

# HOUSE BILL 924

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By: **Delegate Wilson**

Introduced and read first time: January 31, 2025

Assigned to: Judiciary

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## A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Family Law – Child Custody Evaluators – Qualifications**

3 FOR the purpose of specifying certain qualifications for an individual to be appointed by a  
4 court as a custody evaluator; and generally relating to child custody and visitation.

5 BY adding to

6 Article – Family Law

7 Section 9–109

8 Annotated Code of Maryland

9 (2019 Replacement Volume and 2024 Supplement)

10 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,  
11 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

12 **Article – Family Law**

13 **9–109.**

14 **(A) IN THIS SECTION, “CUSTODY EVALUATOR” MEANS AN INDIVIDUAL**  
15 **APPOINTED OR APPROVED BY A COURT TO PERFORM A CUSTODY EVALUATION.**

16 **(B) ON MOTION OF A PARTY OR CHILD’S COUNSEL, OR ON ITS OWN**  
17 **INITIATIVE, A COURT MAY:**

18 **(1) ORDER AN ASSESSMENT TO AID THE COURT IN EVALUATING THE**  
19 **HEALTH, SAFETY, AND WELFARE OR BEST INTERESTS OF A CHILD IN A CONTESTED**  
20 **CUSTODY OR VISITATION CASE; OR**

21 **(2) APPOINT A CUSTODY EVALUATOR DETERMINED BY THE COURT TO**

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EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 BE COMPETENT TO PERFORM A HOME STUDY OR AN EVALUATION OF A SPECIFIC  
2 ISSUE.

3 (C) A COURT MAY NOT ORDER THE COST OF AN ASSESSMENT TO BE PAID, IN  
4 WHOLE OR IN PART, BY A PARTY WITHOUT GIVING THE PARTIES NOTICE AND AN  
5 OPPORTUNITY TO OBJECT.

6 (D) A COURT MAY NOT APPOINT AN INDIVIDUAL AS A CUSTODY EVALUATOR  
7 UNLESS THE INDIVIDUAL MEETS THE QUALIFICATIONS SPECIFIED IN SUBSECTIONS  
8 (E) AND (F) OF THIS SECTION.

9 (E) A CUSTODY EVALUATOR SHALL BE:

10 (1) A PHYSICIAN LICENSED IN ANY STATE WHO IS  
11 BOARD-CERTIFIED IN PSYCHIATRY OR HAS COMPLETED A PSYCHIATRY RESIDENCY  
12 ACCREDITED BY THE ACCREDITATION COUNCIL FOR GRADUATE MEDICAL  
13 EDUCATION OR A SUCCESSOR TO THAT COUNCIL;

14 (2) A MARYLAND LICENSED PSYCHOLOGIST OR A PSYCHOLOGIST  
15 WITH AN EQUIVALENT LEVEL OF LICENSURE IN ANY OTHER STATE;

16 (3) A MARYLAND LICENSED CLINICAL MARRIAGE AND FAMILY  
17 THERAPIST OR A CLINICAL MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPIST WITH AN  
18 EQUIVALENT LEVEL OF LICENSURE IN ANY OTHER STATE;

19 (4) A MARYLAND LICENSED CERTIFIED SOCIAL  
20 WORKER-CLINICAL OR A CLINICAL SOCIAL WORKER WITH AN EQUIVALENT LEVEL  
21 OF LICENSURE IN ANY OTHER STATE;

22 (5) (I) A MARYLAND LICENSED GRADUATE OR MASTER SOCIAL  
23 WORKER WITH AT LEAST 2 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE IN:

24 1. ONE OR MORE OF THE AREAS LISTED IN SUBSECTION  
25 (F)(4) OF THIS SECTION;

26 2. PERFORMING CUSTODY EVALUATIONS; OR

27 3. ANY COMBINATION OF THE EXPERIENCE DESCRIBED  
28 IN ITEM 1 OR 2 OF THIS ITEM; OR

29 (II) A GRADUATE OR MASTER SOCIAL WORKER WITH AN  
30 EQUIVALENT LEVEL OF LICENSURE AND EXPERIENCE IN ANY OTHER STATE; OR

1           **(6) A MARYLAND LICENSED CLINICAL PROFESSIONAL COUNSELOR**  
2 **OR A CLINICAL PROFESSIONAL COUNSELOR WITH AN EQUIVALENT LEVEL OF**  
3 **LICENSURE IN ANY OTHER STATE.**

4           **(F) A CUSTODY EVALUATOR SHALL HAVE:**

5           **(1) COMPLETED A TRAINING PROGRAM THAT CONFORMS WITH**  
6 **GUIDELINES ESTABLISHED BY THE ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS;**

7           **(2) COMPLIED WITH THE CONTINUING EDUCATIONAL**  
8 **REQUIREMENTS OF THE CUSTODY EVALUATOR’S FIELD;**

9           **(3) TRAINING OR EXPERIENCE IN OBSERVING OR PERFORMING**  
10 **CUSTODY EVALUATIONS; AND**

11           **(4) CURRENT KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE IN DEALING WITH**  
12 **ALLEGATIONS IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS:**

13                   **(I) DOMESTIC VIOLENCE;**

14                   **(II) CHILD NEGLECT AND ABUSE;**

15                   **(III) CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE;**

16                   **(IV) TRAUMA AND ITS IMPACT ON CHILDREN AND ADULTS;**

17                   **(V) FAMILY CONFLICT AND DYNAMICS;**

18                   **(VI) CHILD AND ADULT DEVELOPMENT; AND**

19                   **(VII) THE IMPACT OF DIVORCE AND SEPARATION ON CHILDREN**  
20 **AND ADULTS.**

21           SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July  
22 1, 2025.