

HB 1694 -- COUNTY YOUTH INITIATIVE

SPONSOR: Curtis

This bill specifies that the governing body of a city not within a county or any county of this state may, after voter approval, levy a sales tax not to exceed one-quarter of a cent for the purpose of juvenile delinquency prevention and rehabilitation programs, programs that provide opportunities for at-risk children and youth who are affected by adverse community dynamics, and programs that attempt to address the tenuous social infrastructure that often leads to crime, welfare dependency, drug and alcohol abuse, high school dropouts, and extended unemployment.

The bill creates the County Youth Initiative Fund. All sales taxes collected by the Director of the Department of Revenue under these provisions on behalf of any city or county or city not within a county, less 1% for the cost of collection, must be deposited in the fund and these funds must not be deemed to be state funds and must not be commingled with any funds of the state.

The director must keep accurate records of the amount of money in the fund and the records must be open to the inspection of officers of each city or county or city not within a county and the general public. No later than the tenth day of each month, the director must distribute all funds deposited in the fund during the preceding month by distributing the sum, as certified by the director, due the city or county or city not within a county. The director may authorize the state treasurer to make refunds from the amounts in the fund and credited to any city or county or city not within a county for erroneous payments and overpayments made and may redeem dishonored checks and drafts deposited to the credit of such counties.

When the tax prescribed by these provisions is established, the governing body of the entity creating the fund must appoint a board of directors consisting of nine members who must be residents of the city or county or city not within a county.

All board members must be appointed to serve for a term of three years, except that of the first board appointed, three members must be appointed for one-year terms, three members for two-year terms, and three members for three-year terms. Board members may be reappointed. The directors must not receive compensation for their services but may be reimbursed for their actual and necessary expenses. The board must elect a chairman, vice chairman, treasurer, and such other officers as it deems necessary for its membership.

The board is authorized to contract with public or nonprofit agencies licensed or certified where appropriate to provide qualified services and may place conditions on the use of such funds. The board must reserve the right to audit the expenditure of any and all funds and the board and any agency with which the board contracts may establish eligibility standards for the use of the funds and the receipt of services. Members of the board are prohibited from serving on the governing body, having any financial interest in, or being employed by any agency which is a recipient of funds generated under these provisions.

Any county youth initiative board of directors may vote to consolidate with a neighboring county youth initiative board of directors to combine resources and services provided.

The bill creates the "Missouri County Youth Initiative Legislative Oversight Committee." The committee must consist of four members of the House of Representatives appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives and three members of the Senate appointed by the President Pro Tempore of the Senate. No more than three of the House of Representatives members and no more than two of the Senate members can be from the same political party. The committee must ensure that all county youth initiative boards of directors in the state are audited annually and such audits must be submitted to the committee.

Members of the committee must report to the Governor, President Pro Tempore of the Senate, and Speaker of the House of Representatives on the activities of county youth initiatives throughout the state during the preceding fiscal year no later than October 1 of each year. The county youth initiative boards of directors in this state must report to the committee such information as the committee may deem necessary for its annual report. The committee must determine best practices for county youth initiatives, make suggestions for improving county youth initiative programs and services, and analyze further needs from the state perspective and the need for continuing the fund. Members of the committee are prohibited from receiving any compensation in addition to their salary as members of the General Assembly, but may receive their necessary expenses while attending meetings of the committee to be paid out of the county youth initiative fund.