

1 A bill to be entitled
 2 An act relating to employment opportunities for
 3 persons with disabilities; creating s. 445.08, F.S.;
 4 providing legislative findings and purpose; providing
 5 definitions; requiring specified state agencies and
 6 organizations to develop and implement an interagency
 7 cooperative agreement for certain purposes; providing
 8 requirements; authorizing specified state agencies and
 9 organizations to adopt rules; providing an effective
 10 date.

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 12 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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 14 Section 1. Section 445.08, Florida Statutes, is created to
 15 read:

16 445.08 Employment opportunities for persons with
 17 disabilities; interagency cooperative agreements.-

18 (1) The Legislature finds that persons with disabilities
 19 are confronted by unique employment barriers that inhibit their
 20 opportunities in the labor force and that employment of such
 21 persons is the most direct and cost-effective means to help them
 22 achieve independence and self-fulfillment. Therefore, the
 23 Legislature finds that employment for persons with disabilities
 24 should be prioritized and a means to support such employment
 25 should be encouraged. The purpose of this section is to require
 26 a collaborative effort by state agencies and organizations to

27 determine the barriers to achieving better employment outcomes
28 for persons with disabilities and to act collaboratively to
29 eliminate such barriers.

30 (2) For purposes of this section, the term:

31 (a) "Employment" means a person with disabilities is
32 performing an activity or service in return for minimum wage or
33 greater paid by an employer, is fully integrated in the
34 community workforce, and is working towards maximum self-
35 sufficiency. The term includes integrated employment designed to
36 provide jobs for a persons with disabilities in workplace
37 settings where the majority of persons employed are not persons
38 with disabilities, supported employment as defined in s.
39 393.063(38), customized employment designed to personalize the
40 employment relationship between a person with disabilities and
41 his or her employer in a way that meets both of their needs, and
42 suitable gainful employment as defined in s. 440.491(1)(g).

43 (b) "Employment outcome" has the same meaning as in s.
44 413.20(9).

45 (3)(a) The following state agencies and organizations
46 shall develop and implement an interagency cooperative agreement
47 to provide the framework, including their roles and
48 responsibilities, for a long-term commitment to improving
49 employment outcomes for persons with disabilities in this state:

50 1. The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation of the
51 Department of Education.

52 2. The Division of Blind Services of the Department of

53 Education.

54 3. The Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student
 55 Services of the Department of Education.

56 4. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Program of the
 57 Department of Children and Families.

58 5. The Department of Children and Families.

59 6. The Department of Economic Opportunity.

60 7. Workforce Florida, Inc.

61 8. The Florida Developmental Disabilities Council.

62 9. The Florida Association of Rehabilitation Facilities,
 63 Inc.

64 (b) The interagency cooperative agreement shall:

65 1. Establish a commitment among the leadership of each
 66 agency and organization to maximize resources and to coordinate
 67 with other agencies and organizations to improve employment
 68 outcomes for persons with disabilities.

69 2. Develop strategic goals and benchmarks to assist each
 70 agency and organization in implementing the agreement.

71 3. Identify financing and contracting methods that will
 72 prioritize employment for persons with disabilities.

73 4. Identify how training opportunities may be better
 74 utilized by employees of each agency and organization to ensure
 75 effectiveness of supported employment services as defined in s.
 76 413.20(23).

77 5. Ensure collaboration between each agency and
 78 organization during the development of supported employment

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79 services when persons with disabilities are served by multiple
80 agencies and organizations to achieve their employment goals.

81 6. Promote the innovation of supported employment
82 services.

83 7. Identify accountability measures to ensure
84 sustainability of agreement initiatives.

85 (4) The agencies and organizations provided in subsection
86 (3) may adopt rules to implement this section.

87 Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2015.