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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR Garcia **ORIGINAL DATE** 2/11/09 **LAST UPDATED** _____ **HB** _____
SHORT TITLE Improve Doña Ana Father-Child Relationships **SB** 419
ANALYST Peery-Galon

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY09	FY10		
	\$30.0	Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD)

Department of Health (DOH)

Human Services Department (HSD)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

Senate Bill 419 appropriates \$30.0 from the general fund to the Children, Youth and Families Department to support programs in Doña Ana County to improve the quality of father-child relationships in young families.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$30.0 contained in this bill is a recurring appropriation expense to the general fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of fiscal year 2010 shall revert to the general fund.

According to the December 2008 revenue estimate, FY10 recurring revenue will only support a base expenditure level that is \$293 million, or 2.6 percent, less than the FY09 appropriation. All appropriations outside of the general appropriation act will be viewed in this declining revenue context.

CYFD noted the appropriation in the proposed legislation is not included in the department's budget request or the Executive recommendation for fiscal year 2010.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

CYFD reported research has shown that children with involved fathers have better outcomes in school, are more pro-social, are more likely to avoid high-risk behaviors, and are more likely to show positive social, emotional, and cognitive development and functioning. Almost 34 percent of children in the United States are separated from their biological father; of these children, four in ten have not seen their father in the last year, and five in ten have never set foot in his home. Children living without a father are, on average, two to three times more likely to be poor, to use drugs, to experience educational, health, emotional, or behavioral problems, or to engage in criminal behavior. One of the strongest risk factors for child abuse is the presence of a non-biological adult male in the household.

DOH reported the percent of children living in families at or below the federal poverty level in Doña Ana County was 36.4 percent, in contrast to the statewide estimate of 26 percent, and the national estimate of 18.5 percent. For children in single parent families, the estimate can be at least two times higher. A father's involvement with his children is important for nurturance, lifting children out of poverty, and enhancing children's mental and physical well being.

DOH stated that while federal and state policy emphasis is on child support and paternity establishment, many observers note that policies and procedures related to those program goals, as well as those of public housing and public assistance, may inadvertently contribute to many of the reasons for a father's absence or his detaching from his children's lives. There are several reasons men may be psychologically and physically absent from their children's lives, including lack of skills necessary to be effective and involved fathers, growing up in fatherless homes, and never experiencing a male role model. Physical distance from the children, poor relationships with the mother, and a lack of authority over child rearing decisions are also contributing factors.

DOH noted many experts and research point to broad-based collaborative strategies that go beyond welfare agencies and include schools, work programs, prison systems, churches, community organizations and the health care system. While the evidence is just beginning to grow for the kinds of program initiatives that work, some federal and foundations websites are beginning to produce guidance. The Early Head Start programs have mandates for working with fathers. Useful sites include:

<http://fatherhood.hhs.gov/Parenting/hs.shtml>

<http://www.financeproject.org/Publications/fatheris.htm>.

HSD reported the goal of the proposed legislation aligns with the fourth goal of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), which is to encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families. The TANF goal can include activities that are focused on but are not limited to marriage education and other services for mothers, fathers, individuals and couples. HSD noted it would be able to report the funding allocated in the proposed legislation as state Maintenance of Effort (MOE) for those families served under this program who are low-income.

HSD reported in Doña Ana County a similar program has been implemented through a governmental service agreement between the department and New Mexico State University (NMSU) to provide strengthening families services through the Strengthening Families Initiative

Program intended to assist persons receiving TANF and those TANF eligible under the New Mexico Works Program. HSD reported that House Bill 2 allocates \$600 thousand for this program to provide services that include but are not limited to:

- Providing parenting skills including information on parenting roles, benefits of marriage, healthy relationships, conflict resolution and nurturing children;
- Offer information and support regarding furthering education and job retention focusing on young parents who are not in school;
- Increase father involvement with children by working with faith based and community based institutions;
- Provide assistance for fathers on accessing their children including information on visitation rights and providing child support;
- Customize services to individual families needs to ensure appropriate attention is received; and
- Provide reform and awareness to parents by outlining the incentives in providing for their children.

The Strengthening Families Initiative Program through NMSU supports TANF New Mexico Works services statewide and provides intensive services in Bernalillo, Luna, Cibola and Doña Ana.

PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

CYFD noted the proposed legislation relates to the department's mission and vision to support and serve vulnerable populations.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

CYFD stated administrative services for this appropriation will be provided out of existing resources. CYFD currently funds a statewide fatherhood program which has an office in Doña Ana County. The contract for this program expires on June 30, 2010.

HSD noted the appropriation would benefit the department by being able to report TANF Maintenance of Effort for funds spent on eligible families.

ALTERNATIVES

HSD noted that there are a number of federal grants available for the purpose of promoting responsible fatherhood. The Federal Resource Site of the Department of Health and Human Services which identifies these grants is <http://fatherhood.hhs.gov>.

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