

HB 2117 -- FORGIVABLE GRANT PROGRAM FOR SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN

SPONSOR: Thomas

This bill establishes the "Forgivable Grant Program for Families of Adopted Children with Special Needs" within the Division of Senior and Disability Services within the Department of Health and Senior Services. This grant program is intended to support families who adopt children with special needs to conduct home improvements or other projects to address the child's needs.

To be eligible to apply for the Forgivable Grant Program, the following requirements must be met:

- (1) A family shall have adopted three or more children with special needs, with a minimum of two of those children living in the home for more than 18 years; and
- (2) All children living in the home shall have lived in the home for a minimum of 50 accumulative years. The children living in the home under this requirement must be foster or adopted children of the family, provided that the adoption for each child has been finalized.

Once the eligibility requirements have been met, the Division shall enter into a contract with the eligible family, which shall detail the terms associated with principal and interest, how forgiveness is earned, and terms and conditions associated with repayment of the Grant until eligibility for forgiveness has been obtained. The interest rate for the Grant shall not exceed 5%.

A family may have the Grant forgiven if the requirement described in the bill is met and the total number of years for all children living in the home, regardless of whether the children are foster or adopted children of the family, is a minimum of 100 cumulative years.

All grants under the provisions of this bill shall be made from funds appropriated by the General Assembly to the "Forgivable Grant for Families of Adopted Children with Special Needs Fund" that is created by this bill. Any moneys remaining in the Fund at the end of the biennium shall not revert to the credit of the General Revenue Fund.

To be eligible for the Program, the family and adopted children shall be residents of the state, and only years in which the adopted children live with the family in this state count toward the cumulative years.

The years that count toward the cumulative years under the provisions of this bill shall begin the year each adopted child with special needs is placed into the family's home as a foster child to the year the child reaches 21 years of age; however, years that count toward the cumulative total may be extended beyond the child turning 21 if the family has obtained a guardianship over the child from a court in this state.