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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR Sen. Wirth/Rep. Garratt LAST UPDATED _____
ORIGINAL DATE 1/23/2024
SHORT TITLE Local News Fellowship Program BILL NUMBER Senate Bill 57
ANALYST Hanika-Ortiz

APPROPRIATION* (dollars in thousands)

FY24	FY25	Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
	\$500.0	Nonrecurring	General Fund

Parentheses () indicate expenditure decreases.

*Amounts reflect most recent analysis of this legislation.

Sources of Information

LFC Files

Agency Analysis Received From
Workforce Solutions Department (WSD)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Senate Bill 57

Senate Bill 57 appropriates \$500 thousand from the general fund to Workforce Solutions Department (WSD) for a local news fellowship program.

This bill does not contain an effective date and, as a result, would go into effect 90 days after the Legislature adjourns, or May 15, 2024, if enacted.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$500 thousand contained in this bill is a nonrecurring expense to the general fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of FY25 shall revert to the general fund. Although SB57 does not specify future appropriations, there is an expectation the program will need additional funding in future fiscal years, particularly if successful; therefore, this cost could be recurring. SB57 appears to be a second appropriation request for this purpose.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

SB57 provides an appropriation to WSD to support a local news fellowship program. WSD's

analysis suggests there is adequate demand to continue or expand the internship program. For the 2023 Legislature, the General Appropriation Act included a statewide special appropriation to WSD of \$125 thousand, which allowed the department to enter into an intergovernmental agreement with the University of New Mexico, through its college of communications and journalism, to administer the funds. According to WSD, six fellows have completed the program and additional fellows are in the program. The department has spent \$81 thousand, or 65 percent, of the initial appropriation and anticipates fully expending the funds before the reversion date.

PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

WSD notes this program is part of the department's efforts to improve and support employment opportunities for job seekers, particularly in rural areas.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

WSD also noted it could manage the purpose as stated in the bill with no additional staff.

RELATIONSHIP

Relates to a similar special appropriation and purpose in the 2023 General Appropriation Act.

POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

Of the six fellows that completed the program, how many have permanent jobs in the news field because of the experience? Any in rural areas?

AHO/al/ne