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## FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR Lopez DATE TYPED 01/27/05 HB \_\_\_\_\_

SHORT TITLE UNM Corinne Wolfe Children's Law Center SB 148

ANALYST Woods

### APPROPRIATION

Appropriation Contained		Estimated Additional Impact		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY05	FY06	FY05	FY06		
	\$250.0			Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis ( ) Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Relates to the appropriation for the University of New Mexico (UNM) in the General Appropriations Act.

#### SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

#### Responses Received From

Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC)

#### No Response From

Commission on Higher Education

#### SUMMARY

##### Synopsis of Bill

Senate Bill 148 – Making an Appropriation to the Board of Regents of the University of New Mexico for the Corinne Wolfe Children's Center to Provide Training, Assistance and Information – appropriates \$250,000 to the board of regents of the University of New Mexico for expenditure in fiscal year 2006 to increase funding for the Corinne Wolfe children's law center to provide training, technical assistance, research assistance and information dissemination in the areas of child abuse, child neglect and juvenile justice. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of fiscal year 2006 shall revert to the general fund.

### Significant Issues

AOC notes that in 1997, the New Mexico Supreme Court's Court Improvement Project (CIP) Task Force concluded that improving the expertise of the various participants in child abuse and neglect proceedings was important to achieving permanency for children who come into the care and custody of the state. It also concluded that a children's law center was the best mechanism for providing the training and other resources needed.

In December 1997, the Corinne Wolfe Children's Law Center was established at the Institute of Public Law, UNM School of Law, by memorandum of understanding between the New Mexico Supreme Court, the AOC, and the UNM School of Law, Institute of Public Law. It is dedicated to improving the knowledge and skills of the many professionals and volunteers who work in the child abuse and neglect and juvenile justice legal systems, and are not employed by the judicial branch of government.

AOC indicates that the center's current budget does not yet allow it to provide the comprehensive, systematic training and support opportunities originally envisioned by the Supreme Court's (CIP) Task Force, and professionals and volunteers in the abuse/neglect and delinquency systems are still not receiving the requisite training to address the demands of New Mexico's child welfare legal system. This appropriation will support operating costs in the provision of training, technical assistance, research and information dissemination directed to child abuse and neglect and juvenile justice. It will also enable the center to expand children's services and develop the following the initiatives:

- Regional cross-training programs at which volunteers, attorneys, social workers, mental health providers, foster parents, citizen review board members and others participate together to enhance joint problem-solving and collaborative efforts to improve the lives of children who have suffered abuse and neglect.
- Distance learning technology designed to provide training and information to persons working in rural and frontier areas;
- Comprehensive web-based resources;
- Focused training on specific topics, such as permanency planning, accessing treatment services, tribal-state coordination, the effect of domestic violence, or interviewing of children; and
- Expanded training for persons working in the juvenile justice system.

### **FISCAL IMPLICATIONS**

The Commission on Higher Education (CHE) *2005-2006 Higher Education Funding Recommendation* reflects the following history for this program:

- 2003-04 (Recurring Appropriation) - \$50,000
- 2004-05 (Recurring Appropriation) - \$68,200

For FY06 CHE recommends \$68,400, a .3 percent increase over FY05.

The appropriation of \$250,000 contained in this bill is a recurring expense to the general fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of FY06 shall revert to the general fund.

**ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS**

The University of New Mexico, School of Law, will retain oversight of this program.

**CONFLICT, DUPLICATION, COMPANIONSHIP, RELATIONSHIP**

Relates to the appropriation for UNM in the General Appropriations Act.

**OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES**

Currently, there are more than 2,100 children in the custody of the state because of abuse or neglect, or alleged abuse or neglect. AOC observes that annually the number of children entering the system in New Mexico continues to rise, while legal proceedings are increasingly more complex.

BFW/yr