

Department of Legislative Services
 Maryland General Assembly
 2022 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
 First Reader

House Bill 916 (Delegate Reznik)
 Appropriations

Higher Education - Programs for Behavioral Health Professionals in Primary and Secondary Schools - Requirements and Grant Program

This bill requires that a public institution of higher education that offers a program to prepare professionals to provide behavioral health services must (1) offer courses in the program in a manner that maximizes the number and types of students that may participate and (2) to the extent practicable, coordinate with other public institutions for the purpose of more efficiently expanding coursework and training in the preparation of specified professionals. In addition, the bill establishes the Behavioral Health Professionals in Schools Quality and Diversity Grant Program to assist institutions in developing programs to prepare behavioral health professionals for schools from nontraditional and historically underrepresented populations. Funding is as provided in the State budget. The Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) must administer the program and award grants.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: *Under one set of assumptions, general fund expenditures increase by \$100,000 annually beginning as early as FY 2023. Actual general fund expenditures depend on the amount provided in the State budget for the grant program. To the extent that public four-year institutions and Baltimore City Community College (BCCC) receive grants, higher education revenues and expenditures increase. Additional higher education expenditures are possible to increase access and to partner with other entities; however, any such costs cannot be reliably estimated. MHEC can likely administer the program using existing resources.*

(in dollars)	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027
Higher Ed Rev.	-	-	-	-	-
GF Expenditure	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000
Higher Ed Exp.	-	-	-	-	-
Net Effect	(\$100,000)	(\$100,000)	(\$100,000)	(\$100,000)	(\$100,000)

Note:() = decrease; GF = general funds; FF = federal funds; SF = special funds; - = indeterminate increase; (-) = indeterminate decrease

Local Effect: To the extent that local community colleges receive grants, revenues and expenditures increase. Additional expenditures are possible to increase access and to coordinate with other institutions. However, any costs cannot be reliably estimated. There may be more in-state trained behavioral health professionals for local school systems to hire in the future; however, there is no direct impact on local school system finances.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: MHEC must administer the program by awarding grants:

- to institutions of higher education in the State that provide education to individuals to provide behavioral health services in a primary or secondary school;
- on a competitive basis; and
- in a manner that serves the purpose of the program and meets specified requirements.

MHEC must establish and adopt guidelines for awarding grants, including prioritizing the awarding of grants to historically black colleges and universities and institutions of higher education that educate high proportions of Hispanic students and that have a record of preparing diverse and high-quality behavioral health professionals. In its awarding of grants, MHEC must also encourage institutions of higher education to expand existing educational and training programs to provide behavioral health services in a primary or secondary school setting by recruiting and enrolling nontraditional students, offering courses through a variety of methods, and partnering with other entities – such as local schools, applicable licensing boards, and programs related to behavioral health services in schools.

Under the bill, “behavioral health services” means trauma-informed prevention, intervention, and treatment services for the social-emotional, psychological, and behavioral health of students, including mental health and substance use disorders. “Behavioral health professional” means an individual who provides behavioral health services, including a therapist, school psychologist, social worker, and counselor.

Current Law: With specified exceptions, an individual must be licensed by the respective health occupations board before the individual may practice in the State. Licensure requirements vary by profession but typically require, among other things, specified education and experience, passage of a national and/or State examination, and a criminal history records check. Within the Maryland Department of Health, there are separate

boards to regulate various types of counselors and therapists, psychologists, and social workers. As of October 2021, according to the [Maryland State Department of Education](#), local school systems employed approximately 2,107 therapists, 2,714 guidance counselors, and 848 psychological personnel.

State/Local Fiscal Effect: General fund expenditures depend on the amount of funding provided in the State budget. Higher education revenues and expenditures depend on (1) grant funding received and (2) institutional choices made to implement the bill. Neither of these factors can be accurately estimated.

However, *under one set of assumptions*, general fund expenditures for the grant program increase by \$100,000 annually beginning in fiscal 2023. To the extent public four-year and community colleges apply for and receive grant funding higher education revenues increase, higher education expenditures increase correspondingly. Any grant funding must be used in alignment with the requirements of the bill.

Grants are to assist institutions in:

- developing education programs that prepare students to provide behavioral health services in a primary or secondary school setting that are accessible to nontraditional students; and
- aiding students from historically underrepresented populations to prepare for and achieve the relevant certification to become professionals who provide behavioral health services in primary or secondary schools.

MHEC advises that the size and complexity of the grant program affects administration costs. The Department of Legislative Services advises that MHEC can *likely* administer the program using existing resources; however, additional resources may be diverted from existing priorities in the initial year to select initial institutional grant recipients.

In addition, expenditures may increase for public four-year institutions and community colleges (including BCCC) to meet the requirement to offer courses in a manner that maximizes the potential for student enrollment and to partner with other entities. Any such impact cannot be reliably estimated. Some actions may not require additional expenditures.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland Association of County Health Officers; Maryland State Department of Education; Maryland Higher Education Commission; Baltimore City Community College; University System of Maryland; Morgan State University; Maryland Department of Health; Prince George’s County Public Schools; Department of Legislative Services

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