



131st MAINE LEGISLATURE

LD 1240

LR 675(02)

An Act to Develop a Pilot Program to Provide Legal Representation to Families in the Child Protection System

Fiscal Note for Bill as Amended by Committee Amendment " "

Committee: Judiciary

Fiscal Note Required: Yes

Fiscal Note

	FY 2023-24	FY 2024-25	Projections FY 2025-26	Projections FY 2026-27
Net Cost (Savings)				
General Fund	\$712,500	\$950,000	\$237,500	\$0
Appropriations/Allocations				
General Fund	\$712,500	\$950,000	\$237,500	\$0

Fiscal Detail and Notes

This bill requires the Maine Commission on Indigent Legal Services to establish a 2-year pilot program to provide legal representation and related advocacy services to indigent parents and custodians residing in three counties who have become the subject of a child protection investigation by the Department of Health and Human Services and to provide a "warmline" for parents and custodians statewide. The bill includes one-time General Fund appropriations of \$712,500 in fiscal year 2023-24 and \$950,000 in fiscal year 2024-25 to the Maine Commission on Indigent Legal Services to design and implement the program, reimburse attorneys for indigent legal services provided, operate the warmline and conduct an independent evaluation of the program. These estimates assume the 2-year program is in effect from October 1, 2023 to September 30, 2025.

Any additional costs to the Department of Health and Human Services to partner with Maine Commission on Indigent Legal Services to design and evaluate the pilot program and ensure that parents and custodians who fall within the target population are made aware of the program are expected to be minor and can be absorbed within existing budgeted resources.