

Pursuant to § 63.2-1504 of the Code of Virginia, DSS utilizes a differential response system when responding to valid reports and complaints of child abuse and neglect. Under this system, valid reports and complaints are assigned to either the investigative track (for cases requiring a full investigation) or the family assessment track (for cases focused on assessing family needs and providing appropriate support services). Valid reports and complaints are also assigned a response priority level that determines how quickly face-to-face contact is made. This bill concerns valid reports or complaints of child abuse or neglect that are assigned to the family assessment track.

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

In FY 2024, local departments of social services (LDSS) received a cumulative total of 10,591 valid referrals of alleged abuse or neglect involving a child under the age of three. This number includes all reports assigned to both the investigative and family assessment tracks. Of these, 6,378 referrals were categorized as Response Priority 1 under the differential response system, which already requires face-to-face contact to be made within 24 hours. Additionally, 4,125 valid referrals were received outside of traditional business hours. The overlap of referrals that were both Response Priority 1 and received after hours totaled 2,728. This means that as many as 1,397 referrals (4,125 referrals received after hours minus 2,728 referrals received after hours and Response Priority 1) would now necessitate a 24-hour response from LDSS, depending on the track to which they are assigned. In Virginia, it is estimated that 75 percent of valid referrals are assigned to the family assessment track, meaning that 1,048 of the 1,397 referrals received after hours would newly require a 24-hour response time.

DSS reports that the agency will need additional funding to support overtime pay for additional on-call hours worked as a result of this legislation. Each of the 1,048 new referrals is expected to require around three hours of after-hours CPS response. The average overtime compensation rate is \$47 per hour plus FICA taxes, which are estimated at nearly 1.08%. This results in an estimated general fund cost increase of \$159,072 beginning in FY 2027 and continuing each year thereafter.

DSS will also be required to modify the Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System (CCWIS) to update static text in the Structured Decision Making Intake Tool reflecting the provisions of this legislation. This tool is used by LDSS as part of the differential response process to determine how quickly the local departments must initiate the first face-to-face contact with the child alleged to be a victim. The projected cost for this system change is estimated at \$4,000 and can be absorbed within existing appropriation.

Other: n/a