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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 01/24/11

SPONSOR Picraux LAST UPDATED 02/24/11 HB 36/aHHGAC

SHORT TITLE Social Services Database Contracts SB _____

ANALYST Wilson

ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT (dollars in thousands)

	FY10	FY11	FY12	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
Total		\$50.0-\$300.0	\$25.0-\$250.0	\$75.0-\$550.0	Recurring	General Fund, et al

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Aging & Long Term Services Department (ALTSDD)
 Department of Health (DOH)
 Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR)
 Human Services Department (HSD)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of HHGAC Amendment

The House Health and Government Affairs Committee amend removes language requiring that a state agency or contractor that uses public funds to fund an incomplete project or to complete a project shall share information about the project with the social services database provider.

Synopsis of Original Bill

House Bill 36 requires state agencies that provide social services to contract with a New Mexico entity that operates a statewide database of social services. The database will provide residents with access to information regarding state and federal agencies, local government bodies, philanthropic organizations and other organizations that provide social services.

The social service database will be available:

- Statewide, in rural and urban areas;
- Online and printable; and
- In a variety of electronic formats.

The database must provide a comprehensive list all contact information for all field social service programs and include the following services: behavioral and physical health, transportation, housing, food, housing, legal, and employment.

In addition, the database must be culturally and linguistically appropriate and offered in English and Spanish as well as user friendly and easy to access and read by residents who have limited reading and computer skills.

Finally, the database must provide electronic updates by individual organizations, offer systematic update of services and resources listed in person or through virtual technology and be able to be customized to support the information needs of an organization populating the database.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

HB 36 provides no funding source to implement or maintain a contract for this service. HB 36 does not indicate what state agency will be responsible for maintenance of the contract; therefore, it is not clear if all or only one agency will be fiscally responsible. The bill does not have an appropriation to support the cost of developing and maintaining the data base and these unfunded costs will be incurred by the participating agencies.

HB 36 indicates that agencies shall include in a grant application a request for funds in order to use and share information with a social services database that requires specific data collection to meet the project needs. These monies might only cover the cost of the specific project need and not contribute to sustain the management of the database.

HSD notes that from an IT standpoint it is difficult to estimate the development and maintenance costs of a statewide database which will encompass information from several agencies: DOH, DVR, CYFD, ALTSD, HSD, etc.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

HB36 is intended to encourage state agencies and contractors to use a single, statewide social services database, through sharing information with a database provider and requesting funding whenever appropriate to support the use of the database. There are currently a number of sources of information on social services available in New Mexico through state agencies including the ALTSD and the HSD, private social services agencies, and various local resource directories, including those published by county and tribal health councils. Having a single, comprehensive, up-to-date, widely accessible, and user-friendly source of information on social services will, in theory, make it easier for New Mexico residents needing services to obtain accurate and timely information from a single source.

HB 36 will contribute to the objectives of the State of New Mexico 2008 Comprehensive Health Plan, Chapter One: Health Inequities, Goal One: Decrease health inequities, which states: Improve data collection methodologies including indicators of social determinants of health and dissemination by county, city/community, tribal affiliation and in the U.S.-Mexico Border Region to facilitate policy development and community planning related to health inequities.

Health disparities are relative, based on comparisons of the health status, access to services and/or health outcomes of population groups. Many factors contribute to health disparities in New Mexico, including access to health care, behavioral choices, genetic predisposition, poverty, environmental and occupational conditions, language barriers, social and cultural factors and discrimination in the health care setting. If enacted, HB36 could increase access to social service resources to citizens searching the database for resources.

DVR provided the following:

DVR provides services to persons with disabilities under Titles 1 and 6 of the Rehabilitation Act, as amended in 1998. While DVR provides or contracts for some of the services provided, these are considered ancillary services in support of DVR's primary goal of placing persons with disabilities into suitable employment. As such, there is some question about whether DVR meets the definition of being a social service agency as described in this bill.

DVR maintains an agency case management system with a database that is specifically designed to meet federal reporting requirements. Each of the date fields in the case management system captures information relevant to vocational rehabilitation service delivery and federal tracking and reporting requirements. Information about DVR clients is contained within the database and is strictly confidential. As such, it cannot be shared with other agencies or the public. While that may not be the intent of this bill, it is an important consideration.

DVR supports making information about its program available to the public, and maintains its own website which provides information about the vocational rehabilitation program, office locations throughout the state, the Manual of Operating Procedures, and updates of interest. While DVR may be able to expand the information it makes available to the public, it is important to note that all services are individualized. With this being the case, services vary among individuals. Additionally, vocational rehabilitation is an eligibility based program, so not all individuals who apply for services may be eligible.

There are already several databases at different stages of development:

HSD reports that MyCommunityNM, <http://www.mycommunitynm.org/> is a statewide database of social services information and has been under development for over a year. The database is based in Albuquerque and has been expanding its scope to include data about social services throughout New Mexico. In 2010, House Memorial 49 established a steering committee to assess the benefits of utilizing the MyCommunityNM resource database as the State's comprehensive, bilingual resource directory for underserved populations. Based on the outcomes of the committee's surveys and meetings with potential stakeholders, the committee concluded that MyCommunityNM.org is a potential resource for New Mexico, which could be greatly enhanced with support from New Mexico governmental organizations that serve underserved populations.

The HSD website, www.hsd.state.nm.us/isd, includes a comprehensive list of programs available through the HSD and even has on its home page an "online" screening tool, called YES-NM (Your Eligibility System – New Mexico) that allows individuals to input some simple information and find out what programs they may qualify for through HSD, as well as child care through CYFD and the WIC program through DOH.

HSD also provides an online list of other “government and community” resources by county.

DVR noted that New Mexico has an existing website, www.sunshineportalnm.com, which is the official transparency and accountability tracking website for New Mexico’s public funding projects, among other government spending, such as employee salaries, revenues and contracts. New Mexico has an existing website, www.sunshineportalnm.com, which is the official transparency and accountability tracking website for New Mexico’s public funding projects, among other government spending, such as employee salaries, revenues and contracts.

ALTSD believes HB 36 will create a duplication of services because:

ALTSD currently has a social service database that can provide the access to information this bill contemplates, the SSRD at <http://www.nmresourcedirectory.org/>. The SSRD, housed and administered by the ALTSD currently has over 3467 resources statewide, including resources from DOH, HSD, CYFD, DWS and DOT. To minimize cost of the SSRD, the ALTSD staff use the same database system to provide telephonic information and referrals to consumers statewide. Updates are uploaded to the SSRD daily. This online directory provides individuals, their family and caregivers, and providers an easier way to access up-to-date, comprehensive services offered by national, state, and local social service providers.

In addition, the SSRD houses a Person Centered Planning Tool, designed for use by individuals and/or their caregivers to assist in long-term planning. The SSRD also has links for tools to assess an individuals’ potential eligibility for social services.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

Selected DOH staff will need to dedicate a portion of their professional time to fulfill the information-sharing requirements of HB36. For example, HB36 will have an administrative impact on DOH staff time to complete entering and updating of their social service program information on the database. Language concerning HB36 requirements of state agencies will have to be incorporated into contracts with social service providers.

DVR notes that it is a relatively small agency that is currently experiencing some human resource challenges due to the state imposed hiring freeze. DVR will experience a hardship by having to contract for a database and support the activities associated with maintaining it.

DW/svb:bym