

1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to family self-sufficiency; amending
3 ss. 414.14 and 414.175, F.S.; authorizing changes to
4 public assistance policy and federal food assistance
5 waivers to conform to federal law and simplify
6 administration unless such changes increase program
7 eligibility standards; creating s. 414.315, F.S.;
8 establishing food assistance program eligibility
9 standards; providing resource and income eligibility
10 limitations; providing that such standards are subject
11 to changes in federal regulations governing resource
12 and income eligibility; limiting categorical
13 eligibility for food assistance; requiring the
14 Department of Children and Families to obtain
15 legislative authorization before seeking federal
16 waivers to expand resource and income eligibility for
17 food assistance; creating s. 414.393, F.S.; requiring
18 the department to implement an asset verification
19 service to verify eligibility for public assistance;
20 amending s. 445.004, F.S.; requiring CareerSource
21 Florida, Inc., to include certain data relating to the
22 performance outcomes of local workforce development
23 boards and associated pilot programs in an annual
24 report to the Governor and Legislature; providing
25 legislative findings; providing definitions; requiring

26 CareerSource Florida, Inc., to contract with a vendor
27 to develop a pilot program to increase employment
28 among certain persons receiving temporary cash
29 assistance by a specified date; providing criteria for
30 selecting a vendor; providing criteria for selecting
31 local workforce boards to conduct the pilot program;
32 requiring CareerSource Florida, Inc., to submit a
33 comprehensive report on the outcome of the pilot
34 program to the Governor and Legislature by a specified
35 date; providing appropriations; providing an effective
36 date.

37
38 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

39
40 Section 1. Section 414.14, Florida Statutes, is amended to
41 read:

42 414.14 Public assistance policy simplification.—To the
43 extent possible, the department shall align the requirements for
44 eligibility under this chapter with the food assistance program
45 and medical assistance eligibility policies and procedures to
46 simplify the budgeting process and reduce errors. If the
47 department determines that s. 414.075, relating to resources, or
48 s. 414.085, relating to income, is inconsistent with federal law
49 governing the food assistance program or medical assistance, and
50 that conformance to federal law would simplify administration of

51 the Temporary Cash Assistance Program or reduce errors without
 52 materially increasing the cost of the program to the state, the
 53 secretary of the department may propose a change in the resource
 54 or income requirements of the program by rule, providing that
 55 such change does not increase income or resource eligibility
 56 standards for the program.

57 Section 2. Subsection (2) of section 414.175, Florida
 58 Statutes, is amended to read:

59 414.175 Review of existing waivers.—

60 (2) The department shall review federal law, including
 61 revisions to federal food assistance program requirements. If
 62 the department determines that federal food assistance waivers
 63 will further the goals of this chapter, including simplification
 64 of program policies or program administration, the department
 65 may obtain waivers if this can be accomplished within available
 66 resources, providing that such waiver does not increase income
 67 or resource eligibility standards for the food assistance
 68 program above the levels set by federal regulations in 7 C.F.R.
 69 s. 273.

70 Section 3. Section 414.315, Florida Statutes, is created
 71 to read:

72 414.315 Food assistance program eligibility standards.—

73 (1) RESOURCE ELIGIBILITY STANDARDS.—Except for those
 74 households that are federally required to be categorically
 75 eligible for food assistance in 7 C.F.R. 273.2:

76 (a) A household that does not include an elderly or
 77 disabled member may not exceed the maximum allowable resources,
 78 including both liquid and nonliquid assets, of \$2,250.

79 (b) A household that includes one or more members who are
 80 disabled or one or more members who are age 60 or over may not
 81 exceed \$3,250.

82
 83 The resource eligibility standards in this subsection are
 84 subject to any changes to the federal regulations governing
 85 resource eligibility for food assistance in 7 C.F.R. s. 273.8
 86 and any applicable cost of living adjustment.

87 (2) INCOME ELIGIBILITY STANDARDS.—Except for those
 88 households that are federally required to be categorically
 89 eligible for food assistance in 7 C.F.R. s. 273.2:

90 (a) A household that does not include an elderly or
 91 disabled member shall meet the gross income eligibility standard
 92 of 130 percent of the federal poverty level and the net income
 93 standard of 100 percent of the federal poverty level.

94 (b) A household that includes one or more members who are
 95 disabled or one or more members who are age 60 or over shall
 96 meet the gross income eligibility standard of 165 percent of the
 97 federal poverty level and the net income standard of 100 percent
 98 of the federal poverty level.

99
 100 The income eligibility standards in this subsection are subject

101 to any changes to the federal regulations governing income
102 eligibility for food assistance in 7 C.F.R. s. 273.9.

103 (3) LIMITATIONS ON CATEGORICAL ELIGIBILITY.—

104 (a) The department may not expand categorical eligibility
105 for food assistance beyond those programs federally required in
106 7 C.F.R. 273.2(j) (2) and (3).

107 (b) Unless expressly required by federal law, the
108 department shall obtain specific authorization from the
109 Legislature before seeking, applying for, accepting, or renewing
110 any waiver for food assistance which expands resource and income
111 eligibility beyond the limits set forth in this section.

112 Section 4. Section 414.393, Florida Statutes, is created
113 to read:

114 414.393 Applicant asset verification.—The department shall
115 implement an asset verification service for the purpose of
116 determining eligibility for public assistance programs.

117 Section 5. Paragraphs (c) and (d) are added to subsection
118 (7) of section 445.004, Florida Statutes, and subsection (13) is
119 added to that section, to read:

120 445.004 CareerSource Florida, Inc.; creation; purpose;
121 membership; duties and powers.—

122 (7) By December 1 of each year, CareerSource Florida,
123 Inc., shall submit to the Governor, the President of the Senate,
124 the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Senate Minority
125 Leader, and the House Minority Leader a complete and detailed

126 annual report setting forth:

127 (c) For each local workforce development board,
128 participant statistics and employment outcomes, by program, for
129 individuals subject to mandatory work requirements due to
130 receipt of temporary cash assistance or food assistance under
131 chapter 414, including:

132 1. Individuals served.

133 2. Services received.

134 3. Activities in which individuals participated.

135 4. Types of employment secured.

136 5. Individuals securing employment but remaining in each
137 program.

138 6. Individuals exiting programs due to employment.

139 7. Employment status at 3 months, 6 months, and 12 months
140 after exiting the program, for the past 3 years.

141 (d) Interim outcomes of any pilot program implemented by a
142 local workforce development board selected pursuant to
143 subsection (13).

144 (13) The Legislature finds that some mandatory work
145 registrants in the Temporary Cash Assistance Program face
146 significant barriers to employment, which must be addressed with
147 services beyond those offered under a traditional workforce
148 program. To address this problem, CareerSource Florida, Inc., in
149 consultation with the department, shall implement a pilot
150 program to increase unsubsidized employment and earned income

151 among such registrants while reducing their reliance on public
152 assistance. The pilot program may not serve registrants who are
153 assessed as work ready or who do not face significant barriers
154 to employment.

155 (a) For the purposes of this subsection, "significant
156 barriers to employment" means at least one critical barrier or
157 three or more stand-alone barriers.

158 1. "Critical barriers" include substance abuse, mental
159 illness, physical or mental disability, domestic violence,
160 homelessness, and a criminal record affecting employment.

161 2. "Stand-alone barriers" include significant job skill
162 deficiencies; significant soft-skill deficiencies, such as
163 communication, time management, and problem-solving skills;
164 child welfare system involvement; and a negative or nonexistent
165 employment history.

166 (b) CareerSource Florida, Inc., in consultation with the
167 department, shall contract with a vendor by October 31, 2017, to
168 develop the pilot program according to the following guidelines:

169 1. The vendor must have expertise in the design and
170 development of workforce programs.

171 2. The program design shall be based on the best available
172 research and shall include, at a minimum:

173 a. A comprehensive assessment to identify significant
174 barriers to employment, which shall be updated on an ongoing
175 basis. Such an assessment may collect information about the

176 registrant's educational attainment, level of literacy and
177 numeracy, basic skills, work experience, receipt of public
178 benefits, and other indicators of significant barriers.

179 b. An individual responsibility plan based on the
180 assessment, which includes a comprehensive service strategy to
181 address barriers to employment, whether sequentially or
182 simultaneously.

183 c. Intensive case management, including, but not limited
184 to, ongoing one-on-one guidance, motivation, and support for
185 registrants by assessing their needs and barriers, identifying
186 resources, and advising on career and training opportunities.
187 Intensive case management also includes collaborative work with
188 community partners to provide comprehensive services to
189 registrants which are designed to address their barriers and
190 achieve program goals.

191 3. The program may include other elements to address
192 significant barriers, such as a combination of job search
193 assistance, basic skills training, vocational education,
194 strategies that connect registrants to relevant career
195 opportunities by supporting their efforts to obtain educational
196 certificates or industry certification, and transitional
197 employment subsidies to achieve the desired improvements in
198 employment and earnings.

199 (c) CareerSource Florida, Inc., in consultation with the
200 department, shall select at least three local workforce boards

201 to conduct the pilot program based on a board's:

202 1. Commitment to effectively serve the target population;

203 2. Established record of innovation in the delivery of
204 workforce services, preferably to the target population;

205 3. Existing strong community partnerships, including
206 partnerships with nonprofit entities and community colleges, to
207 provide workforce services; and

208 4. Commitment to implement the program for the target
209 population while continuing to serve other Temporary Cash
210 Assistance Program mandatory work registrants.

211 (d) The local workforce boards selected for the pilot
212 program shall contract with vendors to implement the program.
213 The local workforce board shall give preference to vendors with
214 a demonstrated commitment to innovation in providing workforce
215 services or in serving populations with significant barriers.

216 (e) CareerSource Florida, Inc., shall submit a report to
217 the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of
218 the House of Representatives by December 15, 2020. The report
219 shall include the program design; participating entities;
220 participant demographics, including, but not limited to,
221 barriers identified; and the case management processes,
222 assessment processes, and services provided to participants, as
223 compared to those available under the local workforce board's
224 traditional workforce program. The report shall also include an
225 analysis of the effect of the program on participants' barriers

226 to employment, employment outcomes, household income, reliance
227 on public assistance, and other measures of household well-being
228 and self-sufficiency.

229 Section 6. For fiscal year 2017-2018, the sum of
230 \$3,342,525 in recurring funds is appropriated from Federal
231 Grants Trust Fund to the Department of Children and Families to
232 contract with a vendor to develop an asset verification service
233 for public assistance programs pursuant to s. 414.393, Florida
234 Statutes, as created in this act, and the sum of \$300,000 in
235 nonrecurring funds is appropriated from the Federal Grants Trust
236 Fund to the Department of Children and Families to perform the
237 technology modifications necessary to implement the asset
238 verification service.

239 Section 7. For fiscal year 2017-2018, the sum of \$500,000
240 in nonrecurring funds is appropriated from the Federal Grants
241 Trust Fund to the Department of Economic Opportunity for
242 distribution to CareerSource Florida, Inc., to contract for
243 development of a program to serve temporary cash assistance work
244 registrants with significant barriers to employment pursuant to
245 this act, including, but not limited to, providing the initial
246 program design, evaluation design, training curricula
247 development and delivery of training, implementation oversight,
248 development of informational materials for participants, and
249 technical assistance; and for distribution to selected local
250 workforce boards for startup expenses incurred by vendors

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251 implementing the program, including, but not limited to,
252 information technology updates, program coordination, and staff
253 training. Case management and direct services for all temporary
254 cash assistance recipients shall be provided within current
255 resources.

256 Section 8. This act shall take effect July 1, 2017.