

Legislative Analysis



DOULA SCHOLARSHIP FUND

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<http://www.house.mi.gov/hfa>

House Bill 5826 (S-1) as passed by the Senate

Sponsor: Rep. Mai Xiong

House Committee: Health Policy [Discharged]

Senate Committee: Housing and Human Services

Complete to 12-10-24

Analysis available at
<http://www.legislature.mi.gov>

SUMMARY:

House Bill 5826 would create a doula scholarship program under which the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) could award one-time scholarships of up to \$3,000 for the costs of doula training for Michigan residents who demonstrate insufficient financial resources to complete that training without financial assistance.

A doula is an individual who provides continuous physical, emotional, and informational support to a mother before, during, and shortly after childbirth to help the mother achieve a healthy and satisfying childbirth experience.

Scholarship program

An individual could apply for a scholarship by completing an application on a form provided by DHHS, including a signed statement of intent to become a doula in Michigan, and providing proof of residency, in addition to meeting the financial hardship requirement and any other standards established in DHHS rules. In addition, for the individual to be eligible, DHHS would have to determine that they will serve as a doula in a health professional shortage area¹ or with a medically underserved population.²

Financial hardship could be demonstrated through household income or through receipt of financial assistance under such programs as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), or the Social Security Administration SSI program, among other programs.

Eligible costs could include costs for such things as books, workshop fees, examination fees, and membership fees. The doula training would have to be approved by the Michigan Doula Advisory Council in DHHS.³ An individual could not receive more than one scholarship award.

¹ As defined in federal law (42 USC 254e): <https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/42/254e>

² As defined in federal law (42 USC 254b): <https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/42/254b>

³ <https://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs/keep-mi-healthy/maternal-and-infant-health/mdhhs-doula-initiative/doula-advisory-council>

See also <https://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs/-/media/Project/Websites/mdhhs/Maternal-and-Infant-Health/Michigan-Doula-Advisory-Guidelines.pdf>

For a list of approved training programs (as of November 2023), see: <https://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs/-/media/Project/Websites/mdhhs/Maternal-and-Infant-Health/MDHHS-Approved-Doula-Training-Programs.pdf>

Within six months after receiving an award, the recipient would have to document to DHHS that they have completed doula training, or are working toward it, or else DHHS would have to seek repayment of the award.

DHHS would have to publicize the scholarship program in partnership with universities, nonprofit organizations, and any other appropriate entities.

DHHS would have to promulgate rules to implement the above provisions.

Doula Scholarship Fund

The bill also would create the Doula Scholarship Fund in the state treasury. The state treasurer could receive assets from any source for the fund and would be responsible for managing the fund's investment and earnings. Money in the fund at the close of the fiscal year would not lapse to the general fund.

DHHS could spend money in the Doula Scholarship Fund, upon appropriation, only for the purpose of providing scholarships under the bill.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The bill would have no immediate fiscal impact on the Department of Health and Human Services or local units of government. Grant distributions and administrative costs would be dependent upon appropriations by the legislature.

The enrolled omnibus for fiscal year 2024-25 appropriations includes a one-time appropriation within the DHHS budget of \$2.9 million for doula training and continuing education. See section 1948 of Article 6 of Enrolled Senate Bill 747 for additional details.⁴

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⁴ <https://www.legislature.mi.gov/Bills/Bill?ObjectName=2024-SB-0747>

■ This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan House Fiscal Agency staff for use by House members in their deliberations and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.