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## FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 1-31-06

SPONSOR Campos LAST UPDATED \_\_\_\_\_ HB \_\_\_\_\_

SHORT TITLE NM HIGHLANDS SOCIAL WORKER TRAINING SB 309

ANALYST Lucero

### APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY06	FY07		
	\$250.0	Recurring	General fund

(Parenthesis ( ) Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Duplicates Appropriation in the General Appropriation Act  
Relates to Appropriation in the General Appropriation Act

### SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

#### Responses Received From

Office of Workforce Training and Development (OWTD)  
New Mexico Highlands University (NMHU)  
Human Services Department (HSD)

### SUMMARY

#### Synopsis of Bill

Senate Bill 309 appropriates \$250.0 from the general fund for expenditure in FY07 to Office of Workforce Training and Development for the purpose of funding a social worker work experience program to be administered by New Mexico Highlands University.

### FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$250.0 contained in this bill is a recurring expense to the general fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of fiscal year 2007 shall revert to the general fund.

New Mexico Highlands University currently administers a social work stipend program for social work students that provide federal funds to students with the goal that graduates would work

for CYFD upon completion. At this time, approximately 46 stipend social work students from three New Mexico universities have committed to work for the Department for a specified period of time.

## **SIGNIFICANT ISSUES**

NMHU provides the following statement:

Currently there are close to 480 Social Work students enrolled at all NMHU campuses (210+ Bachelor of Art students and 260+ Master of Arts students). The New Mexico Highlands University Social Work Training Initiative was established in 2004. The Social Work Training Initiative targets low-income Hispanic and American Indian high school students for professional work training.

This initiative consists of a year-long program, twenty-four-hour, seven-day-a week, eight-week summer mentorship. Bilingual (Spanish, Navajo, Pueblo) undergraduate and graduate social work students live in NMHU dorms with more than 95 impoverished and at-risk Northern New Mexican teens and provide them with academic tutoring, college mentorship, career counseling, alcohol and drug abuse prevention, and one-on-one mental health counseling. There are six graduate social work students who oversee the summer program. These students work in conjunction with the Office of Workforce Training and Development.

This training program provides social work students with a year-long practicum that trains them in the areas of clinical practice, direct practice, community practice, and most importantly, student and family mental health counseling. These undergraduate and graduate social work students/interns are given group and individual training on working specifically with low-income students and their families who are in crisis, facing issues of job loss, addiction, domestic violence, depression, and suicide. Professional training is a crucial component of this training initiative. The social work students/interns meet with the initiative director on a daily basis to consult on and receive training in social work service delivery, behavior management, adolescent and family counseling, and crisis intervention. These students also receive training in classroom management, curriculum development, staffing, case-note writing, and student and family case-management.

HSD provides the following information:

SB 309 does not describe a targeted population for participation in this program. Without specific information it is difficult to evaluate the relation with the TANF and WIA integration project.

## **PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS**

The bill could positively impact CYFD Human Resource performance measure of “social worker vacancy.” The bill could also positively impact CYFD child welfare worker caseloads. Social worker turnover and vacancy rates are a national problem, as well as an ongoing human resource issue for CYFD in most areas of the state. Local universities are an important source of social workers and child welfare workers for the Department.

The bill fails to mention performance criteria OWTD is to use in evaluating and developing this program. Bill contains no provisions for coordination with Higher Education Department curriculum development or course credit. No provisions are identified for the coordination of em-

ployer participation requirements, which is essential in workforce training programs.

### **ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS**

The bill provides an appropriation to OWTD to fund the program, but OWTD is not given guidance as to administrative costs it can use to monitor and evaluate the performance of New Mexico Highlands. Work experience implies unpaid work yet this is not specified.

### **TECHNICAL ISSUES**

SB 309 is vague on whether the funding is for program or administrative purposes and does not identify the target population of this funding.

### **OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES**

HSD has been tasked by the Governor's Office to work with OWTD to integrate TANF New Mexico Works services with the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) program. In FY 2006, HSD entered into a Governmental Services Agreement (GSA) with OWTD to provide integrated services in two out of four New Mexico service areas. HSD and OWTD are currently evaluating the implementation of the two remaining service areas for integration in FY 2007. The FY 2007 Executive and LFC budget recommendations include a TANF appropriation of \$11,740.0.

### **ALTERNATIVES**

This is a great program and the industry is in dire need of these trained professionals. OWTD is willing to work with Highlands University and the Department of Higher Education in developing a more detailed plan – including reporting requirements, coordination parameters, administrative parameters, oversight plan, performance requirements, etc..

### **WHAT WILL BE THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT ENACTING THIS BILL**

Not funding SB309 will hinder outreach and the ability of NMHU to serve a larger number of marginalized families. It will preclude inclusion of more high school students and social workers in the summer program at NMHU. In addition, social work students/interns will not be exposed to more comprehensive work training.

### **AMENDMENTS**

Amend the bill to clarify the targeted population and use of the funds.

CYFD could also serve as a practicum “social work experience” site for NMHU students.

DL/mt