

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2026 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 915
Appropriations

(Delegate Hill, *et al.*)

Workgroup on Aging Out of Foster Care

This bill establishes the Workgroup on Aging Out of Foster Care, to be staffed by the State Council on Child Abuse and Neglect (SCCAN). The workgroup must (1) identify the types and effectiveness of resources currently available for youth who have aged out of foster care to achieve self-sufficiency, as specified; (2) determine the effectiveness of currently available resources, and identify challenges with current services and programs offered before a youth ages out of the foster care system and seek to assist youth to successfully transition into adulthood and self-sufficiency; (3) determine the types of resources that youth who have aged out of foster care are most likely to utilize when seeking continuing support, such as adults, peers, financial assistance organizations, and community groups; (4) identify the circumstances under which youth in foster care were removed from the youth's home county during any period of foster care; and (5) identify programs that have successfully improved outcomes for youth who have aged out of foster care, such as a hotline or anonymous support line. Members of the workgroup are entitled to reimbursement for expenses under the Standard State Travel Regulations. By June 1, 2027, the workgroup must submit a report of its findings to the General Assembly. **The bill takes effect June 1, 2026, and terminates June 30, 2027.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: SCCAN can staff the workgroup using existing budgeted resources. Any expense reimbursements for workgroup members are assumed to be absorbable within existing budgeted resources. The bill does not otherwise materially affect State operations or finances.

Local Effect: The bill does not materially affect local government operations or finances.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: The Department of Human Services (DHS), through its Social Services Administration, has the primary responsibility for child welfare services throughout the State, which are provided primarily by the local departments of social services.

DHS is required to establish a program of out-of-home placement for minor children (1) who are placed in the custody of a local department, for a period of up to 180 days, by a parent or legal guardian under a voluntary placement agreement; (2) who are abused, abandoned, neglected, or dependent, if a juvenile court has determined that continued residence in the child's home is contrary to the child's welfare and has committed the child to the custody or guardianship of a local department; or (3) who, with the approval of DHS, are placed in an out-of-home placement by a local department under a voluntary placement agreement regarding a child with a developmental disability or a mental illness, as specified.

An out-of-home placement may include family foster care, group and residential care, kinship care, and treatment foster care. "Foster care" means continuous 24-hour care and supportive services provided for a minor child placed by a child placement agency in an approved family home.

State Council on Child Abuse and Neglect

SCCAN is part of DHS for budgetary and administrative purposes. Under § 5-7A-06 of the Family Law Article, SCCAN is tasked with evaluating the extent to which State and local agencies are effectively discharging their child protection responsibilities. SCCAN must coordinate its activities with the State Citizens Review Board of Children, local citizen review panels, child fatality review teams, and the Child Abuse Medical Providers Initiative in order to avoid unnecessary duplication of effort. Under § 5-7A-09 of the Family Law Article, SCCAN must report and make recommendations annually to the Governor and the General Assembly on matters relating to the prevention, detection, prosecution, and treatment of child abuse and neglect, including policy and training needs and any data collected on child abuse and neglect diagnoses and treatment.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Department of Human Services; Department of Legislative Services

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caw/jkb

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