



VERMONT LEGISLATIVE
Joint Fiscal Office

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Fiscal Note

May 23, 2025

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S.56 – An act relating to creating an Office of New Americans

As passed by the General Assembly^{1,i}

Bill Summary

This bill proposes to create an Office of New Americans Study Committee to make recommendations for creating an independent Office of New Americans.

The proposed committee would cost approximately \$6,200 in per diem and expense reimbursements to the Agency of Human Services across fiscal years 2026 and 2027.

Fiscal Impact

Members of the Committee would be entitled to per diem compensation and expense reimbursement for not more than 10 meetings, resulting in an estimated cost of \$6,200 to the Agency of Human Services (AHS). Act 27 (2025), the fiscal year 2026 appropriations act, appropriates \$6,200 to AHS for this purpose.

Background and Details

Office of New Americans Study Committee

The bill would create an Office of New Americans Study Committee to make recommendations for creating an independent Office of New Americans. As passed by the House, the Committee would be comprised of nine members:

- The Director of the Vermont Refugee Office, who shall be Chair;
- One member appointed by the Commissioner of Labor;
- One member appointed by the Executive Director of the Office of Racial Equity; and
- Six members appointed by the Governor, one who must be a New American with lived experience, who shall include:
 - One member nominated by the Association of Africans Living in Vermont;
 - One member nominated by the U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants;
 - One member nominated by the Vermont Afghan Alliance;
 - One member nominated by the Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation;
 - One member nominated by Migrant Justice; and
 - One member nominated by the Vermont State College System.

¹ The Joint Fiscal Office (JFO) is a nonpartisan legislative office dedicated to producing unbiased fiscal analysis – this fiscal note is meant to provide information for legislative consideration, not to provide policy recommendations.

The Committee would be charged with studying and submitting a written report to legislative committees concerning recommendations for creating an independent Office of New Americans. The Committee would have the administrative, technical, and legal assistance of AHS. The first meeting of the Committee would be required to be called on or before September 1, 2025, and the report would be required to be submitted on or before September 1, 2026. The Committee would cease to exist on the earlier of September 1, 2026 or the date that the Committee submits its written report.

Fiscal Impact

Members of the Committee would be entitled to per diem compensation and reimbursement of expenses as permitted under 32 V.S.A. § 1010 for not more than 10 meetings. These payments would be made from monies appropriated to AHS. These costs would average approximately \$124 per member per meeting. If five members are eligible for reimbursement for 10 meetings,² the total cost would be approximately \$6,200. This cost may be due in both fiscal years 2026 and 2027 depending on the timeframe of the Committee's work.

Section B.1100(e)(2) of Act 27 (2025), the fiscal year 2026 appropriations act, appropriates \$6,200 to AHS on a one-time basis for per diems and expense reimbursement for members of the Committee.

For attendance at meetings when the General Assembly is not in session, a legislative member of the Committee would be entitled to per diem compensation and reimbursement of expenses for not more than 10 meetings. These payments would be made from monies appropriated to the General Assembly. The bill, as passed by the Senate, proposes no legislative members but there is a possibility that a legislative member could be appointed if they fit the membership criteria set forth in the bill. If a legislator is appointed to the Committee, the cost would be approximately \$250 per legislator per meeting.

¹ *The full fiscal note history is available on the fiscal tab of the bill page on the General Assembly website and can be pulled up through a bill number search on the JFO page.*

² This cost estimate assumes that five of the six Governor appointees might be eligible for compensation, while the member nominated by the Vermont State College System might be an employee not entitled to it.