

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 for all initial applications and
10 recertifications after January 1, 2018; providing
11 resource and income eligibility limitations; providing
12 that such standards are subject to changes in federal
13 regulations governing resource and income eligibility;
14 limiting categorical eligibility for food assistance;
15 requiring the Department of Children and Families to
16 obtain legislative authorization before seeking
17 federal waivers to expand resource and income
18 eligibility for food assistance; creating s. 414.393,
19 F.S.; requiring the department to implement an asset
20 verification service to verify eligibility for public
21 assistance; amending s. 445.004, F.S.; requiring
22 CareerSource Florida, Inc., to include certain data
23 relating to the performance outcomes of local
24 workforce development boards and associated pilot
25 programs in an annual report to the Governor and

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

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

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

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

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

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

60 414.175 Review of existing waivers.—

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

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

73 414.315 Food assistance program eligibility standards.—The
74 department shall implement the following resource and income
75 eligibility standards for all food assistance households for all

76 initial applications or recertifications for benefits after
77 January 1, 2018:

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

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

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

87
88 The resource eligibility standards in this subsection are
89 subject to any changes to the federal regulations governing
90 resource eligibility for food assistance in 7 C.F.R. s. 273.8
91 and any applicable cost of living adjustment.

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

95 (a) A household that does not include an elderly or
96 disabled member shall meet the gross income eligibility standard
97 of 130 percent of the federal poverty level and the net income
98 standard of 100 percent of the federal poverty level.

99 (b) A household that includes one or more members who are
100 disabled or one or more members who are age 60 or over shall

101 meet the gross income eligibility standard of 165 percent of the
102 federal poverty level and the net income standard of 100 percent
103 of the federal poverty level.

104
105 The income eligibility standards in this subsection are subject
106 to any changes to the federal regulations governing income
107 eligibility for food assistance in 7 C.F.R. s. 273.9.

108 (3) LIMITATIONS ON CATEGORICAL ELIGIBILITY.—

109 (a) The department may not expand categorical eligibility
110 for food assistance beyond those programs federally required in
111 7 C.F.R. 273.2(j) (2) and (3).

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

117 Section 4. Section 414.393, Florida Statutes, is created
118 to read:

119 414.393 Applicant asset verification.—The department shall
120 implement an asset verification service for the purpose of
121 determining eligibility for public assistance programs.

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

125 445.004 CareerSource Florida, Inc.; creation; purpose;

126 membership; duties and powers.—

127 (7) By December 1 of each year, CareerSource Florida,
128 Inc., shall submit to the Governor, the President of the Senate,
129 the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Senate Minority
130 Leader, and the House Minority Leader a complete and detailed
131 annual report setting forth:

132 (c) For each local workforce development board,
133 participant statistics and employment outcomes, by program, for
134 individuals subject to mandatory work requirements due to
135 receipt of temporary cash assistance or food assistance under
136 chapter 414, including:

137 1. Individuals served.

138 2. Services received.

139 3. Activities in which individuals participated.

140 4. Types of employment secured.

141 5. Individuals securing employment but remaining in each
142 program.

143 6. Individuals exiting programs due to employment.

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

146 (d) Interim outcomes of any pilot program implemented by a
147 local workforce development board selected pursuant to
148 subsection (13).

149 (13) The Legislature finds that some mandatory work
150 registrants in the Temporary Cash Assistance Program face

151 significant barriers to employment, which must be addressed with
152 services beyond those offered under a traditional workforce
153 program. To address this problem, CareerSource Florida, Inc., in
154 consultation with the department, shall implement a pilot
155 program to increase unsubsidized employment and earned income
156 among such registrants while reducing their reliance on public
157 assistance. The pilot program may not serve registrants who are
158 assessed as work ready or who do not face significant barriers
159 to employment.

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

163 1. "Critical barriers" include substance abuse, mental
164 illness, physical or mental disability, domestic violence,
165 homelessness, and a criminal record affecting employment.

166 2. "Stand-alone barriers" include significant job skill
167 deficiencies; significant soft-skill deficiencies, such as
168 communication, time management, and problem-solving skills;
169 child welfare system involvement; and a negative or nonexistent
170 employment history.

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

174 1. The vendor must have expertise in the design and
175 development of workforce programs.

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

178 a. A comprehensive assessment to identify significant
179 barriers to employment, which shall be updated on an ongoing
180 basis. Such an assessment may collect information about the
181 registrant's educational attainment, level of literacy and
182 numeracy, basic skills, work experience, receipt of public
183 benefits, and other indicators of significant barriers.

184 b. An individual responsibility plan based on the
185 assessment, which includes a comprehensive service strategy to
186 address barriers to employment, whether sequentially or
187 simultaneously.

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

196 3. The program may include other elements to address
197 significant barriers, such as a combination of job search
198 assistance, basic skills training, vocational education,
199 strategies that connect registrants to relevant career
200 opportunities by supporting their efforts to obtain educational

201 certificates or industry certification, and transitional
202 employment subsidies to achieve the desired improvements in
203 employment and earnings.

204 (c) CareerSource Florida, Inc., in consultation with the
205 department, shall select at least three local workforce boards
206 to conduct the pilot program based on a board's:

207 1. Commitment to effectively serve the target population;

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

210 3. Existing strong community partnerships, including
211 partnerships with nonprofit entities and community colleges, to
212 provide workforce services; and

213 4. Commitment to implement the program for the target
214 population while continuing to serve other Temporary Cash
215 Assistance Program mandatory work registrants.

216 (d) The local workforce boards selected for the pilot
217 program shall contract with vendors to implement the program.
218 The local workforce board shall give preference to vendors with
219 a demonstrated commitment to innovation in providing workforce
220 services or in serving populations with significant barriers.

221 (e) CareerSource Florida, Inc., shall submit a report to
222 the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of
223 the House of Representatives by December 15, 2020. The report
224 shall include the program design; participating entities;
225 participant demographics, including, but not limited to,

226 barriers identified; and the case management processes,
227 assessment processes, and services provided to participants, as
228 compared to those available under the local workforce board's
229 traditional workforce program. The report shall also include an
230 analysis of the effect of the program on participants' barriers
231 to employment, employment outcomes, household income, reliance
232 on public assistance, and other measures of household well-being
233 and self-sufficiency.

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

244 Section 7. For fiscal year 2017-2018, the sum of \$500,000
245 in nonrecurring funds is appropriated from the Federal Grants
246 Trust Fund to the Department of Economic Opportunity for
247 distribution to CareerSource Florida, Inc., to contract for
248 development of a program to serve temporary cash assistance work
249 registrants with significant barriers to employment pursuant to
250 this act, including, but not limited to, providing the initial

251 program design, evaluation design, training curricula
252 development and delivery of training, implementation oversight,
253 development of informational materials for participants, and
254 technical assistance; and for distribution to selected local
255 workforce boards for startup expenses incurred by vendors
256 implementing the program, including, but not limited to,
257 information technology updates, program coordination, and staff
258 training. Case management and direct services for all temporary
259 cash assistance recipients shall be provided within current
260 resources.

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