

HB 1705-FN - AS AMENDED BY THE HOUSE

19Feb2026... 0531h

2026 SESSION

26-2393

06/07

HOUSE BILL

***1705-FN***

AN ACT establishing an employee assistance program for small town and volunteer first responders and making an appropriation therefor.

SPONSORS: Rep. Selig, Straf. 10; Rep. Damon, Sull. 8; Rep. Drye, Sull. 7; Rep. Newell, Ches. 4; Sen. Prentiss, Dist 5

COMMITTEE: Labor, Industrial and Rehabilitative Services

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ANALYSIS

This bill establishes a fund to cover the costs of enrolling first responders from small communities into the state-provided employee assistance program (EAP) and outlines eligibility, enrollment, and reporting requirements for the department of health and human services. This bill also makes an appropriation for the fund.

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Explanation: Matter added to current law appears in ***bold italics***.  
Matter removed from current law appears ~~[in brackets and struckthrough.]~~  
Matter which is either (a) all new or (b) repealed and reenacted appears in regular type.

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

*In the Year of Our Lord Two Thousand Twenty-Six*

AN ACT establishing an employee assistance program for small town and volunteer first responders and making an appropriation therefor.

*Be it Enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court convened:*

1 1 New Sections; State-Funded Employee Assistance Program for Small Communities;  
2 Establishment of Fund. Amend RSA 281-A by inserting after section 17-f the following new sections:

3 281-A:17-g First Responders Support Fund. There is established a first responders support  
4 fund, which shall be administered by the department of health and human services. This fund shall  
5 be used for costs incurred to enroll volunteer first responders and full-time first responders from  
6 towns with 5 or fewer full-time, paid first responders into the state-provided employee assistance  
7 program (EAP). All fees, monetary grants, gifts, donations, or interest generated by these funds  
8 shall be deposited with the state treasurer in a special nonlapsing fund to be known as the first  
9 responders support fund and shall be continually appropriated to the department for the  
10 administration of this section.

11 281-A:17-h Eligibility and Enrollment.

12 I. Volunteer first responders and full-time first responders from towns with 5 or fewer full-  
13 time, paid first responders shall be eligible for the employee assistance program for small  
14 communities.

15 II. The department of health and human services shall ensure that these first responders  
16 are enrolled in the state-provided employee assistance program (EAP), which offers comprehensive  
17 support services, including those for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and post-traumatic  
18 stress (PTS).

19 III. The department of health and human services shall develop and implement guidelines  
20 for the administration of the fund, including the process for enrollment and provision of services.

21 IV. The department shall submit an annual report to the legislature detailing the usage of  
22 the fund, the number of first responders served, and the outcomes of the program.

23 2 Appropriation. The sum of \$114,000 for the biennium ending June 30, 2027, is hereby  
24 appropriated to the department of health and human services to provide coverage for volunteer first  
25 responders and full-time first responders from towns with no more than 5 full-time, paid first  
26 responders through the state-provided employee assistance program (EAP). This sum is in addition  
27 to any other sums appropriated to the department of health and human services for the biennium.  
28 The governor is authorized to draw a warrant for said sum out of any money in the treasury not  
29 otherwise appropriated.

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1           3 New Subparagraph; New Funding. Amend RSA 6:12, I(b) by inserting after subparagraph  
2 (410) the following new subparagraph:

3                   (411) Moneys deposited in the first responders support fund as established in RSA  
4 281-A:17-g.

5           4 Effective Date. This act shall take effect July 1, 2026.

**HB 1705-FN- FISCAL NOTE**  
AS AMENDED BY THE HOUSE (AMENDMENT #2026-0531h)

AN ACT                    establishing an employee assistance program for small town and volunteer first responders and making an appropriation therefor.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** This bill does not authorize new positions.

<b>Estimated State Impact</b>				
	<b>FY 2026</b>	<b>FY 2027</b>	<b>FY 2028</b>	<b>FY 2029</b>
<b>Revenue</b>	\$0	Indeterminable	Indeterminable	Indeterminable
<i>Revenue Fund(s)</i>	Gifts, grants, donations, unidentified fee revenue			
<b>Expenditures*</b>	\$0	\$114,000+	\$119,000+	\$121,000+
<i>Funding Source(s)</i>	General funds and other sources deposited into the newly-established First Responders Support Fund			
<b>Appropriations*</b>	\$0	\$114,000	\$0	\$0
<i>Funding Source(s)</i>	General Fund			

**\*Expenditure = Cost of bill**

**\*Appropriation = Authorized funding to cover cost of bill**

**METHODOLOGY:**

This bill makes community first responders eligible for participation in the state Employee Assistance Program (EAP) administered by the Department of Health and Human Services, and establishes a fund to cover the cost of supporting the new participants. The fund is authorized to accept various revenue sources, including gifts, grants, donations, and fees, although the type of fee revenue is not identified. In addition, the bill appropriates \$114,000 to the fund for the FY26/27 biennium.

The Department of Health and Human Services states that it will need to create a new position to handle the estimated increase of EAP services to qualifying first responders, including eligible family members. The cost of this position is estimated to be \$114,000 for FY 2027, \$119,000 for FY 2028, and \$121,000 for FY 2029. The remaining costs to the Department are indeterminable, as they will depend on the number of qualifying individuals who choose to utilize the services provided by the EAP.

**AGENCIES CONTACTED:**

Department of Health and Human Services