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## FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

**SPONSOR** Nunez **ORIGINAL DATE** 01/22/10  
**LAST UPDATED** \_\_\_\_\_ **HB** 55  
**SHORT TITLE** Services for Homeless Children **SB** \_\_\_\_\_  
**ANALYST** Peery-Galon

### APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY10	FY11		
	\$150.0	Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis ( ) Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

### SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

#### Responses Received From

Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD)  
Public Education Department (PED)

#### No Responses Received From

Lieutenant Governor's Office (LtGov)  
Department of Health (DOH)

### SUMMARY

#### Synopsis of Bill

House Bill 55 appropriates \$150.0 from the general fund to the Children, Youth and Families Department to provide child care services to homeless children in Dona Ana County.

### FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$150.0 contained in this bill is a recurring expense to the general fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of fiscal year 2011 shall revert to the general fund.

CYFD reported it will provide contract monitoring and oversight for the appropriation out of existing resources. The department noted the appropriation was not included in the Executive recommendation.

## **SIGNIFICANT ISSUES**

CYFD reported New Mexico is ranked 44<sup>th</sup> out of the 50 states in mitigating a child's risk of becoming homeless, and ranks high in food insecurity. Seventy-five percent of homeless children under the age of five have at least one major developmental delay. Also, homeless children are more likely to experience physical health and behavioral problems.

The New Mexico Public Education Department 2008-2009 Education for Homeless Children and Youth Report showed the following data from Dona Ana County School District regarding homeless children/youth enrolled in the district:

- Las Cruces Public Schools reported 450 homeless children/youth.
- Gadsden Independent Schools reported 115 homeless children/youth.
- Hatch Valley Public Schools reported 23 homeless children/youth.

PED reported about 600,000 families and 1.35 million children experience homelessness in the United States. The department noted that family homelessness is more widespread than many think, but it is not an unsolvable problem. Across the country, hundreds of communities are planning to end homelessness, and a handful of communities and many local programs are making progress in ending family homelessness.

PED noted that many people think of homelessness as strictly an urban phenomenon because homeless people are greater in number and are more visible in urban areas, but homelessness is pervasive in rural areas. The number of people who experience rural homelessness is unknown, but the last national count of homeless people found that 9 percent of homeless people live in rural areas.

## **PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS**

PED reported that in order to ensure New Mexico's homeless children have access to education and other services needed to meet the state's academic standards, barriers must be lifted to school selection, transportation, school records, immunizations or other medical records, affordable housing, public housing and medical care. Expanding funding for homeless programs statewide, including child care services, may assist in having proper care to meet academic standards and potentially close the achievement gap.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS**

CYFD noted the department would absorb the cost of contract administration and oversight with existing resources.

## **CONFLICT, DUPLICATION, COMPANIONSHIP, RELATIONSHIP**

House Bill 55 has a relationship to House Memorial 7 which requests the study and creation of legislative recommendations to address the needs of homeless children.

## **OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES**

PED noted chronic homelessness is long-term or repeated homelessness accompanied by a disability. Many chronically homeless people have a serious mental illness like schizophrenia

and/or alcohol or drug addiction. Most chronically homeless individuals have been in treatment program, sometimes on dozens of occasions. Research reveals that between 10 to 20 percent of homeless single adults are chronically homeless. The federal government's definition of chronic homelessness includes homeless individuals with a disabling condition, such as substance abuse disorder, serious mental illness, developmental disability, or chronic physical illness or disability, who have been homeless either continuously for one whole year, or four or more times in the past three years.

PED reported homeless people suffer from high rates of mental and physical health problems exacerbated by living on the streets and in shelters. The lack of residential stability makes healthcare delivery more complicated. Health conditions that require ongoing treatment, such as diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, tuberculosis, addiction and mental illness, are difficult to treat when people are living in shelters or on the streets. Homeless people often lack access to preventative care, waiting until a trip to the emergency room is a matter of life or death. These emergency room visits are costly.

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