



[HF 705](#) – Guardian Ad Litem Visits (LSB2432HV)
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Fiscal Note Version – New

Description

[House File 705](#) specifies that a guardian ad litem for a child is required to visit the home, residence, or both home and residence of the child monthly.

Background

The State Public Defender is authorized to make payment from the Indigent Defense Fund for the fees and expenses for an appointed guardian ad litem in a juvenile court proceeding. The State Public Defender pays for the time the guardian ad litem spends visiting with the child or carrying out any of the guardian ad litem's other statutory duties pursuant to Iowa Code section [232.2\(22\)](#).

Assumptions

- Beginning in FY 2020 there will be 6,051 sibling groups who annual receive guardian ad litem services paid for by the Indigent Defense Fund. This is similar to the number served in FY 2018.
- Guardians ad litem currently make an average of three visits per year; therefore; nine additional visits would be necessary.
- The total amount of time and travel for each visit is unknown due to the unavailability of historical data. Travel expenses would include mileage on shorter trips. Longer trips could involve hotels, meals, airfare, and car rental. For this estimate, each visit, including travel time, is assumed to take three hours.
- The hourly reimbursement rate for guardian ad litem services is \$60.
- The current number of assignments that the four State Public Defender field offices handle is unknown. As currently staffed, the offices may need to decline or withdraw from additional court-appointed cases, in which case the court would have to appoint a private attorney, adding to the Indigent Defense Fund impact.

Fiscal Impact

The four State Public Defender field offices that engage in guardian ad litem work for juveniles in juvenile court proceedings would have to spend an increased amount of time and travel to comply with the provisions of this Bill. The Bill is estimated to increase expenditures from the Indigent Defense Fund by \$9.8 million annually due to the increase in expense claims. However, due to the unknown travel costs and further impacts to the State Public Defender field offices, the impact could be higher.

Sources

State Public Defender

/s/ Holly M. Lyons

March 18, 2019

The fiscal note for this Bill was prepared pursuant to Joint Rule 17 and the Iowa Code. Data used in developing this fiscal note is available from the Fiscal Services Division of the Legislative Services Agency upon request.
