A bill to be entitled

An act relating to the WAGES Program; creating s. 414.155, F.S.; providing a relocation assistance program for families receiving or eligible to receive WAGES Program assistance; providing responsibilities of the Department of Children and Family Services; providing for a relocation plan and for monitoring of the relocation; requiring agreements restricting application for temporary cash assistance for a specified period; providing exceptions; requiring repayment of temporary cash assistance provided under certain circumstances, and reduced eligibility for future assistance; providing an effective date.

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

Section 1. Section 414.155, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

414.155 Relocation assistance program.--

(1) The Legislature recognizes that the need for public assistance may arise because a family is located in an area with limited employment opportunities, because of geographic isolation, because of formidable transportation barriers, because of isolation from their extended family, or because domestic violence interferes with the ability of a parent to maintain self-sufficiency. Accordingly there is established a program to assist families in relocating to communities with greater opportunities for self-sufficiency.

	(2)	The	rel	location	ass	sist	ance	prog	gram	shall	involve	
five	steps	by	the	Departme	ent	of	Child	dren	and	Family	/ Services	:

- (a) A determination by the department that the family is a WAGES Program participant or that all requirements of eligibility for the WAGES Program would likely be met.
- (b) A determination that there is a basis for believing that relocation will contribute to the ability of the applicant to achieve self-sufficiency. For example, the applicant:
- 1. Is unlikely to achieve independence at the current community of residence;
- 2. Has secured a job that requires relocation to another community;
- 3. Has a family support network in another community; or
- 4. Is a victim of domestic violence who would experience reduced probability of further incidents through relocation.
- (c) Establishment of a relocation plan, including a budget and such requirements as are necessary to prevent abuse of the benefit and to provide an assurance that the applicant will relocate, which includes making expenditures on behalf of the applicant. The payment to defray relocation expenses shall be limited to an amount not to exceed 4 months' temporary cash assistance, based on family size.
- (d) A determination, pursuant to criteria adopted by the WAGES Program State Board of Directors, that a Florida community receiving a relocated family has the capacity to provide needed services and employment opportunities.
  - (e) Monitoring the relocation.

(3) A family receiving relocation assistance for reasons other than domestic violence must sign an agreement restricting the family from applying for temporary cash assistance for 6 months, unless an emergency is demonstrated to the department. If a demonstrated emergency forces the family to reapply for temporary cash assistance within 6 months after receiving a relocation assistance payment, repayment must be made on a prorated basis over an 8-month period and subtracted from any regular payment of temporary cash assistance for which the applicant may be eligible.

Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1 of the year in which enacted.

\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*

## HOUSE SUMMARY

Provides a relocation assistance program for families receiving or eligible to receive assistance under the WAGES Program. Provides responsibility of the Department of Children and Family Services to determine who is eligible for and will benefit from the program, to establish a relocation plan, to determine the capacity of the receiving community to provide services and employment opportunities, and to monitor the relocation. Requires recipients of relocation assistance, except families relocating because of domestic violence, to sign an agreement restricting applications for temporary cash assistance for 6 months. Provides requirements for repayment and for reduced eligibility for future assistance when emergency applications for temporary cash assistance are made during this 6-month period.