

Division III Question

Provide more information regarding inclusion of repeal of grandparent foster parent and congregate housing programs in HB 2, along with previous funding (State and federal) and staffing related to both programs.

Foster Grandparent Program

The Senior Volunteer Program (also known as the Senior Companion Program) is not being suspended or repealed. Funding is outlined on page 1004, 9010 titled Volunteer Activities.

BEAS contracts with Belknap Merrimack CAP who is the sole agency designated by SeniorCorps to provide the Senior Companion Program. The Senior Companion Program is a program with the Corporation for Community Services. Senior Companions are volunteers 55 and over who provide assistance and friendship to seniors who have difficulty with daily living tasks, such as shopping or paying bills. The program aims to keep seniors independent longer, and provide respite to family caregivers. Senior Companions serve 15 to 40 hours per week helping an average of two to four adult clients live independently in their own homes. Volunteers receive pre-service orientation, training where they serve, supplemental insurance while on duty, and may qualify to earn a tax-free hourly stipend. BEAS supports this program since it is mission driven and directly supports seniors.

The HB2 language references the statute below that “nests” the Foster Grandparent Program in it. The intent is to repeal the Foster Grandparent Program only. The Foster Grandparent Program is school and child care centered, and is funded through federal, in-kind match, grants, and donations.

Please know that the Friends Program, which is a non-profit agency, gets federal funding through direct federal stipends for the Foster Grandparent Program. Last year the budget was \$569,000; 90% from SeniorCorps/AmeriCorps and 10% required match. The 10% match is currently obtained through, community donations and in-kind support from school/site partners in the form of meals, transportation reimbursements, and other resources for participating senior volunteers. The focus is service provision in schools, child care centers, and after school programs. The program’s goal is to set children on a path of a successful future, while providing an opportunity for volunteers to provide meaningful contributions.

NH State General Funds for the Program were suspended in the Laws of 2011, House Bill 2 (224:278) for the biennium ending June 30, 2013. In SFY 20/21, it was funded and the repeal language is submitted to administratively right side the SFY 20/21 funding of a program that was suspended.

161-F:40 Establishment of Program. –

I. There is hereby established a senior volunteer grant program in the department. The program shall, within the limits of funds appropriated, reimburse the senior companion and foster grandparents programs for the volunteers' stipends, benefits, travel, and administrative expenses incurred in providing volunteer services. II. The funds so appropriated shall be disbursed by the department in quarterly payments. The funds shall be allocated to senior companion and foster grandparents programs.

Congregate Housing Program

The Congregate Housing Program was established in NH in 1987, but in 1995 HUD stopped funding the development of new congregate housing programs. The program has been in suspension since SFY 12/13 (9 years). One of the main reasons for suspension was the lack of and decrease in HUD funding resulting in the closure of several sites. SFY 12/13 was the last biennium that HUD funding was appropriated and the programs that remained came up with the match without support from state General Funds.

NH State General Funds for the Program were suspended in the Laws of 2011, House Bill 2 (224:278) for the biennium ending June 30, 2013. In SFY 20/21, the program was funded at \$750,000 each year and the repeal language is submitted to administratively right side the SFY 20/21 funding of a program that was suspended.

As background, in the 1987 session, the NH Legislature passed House Bill 373-FN-A to develop a Congregate Housing Program for the NH (See statute below). The State budget appropriated \$240,000 (biennium) State General Fund to

contract with housing partners to support the program. States paid 50% of the cost for each participant, HUD contributed 40% and each participant contributed 10%.

The state general funds appropriated for the program provided the required match contribution for what was anticipated to develop into a large-scale federally funded supportive services program for older and/or disabled public housing residents. Beyond the original sites that were developed, further development did not materialize because the policy direction of HUD shifted away from supportive services in public housing to home ownership in 1995. While HUD provided no new funding to expand the CHSP after 1995, it continued its financial support of the existing CHSP program "slots" that had been established; as long as participating housing authorities were able to continue to provide the 50% match.

Over the years, there was interest in expanding congregate housing, but this never materialized due to HUD's cessation of additional funding as of 1995. One of the main reasons for suspension in the 2012-2013 biennium was the cessation of HUD funding.

161-F:37 Administration; Services. –

I. The congregate services program shall be administered through the department. The congregate services shall be provided through a qualified service provider under contract with the department. The experience acquired through each congregate services program shall be shared with other congregate services programs established anywhere in the state.

II. Congregate services shall be provided on a full-time basis. Eligible recipients shall contribute financially toward the services. Eligibility and cost for these services shall be determined by rules adopted by the commissioner under RSA 161-F:38.

III. Administrative costs of the department shall not exceed 8 percent of the total state appropriation for congregate services programs.

IV. The department or qualified service provider shall be eligible to receive private or public grants. Private or public grants shall be in addition to funding appropriated by the state.

*Please note that there are no BEAS staff assigned to support these programs since the programs have been suspended for nine years.