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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE
LAST UPDATED 1/28/08 **HB** 367

SPONSOR Gonzales

SHORT TITLE Taos County Homeless Youth Programs **SB** _____

ANALYST Lucero

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY08	FY09		
	\$30.0	Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Relates to: SB159 “Services for Homeless Children”, SB302 “Homeless Youth Transitional Program for Bernalillo County”, HB242 “Santa Fe Youth Transitional Living Services”, and HB384 “Services for Homeless Children”.

Relates to Appropriation in the General Appropriation Act

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD)

Public Education Department (PED)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

House Bill 367 appropriates thirty thousand (\$30,000) from the general fund to Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD) for expenditure in FY09 for community-based organizations to provide transitional living services for homeless, abused and neglected youth in Taos county.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of thirty thousand (\$30,000) contained in this bill is a recurring expense to the general fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of 2009 shall revert to the general fund.

This appropriation is not part of the executive recommendation.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

Transitional living services offer a home setting for youth to facilitate their shift from dependence on care by others to caring for themselves. Previously residing in an emotional/behavioral treatment setting, these youth are at a crossroads during a vulnerable stage in life, going from youth to young adult. They have limited housing resources, few funds and insufficient self-care skills. Within settings designed for safe co-ed living, staff oversees the living environment, provides training and facilitates access to community resources and skill development. A successful discharge from Transitional Living Services (TLS) means that a youth now possesses the skills to secure a living space of their own and manage their lives successfully (Hogares Inc., 2008).

In 2002, the US Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention estimated that there are nearly 1.7 million homeless and runaway youth in the United States. Many of these youth left home after years of physical and/or sexual abuse, addiction of a family member, and/or parental neglect. Studies show that homeless youth benefit from programs that meet immediate and basic needs first, including housing, and then help them to address other aspects of their lives (National Coalition for the Homeless, Fact Sheet #13, August 2007). A 2007 study in Colorado suggests it costs less than \$6,000 to permanently move a homeless youth off the streets, compared to more than \$53,000 to maintain a youth in the criminal justice system for a year (www.medicalnewstoday.com, June 12, 2007).

The Behavioral Health Purchasing Collaborative currently provides behavioral health and related supportive services through the Single Entity, ValueOptions New Mexico, including services to support transitional living for youth. CYFD's Protective Services' Youth Services Consultants provide independent living and related transitional living support services to youth aging out of the foster care system with a history of abuse or neglect that may be homeless. Also within CYFD Family Services, the Regional Transition Services program provides behavioral health case management services to Juvenile Justice-involved youth transitioning from CYFD facilities to support successful transition into the community. Transitional living services include behavioral health and related support services that may provide youth who are homeless or at-risk of being homeless with support in successfully transitioning from unstable environments to situations that are safe, permanent and increase youths' ability to successfully live independently in the community.

This bill would require CYFD to contract with community-based organizations in Taos County to provide transitional living services for homeless, abused and neglected youth. This bill offers no provision for coordinating or collaborating with existing CYFD funded transitional living and service programs.

PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

CYFD's strategic plan includes initiatives for improving the outcomes of older youth in foster care by addressing their unique needs in the areas of financial assistance, education, and housing. This bill is consistent with those initiatives.

In order to ensure New Mexico's homeless children and youth have access to education and other services needed to meet the state's academic standards, barriers must be lifted to school selection, transportation, school records, immunizations or other medical records, affordable

housing, public housing and medical care. Expanding funding for homelessness programs statewide, including TLS, may assist youth in acquiring life skills to meet academic standards and potentially close the achievement gap.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

Costs for developing and monitoring contracts with community-based providers will have to come out of existing CYFD resources.

CONFLICT, DUPLICATION, COMPANIONSHIP, RELATIONSHIP

Relates to: SB159 “Services for Homeless Children”, SB302 “Homeless Youth Transitional Program for Bernalillo County”, HB242 “Santa Fe Youth Transitional Living Services”, and HB384 “Services for Homeless Children” and the appropriation to CYFD in the General Appropriation Act

TECHNICAL ISSUES

None identified.

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

Changing youth behavior to accomplish personal freedom and successful independence through TLS is the result of several factors:

- Skill development
- Effective communication
- Awareness and use of community resources
- Educational goals
- Job-seeking skills
- Money management skills
- Transportation
- Involvement in structured daily living
- Growing confidence and self-respect.

In the 2006-07 Data Collection Report to the federal government, PED cited serving 5,001 homeless children and youth through the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Program. The PED has identified the following barriers to the education of New Mexico homeless children and youth: 1) school selection, 2) transportation, 3) school records, 4) immunization/medical records and 5) lack of affordable housing (Public Education Department, 2007).

Youth in transition are vulnerable to becoming homeless. Ending homelessness begins with the understanding that people who are or have been homeless are our neighbors and members of our community:

- Public perceptions and attitudes toward persons experiencing homelessness or in danger of becoming homeless need to change in order for positive, long-term solutions to be realized.
- Most Americans rarely interact with people who are or who have been homeless.

- The lack of interaction between different groups of our society, combined with impersonal or inaccurate descriptions of homelessness posed by the media and public officials, contributes to a distancing of those who have housing from those who do not.
- As a result, homelessness is perceived as an abstract social problem.
- Those who experience homelessness are seen as the sources of their own misfortunes, and the socio-economic policies and practices that give rise to homelessness are then too easily ignored.
- This abstraction, in turn, lessens the degree of urgency and commitment needed to work strategically and consistently toward solutions to end homelessness that are long-term, outcome-based, and not simply responses to crises. (National Coalition for the Homeless, 2005).

Most Americans underestimate how the problem of homelessness affects families:

- About 600,000 families and 1.35 million children experience homelessness in the United States. Family homelessness is more widespread than many think, but it is not an unsolvable problem. Across the country, hundreds of communities are planning to end homelessness, and a handful of communities and many local programs are making progress in ending family homelessness.
- Chronic homelessness is long-term or repeated homelessness accompanied by a disability. Many chronically homeless people have a serious mental illness like schizophrenia and/or alcohol or drug addiction. Most chronically homeless individuals have been in treatment programs, sometimes on dozens of occasions. Research reveals that between 10 to 20 percent of homeless single adults are chronically homeless. This translates into 150,000 to 200,000 people who experience chronic homelessness. The federal government's definition of chronic homelessness includes homeless individuals with a disabling condition (substance use disorder, serious mental illness, developmental disability or chronic physical illness or disability) who have been homeless either 1) continuously for one whole year, or 2) four or more times in the past three years.
- Many people think of homelessness as strictly an urban phenomenon because homeless people are greater in number and are more visible in urban areas, but homelessness is pervasive in rural areas. The number of people who experience rural homelessness is unknown, but the last national count of homeless people found that 9 percent of homeless people live in rural areas.
- Homeless people suffer from high rates of mental and physical health problems exacerbated by living on the streets and in shelters. The lack of residential stability makes healthcare delivery more complicated. Health conditions that require ongoing treatment—such as diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS and mental illness—are difficult to treat when people are living in shelters or on the streets. Homeless people often lack access to preventative care, waiting until a trip to the emergency room is a matter of life or death. These emergency room visits are costly. Additionally, when homeless people become ill, they often do not receive timely treatment. (National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2007).

Reference:

Hogares Inc. *Transitional Living Services*, Retrieved January 22, 2008, from <http://www.hogaresinc.com> .

National Alliance to End Homelessness. *FACT CHECKER: FAMILY HOMELESSNESS*, Retrieved January 17, 2008, from <http://www.endhomelessness.org/> .

National Coalition for the Homeless. *Faces of Homeless Speaker Bureau*, Retrieved January 17, 2008, from <http://www.nationalhomeless.org/getinvolved/index.html> .

New Mexico Public Education Department, School and Family Support Bureau (2007). *2007 Final Data Collection Report*.

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