

**Department of Planning and Budget**  
**2026 General Assembly Session**  
**State Fiscal Impact Statement**

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ORIGINAL

**Bill Number:** HB321

**Patron:** Glass

**Bill Title:** Agricultural Workforce Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Program established; report

**Bill Summary:** Requires the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (the Department) to establish and administer the Agricultural Workforce Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Program (the Program) to support the mental health and well-being of the agricultural workforce, as defined in the bill, in the Commonwealth. The bill requires the Program to (i) increase public awareness of mental health and suicide prevention, (ii) provide access to culturally and contextually appropriate mental health services, and (iii) address mental health challenges arising from certain stressors affecting agricultural communities in the Commonwealth. The bill directs the Department to submit a report on the Program's progress, including data collected and any recommendations, to the Chairmen of the House Committee on Agriculture, Chesapeake and Natural Resources and Senate Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Natural Resources by September 1, 2027, and biennially thereafter.

**Budget Amendment Necessary:** Yes.

**Items Impacted:** 86

**Explanation:** This bill involves the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS), which anticipates needing additional general funds to carry out its provisions, and the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS).

**Fiscal Summary:** It is anticipated that VDACS would require \$168,515 from the general fund annually to fulfill the requirements of this legislation.

**General Fund Expenditure Impact:**

| Agency       | FY2026 | FY2027           | FY2028           | FY2029           | FY2030           | FY2031           |
|--------------|--------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| 301 (VDACS)  | -      | \$168,515        | \$168,515        | \$168,515        | \$168,515        | \$168,515        |
| <b>TOTAL</b> | -      | <b>\$168,515</b> | <b>\$168,515</b> | <b>\$168,515</b> | <b>\$168,515</b> | <b>\$168,515</b> |

**Fiscal Analysis:** This impact statement is preliminary. This bill would require VDACS to provide access to mental health services, including crisis intervention, and to develop mental wellness plans. To provide such robust services, VDACS assumes the program leader will need to be a registered nurse (RN) or similarly credentialed. It is possible that VDACS could contract with an organization or organizations to provide these services. Should the bill pass, VDACS intends to pursue the most cost-effective means of providing the scope of services required by the bill. It is anticipated that the reporting requirements would be achieved using existing staff in conjunction with any employee hired or contractor(s) engaged to provide the services.

It is anticipated that the bill would require one staff member to establish and administer the Agricultural Workforce Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Program. Based on a full-time RN, the cost is estimated at

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\$183,515 and includes salary (\$102,530), fringe benefits (\$45,985), funds for public awareness (\$20,000), and continued participation in the Agristress Hotline (\$15,000). VDACS currently provides the latter in annual support for a multi-state crisis hotline effort for agricultural communities, so a budget amendment of \$168,515 in each year would be necessary.

Any impact to DBHDS is unknown at this time.

**Other:** None.