



2025-2026 General Assembly

SENATE BILL 257: 2026 Appropriations Act, Sec. 9H.1: Local Health Departments/Competitive Grant Process to Improve Maternal and Child Health

Analysis of: S.L. 2026-41, Sec. 9H.1

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Section 9H.1 of S.L. 2026-41 (Senate Bill 257) requires funds allocated to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to be used to continue funding competitive grants to local health departments to improve maternal and child health, with the following goals:

- Improving birth outcomes.
- Improving the overall status of children's health from birth to age five.
- Lowering infant mortality.

Administration of the grant process must include the following:

- A request for application allowing local health departments to apply for and receive funds on a competitive basis.
- A requirement that the applications of local health departments who can leverage non-State funds be prioritized.
- Ensuring that funds received by DHHS to implement the grant program do not supplant existing funds.
- Allowing the grants to be awarded for up to three years.

DHHS must award the grants by July 1 of each year. After the grants have been awarded, DHHS must submit a report to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Health and Human Services containing the following:

- The identity and a brief description of each grantee and each program or initiative offered by the grantee.
- The amount of funding awarded to each grantee.
- The number of persons served by each grantee, broken down by program or initiative.

No later than February 1 of each fiscal year, each local health department receiving funds must submit the following to the Division of Public Health:

- A description of the types of programs, services, and activities funded by the grant.
- Statistical and demographical information on the number of persons served by the programs.
- Outcome measures that demonstrate the impact and effectiveness of the programs.
- A detailed program budget and list of expenditures.

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This section became effective July 1, 2026.