

Vermont Legislative Joint Fiscal Office

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FISCAL NOTE

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H. 968 - An act relating to the Vermont Coronavirus Economic Stimulus Equity Program *As passed by the House Committee on Appropriations*

The proposal would establish the Vermont Coronavirus Economic Stimulus Equity Program. To be eligible for the program, applicants must certify that they:

- are a resident of Vermont;
- were ineligible to receive an economic impact payment under the federal CARES Act due to reasons of immigration status; and
- had an adjusted gross income of less than \$99,000.00 in taxable year 2019 or, if filing jointly, an adjusted gross income of less than \$198,000.00 in taxable year 2019.

Under the program, each eligible adult would receive \$1,200.00 and \$500.00 for each eligible child. While it is not known how many people could be impacted by this program, data provided from multiple sources suggest approximately 3,500 to 4,000 adults and up to 1,000 children could receive benefits from this program. This includes approximately:

- 3,000 undocumented adults.¹
 - Of which approximately 1,250 work in Vermont's dairy industry.²
- 500 citizens and legal permanent residents (who are green card holders) who file taxes with undocumented spouses.³
- 0 - 500 immigrants with lawful status but do not have Social Security numbers.
 - Examples include student visa holders, asylum applicants awaiting work authorizations, spouses and/or dependents who have been petitioned by citizens, etc.
- 500 - 1,000 children.⁴
- Note: These estimates are consistent with a 2016 report from Pew Research Center that estimated that there were "fewer than 5,000" undocumented people in Vermont.⁵

Based on these estimates, the program as fully rolled out is estimated to cost between \$4,450,000.00 and \$5,300,000.00. Just as there is uncertainty as to the number of people in

¹ Data extrapolated from [The Contributions of New Americans in Vermont](#), by the New American Economy (2016).

² Estimates by researchers at the University of Vermont (UVM), UVM Extension Program, and Migrant Justice.

³ [American Immigration Council](#).

⁴ Data from multiple sources including Migrant Justice, U.S. Census Data, Pew Research Center, UVM, UVM Ext.

⁵ [U.S. unauthorized immigrant population estimates by state, 2016](#). Pew Research Center.

Vermont that could be eligible for this benefit, it is also difficult to estimate what the take-up rate of the program would be. Much will depend on how the program is administered, the complexity of the application process, outreach, and how much trust the intended beneficiaries have for the state and/or the administering entity.

The program will be administered by the Agency of Administration (AOA) in consultation with Executive Director of Racial Equity and the Agency of Human Services (AHS). The bill allows the AOA to partner with other state agencies and departments as well as non-governmental entities to promote and implement the program and allows the agency to use up to \$50,000.00 of the funds appropriated for the administration of the program.

Appropriation = \$5,000,000.00

- The bill makes available \$5,000,000.00 to the AOA for the payment of grants and the administration of the program.
 - \$2,000,000.00 will come from the General Fund.
 - *Note: The Governor's FY2021 budget restatement proposed appropriating \$2,000,000.00 from the General Fund for this program.*
 - \$3,000,000.00 will come from funds appropriated to the Judiciary from the Tobacco Litigation Fund in 2018 (and amended in 2019) to address adjudication of Children in Need of Supervision Cases (CHINS).⁶
 - Any remaining funds that have not been awarded on or before June 30, 2021 will revert back to the Tobacco Litigation Fund to be used for the CHINS program.

⁶ 2018 (Sp. Sess.) Acts and Resolves No. 11, Sec. 106 as amended by 2019 Acts and Resolves No. 6, Sec. 91.