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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR Boitano DATE TYPED 02/04/04 HB _____

SHORT TITLE Low-Income Family Relationship Training SB 371

ANALYST Weber

APPROPRIATION

Appropriation Contained		Estimated Additional Impact		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY04	FY05	FY04	FY05		
	\$200.0			Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Relates to Appropriation in the General Appropriation Act

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Department of Health (DOH)

New Mexico Public Education Department

No Response From

Human Services Department (HSD)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

Senate Bill 371 appropriates \$200 thousand from the general fund to the Human Services Department for the purpose of contracting with non-profit organizations in Dona Ana and Bernalillo counties to provide the following.

- public advertising campaigns on the value of marriage;
- education in high schools on relationship skills;
- marriage education and skills training, including conflict resolution;
- financial management for non-married pregnant women and non-married expectant fathers;
- premarital education and marriage skills training for engaged couples; marriage enrichment for married couples, and
- divorce reduction programs; and marriage mentoring programs, which use married couples as role models.

Significant Issues

The Department of Health reports:

A significant body of social science data show that compared to children living in single parent homes, children raised by their biological married parents in a low-conflict union 1) have the best chance of becoming happy, healthy, responsible, citizens; 2) are safer in their homes and neighborhoods with lower risks of abusive experiences; 3) have less potential that they may engage risk behaviors that have long term health consequences such as unintended teen pregnancy, alcohol or drug use, and related violent behaviors; and 4) may have more economic stability. Communities with more married-parent families are less likely to have substance abuse and crime among young people.

Two-parent families have greater incomes than do single adults, and the longer they stay in union, the more wealth they accumulate. Marriage particularly benefits men's earnings capacities. As sociologist Steven Nock's research demonstrates, "Once married, men earn more, work more, and have better jobs." Census 2001 reported only 6% of married parent families lived in poverty compared to 33.6% of single parent families.

DOH reports that there are challenges because research on how to promote strong, low-conflict marriages is thin, at best. The challenges are even greater when working with low income, disadvantaged parents (www.childtrends.org). The bill could be strengthened were it to require a review of literature to obtain guidance on what has worked or not worked in similar projects, and a search for evidence-based programs or interventions. If managed in this way, the program could serve as a pilot for more wide spread intervention across the state. One example of effective service is to assist couples to plan pregnancies; unintended pregnancy is one research-based finding that is associated with extreme family stress.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$200 thousand contained in this bill is a recurring expense to the general fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of Fiscal Year 2005 shall revert to the general fund.

TECHNICAL ISSUES

The bill title contains "training for low-income families" but no income provision is contained in the bill.

POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

It is not clear why only non-profit organizations can bid on the contract. The contract should also include performance measures that will evaluate the success of the program in addressing specific problems.

MW/dm:lg