

<b>FROM</b>	<b>NAME &amp; TITLE</b>	Laura Larsen, Budget Director	CITY of <b>BALTIMORE</b> <b>MEMO</b>	
	<b>AGENCY NAME &amp; ADDRESS</b>	Bureau of the Budget and Management Research Room 469, City Hall		
	<b>SUBJECT</b>	City Council Bill 23-0416 – Baltimore City Office of Returning Citizens		

DATE:

**TO**

The Honorable President and  
Members of the City Council  
City Hall, Room 400

February 26, 2024

**Position: Does Not Oppose**

The Department of Finance is herein reporting on City Council Bill 23-0416, Baltimore City Office of Returning Citizens, the purpose of which is to establish a Baltimore City Office of Returning Citizens and the Re-Entry Action Council. The Office of Returning Citizens will be responsible for advocating for returning citizens; coordinating and monitoring service delivery that promotes general welfare, empowerment, and reintegration of returning citizens; collaborating with Federal, State, and private agency stakeholders; participating in public hearings; providing input on and developing legislation and policies that will impact returning citizens; and developing and submitting an annual report to the Mayor and City Council. The Re-Entry Action Council will be responsible for advising the Office, Mayor, and City Council on issues relating to returning citizens and collaborating and consulting with the Office on matters relating to the discharge of the Office’s duties.

**Background**

The proposed legislation seeks to create a new office within the Mayor’s Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement (MONSE) that will be responsible for advocating for returning citizens; coordinating and monitoring service delivery to returning citizens; promoting the general welfare, empowerment, and reintegration of returning citizens; developing sustainable relationships and coordinating with Federal, State, and private agencies that work with returning citizens; developing and proposing City policy; participating in public hearings; promoting community dialogue on related issues; providing input on legislation and policies that will impact returning citizens; and developing and submitting an annual report to the Mayor and City Council.

Currently, MONSE administers grant programming to provide case management and safe return planning for returning citizens. These services are provided in partnership with the Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS) and are funded through MONSE’s \$50 million American Rescue Plan Act award. MONSE also partners with DPSCS to provide the Returning Citizens Behind the Wall program, which provides job training and paid employment opportunities for returning citizens. This program is also supported by MONSE’s violence prevention and community intervention APRA award.

The proposed legislation also seeks to create a Re-Entry Action Council that will be responsible for advising the Office, Mayor, and City Council on issues relating to returning citizens and collaborating and consulting with the Office on matters relating to the discharge of the Office’s duties.

**Fiscal Impact**

The Department of Finance anticipates a total cost of \$159,704 to enact this legislation. The proposed legislation requires establishment of a Director position that will be responsible for administration and

oversight of the Office. Based on discussions with MONSE, the Community Engagement and Opportunity Associate Director position, currently supported by MONSE’s ARPA award, would direct the Office. ARPA support for this position will end on December 31, 2024. Thus, support for this position would transition to the General Fund during Fiscal 2025.

There is no additional General Fund impact anticipated from this legislation because funding for new positions and programming is subject to approval as part of the annual budget process.

**Other Considerations**

There are three additional factors that City Council should consider when reviewing this legislation. First, discussions with MONSE yielded an estimated cost of \$4.80 million to support an Office that provides a comprehensive range of programming supported by seven additional positions. The table below details the total personnel and non-personnel costs associated with this model:

<b>Expense</b>	<b>Total Positions</b>	<b>Total Cost</b>
Personnel	7	\$820,514
Non-Personnel	-	\$3,984,248
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>\$4,804,762</b>

*Personnel*

Finance anticipates that the Office would require seven newly funded positions supported by General Funds. Based on analysis by MONSE, the seven additional positions will be needed to manage the Office and implement coordination and delivery of services to returning citizens in the areas of: employment and career development; health care; education; housing; and social services. These positions include: a Re-Entry Deputy Director; a Navigator; a Career Navigator; two Housing Locators; and two Case Managers. Currently, the Re-Entry Deputy Director, which is supported by ARPA funding, assists in managing MONSE’s re-entry programming and partnerships. This analysis assumes that this position will transition to General Fund funding in future years. This staffing model assumes that administrative support would be provided by current HR and Fiscal personnel within MONSE. Total projected Fiscal 2025 personnel costs for these positions are outlined in the table below:

<b>Position</b>	<b>Total Cost</b>
Re-Entry Deputy Director	\$147,312
Navigator	\$110,135
Career Navigator	\$110,135
Housing Locator (2)	\$220,270
Case Manager (2)	\$232,662
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$820,514</b>

*Non-personnel*

Finance anticipates costs for general operations, including BCIT hardware and software, as well as costs related to coordination and provision of services. The total estimated cost of coordination and provision of services is \$3.98 million. Based on analysis by MONSE, these costs would be related to: relocation of returning citizens; basic furnishing of returning citizen’s residences; hoteling and providing basic necessities and transportation to returning citizens awaiting location of permanent housing; Returning Citizens Behind the Wall programming; job training programming; and transitional employment programs. This analysis assumes that the Returning Citizens Behind the Wall programming will transition

from support by ARPA funds to General Funds. There is no anticipated service impact from this change. Total costs related to general operations and services are detailed in the table below:

<b>Service</b>	<b>Total Cost</b>
Relocation	\$1,400,000
Furniture	\$250,000
Hoteling	\$280,000
Returning Citizens Behind the Wall	\$650,000
Job Training Programming	\$125,000
Transitional Employment	\$1,275,000
BCIT Hardware	\$1,952
BCIT Software	\$2,296
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$3,984,248</b>

Second, Finance anticipates that some of the estimated costs related to the proposed Office may have no General Fund impact and will instead be supported by grant funding. However, due to the expiration of ARPA these costs will have to be picked up by the General Fund, or other grants if available. Due to the unpredictability of the frequency and value of grant awards, it is too difficult to factor this into Finance's cost estimate.

Third, successful implementation of the support services proposed by MONSE may produce benefits to the City and residents. Although it is difficult to project the cost savings related to less recidivism, a 2007 cost-benefit analysis by the Urban Institute, which examined the Maryland Reentry Partnership Initiative, estimated that a reentry program produced \$3 in benefits per dollar in costs. Benefits primarily impacted private citizens by decreasing the number and severity of crimes and impacted by City agencies by decreasing the costs dedicated to resources related to investigating crimes and arresting offenders.

### **Conclusion**

City Council Bill 23-0416, Baltimore City Office of Returning Citizens proposes to create an Office of Returning Citizens and Re-Entry Action Council to enhance the City's re-entry services for citizens returning from incarceration. This Office has potential to provide important services to vulnerable residents as well as improve public safety across the City.

Finance is supportive of this legislation, but concerned about the costs. Although the cost of enacting the legislation is minimal, building out an Office with more robust functions supported by General Funds poses a challenge with the City's current fiscal constraints.

**For the reasons stated above, the Department of Finance does not oppose City Council Bill 23-0416.**

cc: Michael Mocksten  
Nina Themelis