
Judiciary Committee

HB 1734

Title: An act relating to creation of the one family one team public-private court innovation demonstration.

Brief Description: Creating the one family one team public-private innovation demonstration.

Sponsors: Representatives Kagi, Walsh, Rodne, Fey, Jinkins, Pettigrew, Carlyle and McBride.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Directs the Administrative Office of the Courts to participate in a One Family One Team Public-Private Partnership (Partnership) that supports innovation in dependency court proceedings.
- Provides that the Partnership must design and administer a court demonstration program to provide grants to superior courts that commit to implementing an early resolution intervention model and multi-disciplinary team-based approach for resolving child welfare cases.
- Establishes the One Family One Team Public-Private Partnership Account to receive funds appropriated by the Legislature and provided by private sources to support the Partnership, and makes public funding of the grant program contingent on private match.

Hearing Date: 2/10/15

Staff: Edie Adams (786-7180).

Background:

The state's superior courts handle a variety of family and juvenile cases. Family court cases include proceedings involving dissolution, parenting plans, child custody and support, paternity, and adoption. Juvenile court is division of superior court that handles cases involving juveniles including juvenile offenses, dependencies, termination of parental rights, at risk youth and children in need of services out-of-home placements, and emancipation of minors.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

The Family and Juvenile Court Improvement Program (FJCIP) was established in 2008 to provide grants to superior courts to implement plans for improving the handling of family and juvenile court cases, especially child dependency cases, consistent with Unified Family Court (UFC) principles. UFC is a model for handling cases involving children and families based on the following principles: the assignment of one judicial team to one family; centralized case management; specialized education for judicial officers; judicial assignments for longer terms to provide continuity; and mandatory mediation in certain cases.

The Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) administers the FJCIP. A court wishing to receive FJCIP grant money must submit a plan that meets criteria consistent with UFC principles and that: (1) commits to a chief judge assignment to the family and juvenile court for a minimum of two years; (2) implements the principal of one judicial team hearing all proceedings in a case involving one family, especially in dependency cases; and (3) requires family and juvenile court commissioners and judges to receive a minimum of 30 hours of specialized training in family and juvenile matters within six months of assuming family and juvenile court duties.

Thirteen superior courts currently receive FJCIP funding to improve their family and juvenile court programs: Asotin with Columbia and Garfield; Clallam and Jefferson; King; Pierce; Snohomish; Chelan; Island; Kitsap; Spokane; and Thurston.

Summary of Bill:

The Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) is directed to participate in the One Family One Team Public-Private Partnership (Partnership). The Partnership is a non-governmental public-private partnership that supports innovation in dependency court proceedings that provide well-trained and committed judicial leaders, an early resolution intervention, and a multidisciplinary team.

The Partnership must identify private funding that will be matched with public funding for a court demonstration program. The Partnership may receive staff support and meeting space from a private nonprofit organization dedicated to reforming the juvenile justice and child welfare systems in the state.

The Partnership must spend the first year designing and planning a court demonstration program to provide grants to superior courts wishing to implement an early resolution intervention model for resolving child welfare cases. The Partnership must convene a planning and design committee, co-chaired by a superior court representative and a member of the private partners, to identify an early resolution intervention model by December 1, 2015. The Partnership must provide to the Legislature by January 1, 2016, a statement of the public and private funding required in order to provide demonstration grants to four counties.

The Partnership must design grant guidelines and selection criteria based on a contractual agreement with the AOC, and if public funding is made available, administer a competitive grant program open to superior courts in the state. Grant applications must meet the following criteria:

- agreement that all involved entities will fully participate in the demonstration;
- commitment to provide judicial officers with ongoing training in issues unique to child welfare court;

- assignment of judicial officers to family or juvenile court matters for a minimum of two years with the option to stay longer;
- creation of a team-based approach in child welfare cases and provision of cross-system training to the team;
- implementation of an early resolution component; and
- participation in an evaluation conducted by an entity with expertise in child welfare systems research.

The One Family One Team Public-Private Partnership Account is created. All funds appropriated by the Legislature and provided by other sources to support the Partnership must be deposited in the account. The AOC may authorize expenditures from the account. Beginning August 1, 2015, the AOC must only use funds in the account to contract with the Partnership to design and administer planning grants. Expenditures may be made only after private funds are committed.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.