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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR:	Garcia, M.H.	DATE TYPED:	02/22/01	HB	660
SHORT TITLE	Court-Appointed Spec	Court-Appointed Special Advocates Program			
		ANALYST:			Hayes

APPROPRIATION

Appropriation Contained			Estimated Additional Impact		Recurring	Fund
FY01	FY02		FY01	FY02	or Non-Rec	Affected
	\$	71.6			Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Relates to Appropriation in The General Appropriation Act in HB2/a

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) New Mexico CASA documents

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

HB660 appropriates \$71.6 from the general fund to the Administrative Office of the Courts for the purpose of expanding funding for the Court-Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) program statewide.

Significant Issues

The mission of the New Mexico CASA Network is to support effective volunteer advocacy for the best interests of abused and neglected children involved in the court system. CASA's vision is to ensure that every child in the state has a safe, supportive and permanent home.

Currently, CASA programs exist in 11 of the 13 judicial districts. These programs serve 23 of the state's 33 counties. Since fiscal year 1999, the number of children served by the CASA program increased by 11.4 % (247 additional children). During this same period, the appointment of a CASA in a children's court case increased by 11.1% or by 135 cases.

For fiscal year 2002, the CASA program expansion request is to accomplish the following goals:

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- support existing programs at their appropriate funding level
- create new programs in the 4th and 10th Judicial Districts
- expand training, data collection and other program services
- increase volunteers by at least 50 (7.6%)

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$71.6 contained in this bill is a recurring expense to the general fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of fiscal year 2002 shall revert to the general fund.

Currently, CASA has a program budget of \$857.3 through the AOC. The HAFC has already recommended an additional \$85.0 from CASA's request of \$154.0, increasing CASA's total to \$942.3. The intent of HB660 is to request the remainder of CASA's original request that was not recommended the LFC or HAFC: \$71.6.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

The Administrative Office of the Courts administers the New Mexico CASA Network contract, but the director of CASA actually administers the program and oversees all volunteers.

RELATIONSHIP

In HB2/a, a sum of \$85.0 is included in AOC's general fund budget for the CASA program.

CMH/ar