



**Colorado
Legislative
Council
Staff**

HB16-1448

FISCAL NOTE

FISCAL IMPACT: State Local Statutory Public Entity Conditional No Fiscal Impact

Drafting Number: LLS 16-0995

Date: April 26, 2016

Prime Sponsor(s): Rep. Singer
Sen. Kefalas; Lundberg

Bill Status: House Judiciary

Fiscal Analyst: Bill Zepernick (303-866-4777)

BILL TOPIC: RELATIVE GUARDIANSHIP ASSISTANCE PROGRAM CRITERIA

Fiscal Impact Summary	FY 2016-2017	FY 2017-2018
State Revenue		
State Expenditures	Minimal workload increase.	
Appropriation Required: None.		
Future Year Impacts: None.		

Summary of Legislation

The bill makes several changes to the Relative Guardian Assistance Program to comply with federal regulations and clarify the qualifying legal relationships and situations that are eligible for the program. Specifically, the bill clarifies that relatives, kin, and other persons with a family-like relationship, including foster parents, are eligible for relative guardianship assistance in certain situations when a child or children cannot be returned to the physical custody of parents or legal guardians and adoption or reunification is either unavailable or not appropriate. The bill also expands guardianship assistance in situations where a foster parent or relative is allocated parental responsibilities by the courts, in addition to assuming permanent legal guardianship.

Background

The Relative Guardianship Assistance Program provides financial assistance to foster parents and kinship care providers that assume guardianship of a child who has been placed in their care during a dependency and neglect proceeding. Guardianship assistance encourages foster parents and relatives to enter into a more permanent relationship with the child, rather than continuing in a foster or kinship care relationship until the child reaches the age of 18. As of FY 2014-15, 53 children are served through the Relative Guardian Assistance Program at a cost of about \$153,000. These costs are paid by counties out of their county child welfare allocation.

State Expenditures

The bill increases workload in the Department of Human Services by a minimal amount in FY 2016-17 to update rules and regulations concerning guardianship assistance and to provide technical guidance to counties. No change in appropriations is required. To the extent the bill increases spending by counties from the child welfare services allocation, the DHS may request additional appropriations through the annual budget process.

Local Government Impact

By allowing relatives and foster parents with a family-like relationship in additional situations to receive relative guardianship assistance, the bill may increase the number of persons who qualify for and seek guardianship assistance. In some cases, guardianship assistance costs may be offset by savings from lower foster care maintenance payments. However, exact costs to counties will depend on utilization of the guardianship assistance in different situations and the alternative types of assistance that may be available to foster parents and relatives under current law. It is assumed that counties will manage these costs within their existing funding allocation for child welfare services.

Effective Date

The bill takes effect October 1, 2016.

State and Local Government Contacts

Counties
Judicial

Human Services
Law

Information Technology