
Appropriations Committee

HB 1498

Brief Description: Concerning domestic violence co-responder programs.

Sponsors: Representatives Davis, Couture, Macri, Griffey, Walen, Reed, Simmons, Goodman, Parshley, Leavitt, Pollet, Hill, Salahuddin and Scott.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Creates the Domestic Violence Co-Responder Account (Account).
- Establishes an additional \$100 fee on marriage licenses and requires revenues from the fee to be deposited into the Account.
- Requires expenditures from the Account to only be used for a new Domestic Violence Co-Responder Grant Program administered by the Office of Crime Victims Advocacy.

Hearing Date: 1/29/25

Staff: Jessica Van Horne (786-7288).

Background:

Marriage License Fees.

Marriage license fees are established by statute. The fees are collected by the county auditor at the time of application for a marriage license. Some fees are specific to marriage licenses, including:

- an \$8 fee for the issuance of a marriage license;
- a \$5 fee for activities to prevent child abuse and neglect, to be transmitted to the state General Fund; and
- a \$10 fee to be deposited into the state General Fund for activities for the purposes of the Displaced Homemaker Act, which expired in 2015.

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

A county legislative authority may impose additional fees on marriage licenses to fund certain purposes, including a fee of up to \$15 for the purpose of funding family services such as family support centers, and a fee of up to \$8 for the purpose of funding family court services.

In addition to fees specific to marriage licenses, there are other document recording fees and surcharges that apply to all documents recorded by the county auditor. Examples include, but are not limited to, a \$5 fee for the first page of a recorded instrument, and a \$5 surcharge to support the preservation of historic documents of county offices and departments.

Due to the ability of counties to impose additional fees at the discretion of the county legislative authority, the total cost to obtain a marriage license varies on a county-by-county basis, ranging from \$36 to \$72 per license depending on the county in which a couple applies.

Office of Crime Victims Advocacy.

The Office of Crime Victims Advocacy (OCVA) is housed within the Department of Commerce. Among other activities, the OCVA administers grant programs for services to victims of crime and prevention activities as authorized by state or federal legislation, budget, or executive order.

Summary of Bill:

An additional \$100 fee is imposed on marriage licenses, increasing the total cost to obtain a marriage license from a range of \$36 to \$72 per license, to \$136 to \$172 per license, depending on the county in which the license is obtained.

The Domestic Violence Co-Responder Account (Account) is created. The Account is an appropriated account. All revenues from the new \$100 fee on marriage licenses must be deposited into the Account. Expenditures from the Account may only be used for a new Domestic Violence Co-Responder Grant Program (Program) administered by the Office of Crime Victims Advocacy. The Program must award matching grants to cities and counties for the purpose of establishing and operating domestic violence co-responder programs, provide technical assistance and training for grantees, and provide contracted services to assist grantees in billing health insurance for domestic violence co-responder services. A "domestic violence co-responder program" is a program using domestic violence victim advocates that are summoned by law enforcement to the scene of a domestic violence incident and that provide whole family support, resource connection, and care navigation for victims.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 21, 2025.

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