

**§ 122C-153. Defense of agents, employees, and board members.**

(a) Upon request made by or in behalf of any agent, employee, or board member or former agent, employee, or board member of the area authority, any area authority may provide for the defense of any civil or criminal action or proceeding brought against him either in his official or in his individual capacity, or both, on account of any act done or omission made, or any act allegedly done or omission allegedly made, in the scope and course of his duty as an agent, employee, or board member. The defense may be provided by the local board by employing counsel or by purchasing insurance that requires that the insurer provide the defense. Nothing in this section requires any area authority to provide for the defense of any action or proceeding of any nature.

(b) An area authority may budget funds for the purpose of paying all or part of the claim made or any civil judgment entered against any of its agents, employees, or board members or former agents, employees, or board members when a claim is made or judgment is rendered as damages on account of any act done or omission made, or any act allegedly done or omission allegedly made, in the scope and course of his duty as an agent, employee, or board member of the area authority. Nothing in this section shall authorize any area authority to budget funds for the purpose of paying any claim made or civil judgment against any of its agents, employees, or board members, or former agents, employees, or board members, if the authority finds that the agent, employee, or board member acted or failed to act because of actual fraud, corruption, or actual malice on his part. Any authority may budget for and purchase insurance coverage for payment of claims or judgments pursuant to this section. Nothing in this section requires any authority to pay any claim or judgment referred to, and the purchase of insurance coverage for payment of the claim or judgment may not be considered an assumption of any liability not covered by the insurance contract and may not be deemed an assumption of liability or payment of any claim or judgment in excess of the limits of coverage in the insurance contract.

(c) Subsection (b) of this section does not authorize an authority to pay all or part of a claim made or civil judgment entered or to provide a defense to a criminal charge unless (i) notice of the claim or litigation is given to the area authority before the time that the claim is settled or civil judgment is entered; and (ii) the area authority has adopted, and made available for public inspection, uniform standards under which claims made, civil judgments entered, or criminal charges against agents, employees, or board members or former agents, employees, or board members shall be defended or paid.

(d) The board or boards of county commissioners that establish the area authority and the Secretary may allocate funds not otherwise restricted by law, in addition to the funds allocated for the operation of the program, for the purpose of paying legal defense, judgments, and settlements under this section. (1981, c. 539, s. 2; 1985, c. 589, s. 2.)