster Care - Required
Workgroup and Report

This bill requires that Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) and the Social Services Administration (SSA) to convene a workgroup to examine the transition of developmentally disabled youth from foster care. DDA and SSA must report to the General Assembly on the workgroup's findings by December 1, 2011.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2011.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Given the State's fiscal difficulties, agency budgets have been constrained. Thus, the requirement to convene the workgroup and report within five months may not be absorbable within the existing budgeted resources of DDA and SSA without a redirection of resources from other projects. Revenues are not affected.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: The workgroup, which comprises interested stakeholders and should include foster parents, is tasked with examining methods to ensure:

- a smooth transition of developmentally disabled youth from foster care to receiving services through DDA at age 21; and

- that developmentally disabled youth who age out of the foster care system receive a prompt evaluation for services from DDA.

Current Law/Background: Foster care is a temporary service that provides short-term care and supportive services to children who are unable to live at home (typically because of child abuse or neglect). Foster children live in family foster homes or group care settings. Of the approximately 9,000 children in out-of-home foster care placements, roughly half are between the ages of 14 and 20. Developmentally disabled youth, in particular, face great challenges in transitioning from foster care.

Focus on these issues has increased in recent years, and DDA advises that there is currently a memorandum of understanding between DDA and the Department of Human Resources (DHR), which oversees SSA, that addresses the transition of youth from foster care services to DDA services. In addition, the Interagency Transition Council for Youth with Disabilities, which was authorized in 2000 and reconstituted in 2007, is tasked with ensuring effective interagency planning and delivery of services for students with disabilities. (The council also oversees the Maryland Seamless Transition Collaborative, which works to improve outcomes for students with disabilities.) DHR has also established a “Ready by 21” initiative to assist youth to prepare for a successful transition from dependence to self-sufficiency by implementing an array of services and benchmarks (in areas such as education, housing, employment, self-care, and mental health) for all foster care youth age 14 and over.

State Expenditures: DDA anticipates that one contractual part-time position will be needed to implement this bill. However, the Department of Legislative Services advises that the added responsibilities resulting from this legislation are relatively minimal and are not permanent. Legislative Services believes the workgroup can be established, meet, and prepare the required report by temporarily redirecting resources from other projects.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Department of Human Resources, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 14, 2011
ncs/mwc

Analysis by: Jennifer A. Ellick

Direct Inquiries to:
(410) 946-5510
(301) 970-5510