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H.B. 472
(1_136_1067-2)
136th General Assembly

Fiscal Note & Local Impact Statement

[Click here for H.B. 472's Bill Analysis](#)

Version: In House Children and Human Services

Primary Sponsors: Reps. Cockley and Salvo

Local Impact Statement Procedure Required: Yes

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Highlights

- The Ohio Department of Health (ODH) and local boards of health will experience a decrease in revenue related to providing free birth certificates to individuals experiencing homelessness. Total losses will depend on the number of qualified individuals seeking a birth certificate, as well as the fees charged by individual local boards.
- The Children's Trust Fund (Fund 1980) and the Family Violence Prevention Fund (Fund 5BK0) will also experience decreases in revenues, as certain portions of birth certificate fees are deposited in these funds. Again, total losses will depend on the number of individuals who obtain a certificate for free.
- The Bureau of Motor Vehicles (BMV) may incur a minimal loss in revenue to provide state identification cards (ID) cards at no cost for individuals under the age of 17 who are experiencing homelessness.
- Probate courts and clerks of the courts of common pleas may incur a minimal loss in fee revenue to provide copies of certified abstracts of marriage; certificates of divorce, annulment, or dissolution; and certified records of a name to persons experiencing homelessness.

Detailed Analysis

The bill eliminates fees (1) for copies of birth certificates issued to individuals experiencing homelessness, (2) for state identification (ID) cards issued to individuals under the age of 17 experiencing homelessness, and (3) for copies of certified abstracts of marriage; certificates of divorce, annulment, or dissolution; and certified records of a name change. It also eliminates fees for duplicate or reprint ID cards for these same individuals.

Ohio Department of Health (ODH) and local boards of health

As stated above, the bill eliminates all fees for a certified birth record, a certification of birth, or a replacement birth record for individuals experiencing homelessness. In order for the fee to be waived, one of the following must verify that an individual is experiencing homelessness: a government or nonprofit agency that provides services to such individuals; a school social worker, counselor, or local educational agency liaison for homeless children and youths; a federal TRIO program or Gaining Early Awareness Readiness for Undergraduate Program; or a financial aid administrator for an institution of higher education.

Fiscal impact

ODH and local boards of health will experience a decrease in revenue to provide free birth certificates to individuals experiencing homelessness. Total losses will depend on the number of qualified individuals seeking a birth certificate under the bill, as well as the additional fees charged by local boards. Impacts will also depend on how an individual obtains a free birth certificate – either directly from the Bureau of Vital Statistics or from the local department/office. The Children’s Trust Fund (Fund 1980) under the Department of Children and Youth (DCY) and the Family Violence Prevention Fund (Fund 5BK0) under the Department of Public Safety (DPS) will also experience decreases in revenues, as portions of birth certificate fees are deposited into these funds. The following sections provide a description of vital certificate revenue and disposition, as well as homelessness statistics.

Vital certificate fee structure

There are currently three options for obtaining a certified copy of a birth certificate: online, by mail, or in person. For the first two methods, the state Bureau of Vital Statistics charges a total fee of \$21.50. Individuals who obtain a copy by going to one of the local boards of health may pay a higher fee amount, as boards are permitted to establish fees in excess of \$21.50 to cover their costs. As a result, the fees charged for going in person to obtain a copy varies by local boards. The Ohio Revised Code requires certain portions of vital certificate fees to be used for several purposes, including providing funding for the Children’s Trust Fund and the Family Violence Prevention Fund. The table below provides a breakdown of the fee.

Vital Certificate Fee ¹ (Local Fees Not Included)	
Vital record certification fee*	\$12.00
Vital statistics modernization and operations fee	\$5.00
Children’s Trust Fund**	\$3.00
Family Violence Prevention Fund**	\$1.50
Total Vital Certificate Fee	\$21.50

*Local offices may retain \$8 of this fee.

**Local offices may retain 3%.

¹ R.C. 3109.14, 3705.24, and 3705.242 and Ohio Administrative Code (O.A.C.) 3701-5-03.

The vital record certification fee, which is at least \$12, must be collected for each certificate issued. If the certificate is issued by the state Bureau of Vital Statistics, this fee is deposited into the General Operations Fund (Fund 4700), used by ODH. The Ohio Revised Code requires a local office to forward \$4 of this fee for each certificate it issues to ODH. ODH is required to use this portion to support public health systems. If the fee is collected by a local board, \$1 of this amount is to be used by ODH to pay subsidies to local boards of health. Local offices may retain the remaining \$8, and as mentioned above, may charge an additional fee to cover their own administrative costs.

There is also a \$5 fee to support the operations and modernization of the vital records program. A local board is required to forward all revenues it collects to ODH from this portion of the overall fee. Funds forwarded by the local boards or collected directly from the Bureau of Vital Statistics are deposited into Fund 4700 as well.

Additionally, there is a \$3 fee for the benefit of the Children's Trust Fund (Fund 1980), which funds programs designed to prevent child abuse and neglect under DCY. Lastly, there is a \$1.50 fee for the benefit of the Family Violence Prevention Fund (Fund 5BK0), which is to be used by DPS to provide grants to family violence shelters and to operate the Division of Criminal Justice Services. Local offices may retain up to 3% of each of these two fees for administrative purposes.

Losses to the Bureau of Vital Statistics will be realized in ODH's General Operations Fund (Fund 4700). Losses to local boards of health will include the \$8 that may be retained from the certification fee as well as any additional fee that a local board may charge. ODH's General Operations Fund is also used to provide subsidies to local boards of health, so any reduction in the fund could also impact local boards. There are over 100 vital statistics offices located in the state, according to ODH's Registrar Directory.² The majority of the offices charge \$25, but fees generally range from between \$22 and \$32. If a local board of health charges \$25, it retains \$11.50 and forwards \$13.50 to the state. Thus, a local board charging \$25 would lose \$11.50 for any free birth certificates issued in accordance with the bill's provisions.³

Homelessness statistics

The magnitude of potential revenue loss will depend on the number of individuals who will qualify under the bill to receive a birth certificate for free. However, it is difficult to come up with an estimate regarding the number of Ohioans who experience homelessness each year and the number of these individuals who would seek a free birth certificate.

The 2024 Annual Homelessness Assessment Report to Congress (AHAR), from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (U.S. HUD), found that on a single night in January 2024, nearly 11,800 Ohioans experienced either sheltered or unsheltered

² ODH [Registrar Directory \(PDF\)](#), which may be accessed by conducting a "registrar directory" keyword search on ODH's website, odh.ohio.gov. However, this document was last updated in April 2025. Some local offices have updated their fee schedules since this publication.

³ LBO's local impact threshold is a "yes" if a county or city with a population over 5,000 has costs of \$5,000 or more. If a local board charged a fee of \$25 and provided about 435 free birth certificates, the loss of revenue could exceed this amount. This number of free birth certificates could perhaps happen in larger counties.

homelessness.⁴ Since this data is a point-in-time estimate, it does not capture the total number of people experiencing homelessness each year. The unsheltered homeless population may be undercounted due to the difficulty in locating these individuals, as well as the capacity for local communities to conduct the unsheltered count. Additionally, the AHAR does not count individuals who are temporarily staying with family or friends, or those who are incarcerated or hospitalized. For these reasons, it is difficult to determine how many total individuals are experiencing homelessness and could potentially receive a birth certificate for free. To show the potential differences in point-in-time and annual data, Cuyahoga County's Strategic Action Plan for Homelessness, stated that in 2022, point-in-time data showed that almost 1,410 individuals experienced homelessness on a given night; however, the actual annual number estimated to experience homelessness in Cuyahoga County is about 5,000.⁵ As a result, it is likely that many more Ohioans, than the number estimated in the AHAR data, could experience homelessness in a year. Because of this, it is difficult to determine how many individuals could qualify for free birth certificates.

Bureau of Motor Vehicles

Under current law, state ID cards are provided by the Bureau of Motor Vehicles (BMV) free of charge to individuals 17 and older, regardless of their living situation. By expanding eligibility to obtain a state ID card at no cost to include individuals under the age of 17 who are experiencing homelessness, the bill may result in a minimal loss in revenue that would otherwise have been collected for the issuance of each of those cards. The number of potential new cards that could be issued is negligible. According to the abovementioned AHAR, there were a total of 3,357 people in families with children in Ohio experiencing homelessness in 2024. The number of those who are under the age of 17 and would receive a free state ID card under the bill is indeterminate but is presumably a smaller subset of that total number.

The BMV currently produces state ID cards at a cost of \$1.47 per card, and for individuals under the age of 17, collects a fee of \$10 (for a four-year state ID card) or \$19 (for an eight-year state ID card). State ID card fee revenue is credited to the Public Safety – Highway Purposes Fund (Fund 5TMO), which is used in part to pay the BMV's expenses related to titling motor vehicles, licensing drivers, and registering motor vehicles. The impact to the BMV and to Fund 5TMO will ultimately depend on the number of individuals under the age of 17 who are experiencing homelessness that seek to obtain a free state ID card.

The bill also eliminates the fees for duplicate or reprint state ID cards for individuals 17 or older who are experiencing homelessness. The fee to obtain such a card is \$9, however, the BMV does not currently charge a duplicate or reprint fee for this age group regardless of their living situation.

⁴ The [2024 Annual Homelessness Assessment Report to Congress \(PDF\)](#), can be found by conducting a keyword "homelessness" search on the U.S. HUD website, [huduser.gov](https://www.huduser.gov).

⁵ [Cuyahoga County Strategic Action Plan for Homelessness \(PDF\)](#), which can be found on Cuyahoga County's website: hhs.cuyahogacounty.gov.

Courts of common pleas

The bill requires fees for (1) a copy of a certified abstract of marriage, (2) a certificate of divorce, annulment, or dissolution, and (3) a certified record of a name change to be waived if the record is requested by a person experiencing homelessness. Under continuing law, probate courts are authorized to collect \$2 for a copy of a certified abstract of marriage, and the clerk of the court of common pleas is authorized to collect a fee of \$2 for a certificate of divorce, annulment, or dissolution and \$1 for each page for copies of pleadings, process, record, or files, including certificate and seal. The number of individuals who would receive a fee waiver under the bill is indeterminate but is presumably low relative to all individuals requesting documents statewide. The resulting fee revenue loss is expected to be minimal.

Synopsis of Fiscal Effect Changes

The substitute bill (I_136_1067-2) includes new provisions requiring (1) a probate judge to waive all fees for a certified abstract of marriage if the abstract is requested by an individual experiencing homelessness and (2) a clerk of a common pleas court to waive all fees for a certified record of a name change or a certificate of divorce, annulment, or dissolution of marriage if the record or certificate is requested by an individual who is experiencing homelessness. The number of individuals who would receive a fee waiver under the bill is indeterminate but is presumably low relative to all individuals requesting documents statewide. The resulting fee revenue loss is expected to be minimal. The substitute bill also adds additional persons who may sign an application for an identification card, for which there would be no fiscal impact.