

TENNESSEE GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
FISCAL REVIEW COMMITTEE



**FISCAL NOTE**

**SB 364 - HB 1195**

March 24, 2015

**SUMMARY OF BILL:** Requires the Department of Human Services to negotiate with the federal Office of Refugee Resettlement to reacquire state administration of the refugee resettlement program. Requires the department to utilize existing resources and personnel in the implementation of the bill.

**ESTIMATED FISCAL IMPACT:**

**Increase State Expenditures – Exceeds \$150,000**

**Increase Federal Expenditures – Exceeds \$193,700**

Assumptions:

- In 2008, the State relinquished its administration of the federal refugee resettlement program. At the time the program was relinquished the state had one employee administering the program as a portion of the employee's duties.
- The federal government awarded administration of the program to the Catholic Charities of Tennessee.
- The Tennessee Office for Refugees currently administers the estimated \$8,900,000 Wilson-Fish grant program. The office has 10 full-time dedicated staff members working exclusively on the program which are funded through administrative allocations from the Wilson-Fish grant and through other grant sources.
- It is assumed that the state would continue to operate the program under the current grant requirements and would have to ensure administration of the program would be equitable to the administration provided by the Tennessee Office for Refugees for the federal government to agree to the state reacquiring administration of the program.
- DHS estimates administration of the program at a level that will be approved by the federal government will require five additional employees. These employees include a program manager, a program specialist, an accountant, a program monitor, and a nurse practitioner. These additional employees will result in expenditures estimated to be \$343,656 (\$260,352 salaries + \$83,304 benefits).
- Based on information provided by DHS, the allowable positions funded by the federal grant are unclear, but the department assumes three of the five positions would be federally funded at a cost of \$193,656. Approximately \$150,000 of staff payroll and operational expenses are estimated to be state funded.
- There will also be substantial systems development costs to maintain and monitor data for state and federal audit purposes.

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- Based on information from DHS, services would be administered to an estimated 1,500 refugees in a given month. With state administration of the program, these individuals will become eligible for certain federal and state administered programs even if otherwise ineligible, such as TANF benefits and child care benefits.
- Refugees are also eligible for medical insurance coverage equivalent to, or better than, Medicaid coverage.
- The Tennessee Office for Refugees currently offers medical assistance and other benefits so not all refugees are currently enrolled in these programs.
- The state does not currently have any way to determine the number of refugees that are currently enrolled or have been enrolled in any state or federal administered benefit programs; therefore, the state and federal fiscal impact to these programs cannot be reasonably determined.

**CERTIFICATION:**

The information contained herein is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.



Jeffrey L. Spalding, Executive Director

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