



368416

LEGISLATIVE ACTION

Senate	.	House
Comm: RCS	.	
04/04/2023	.	
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The Committee on Children, Families, and Elder Affairs (Rouson) recommended the following:

Senate Amendment (with title amendment)

Delete everything after the enacting clause
and insert:

Section 1. The Certified Peer Specialist Gateway Pilot Program is created within the Department of Corrections. The purpose of the pilot program is to provide participating inmates with a path to becoming certified peer specialists under s. 397.417, Florida Statutes, upon release by offering such inmates while incarcerated the necessary training hours and experience



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11 needed for certification and to assist inmates who complete the
12 pilot program's requirements with post-incarceration employment.

13 (1) The pilot program shall:

14 (a) Recruit and enroll inmates who have completed certain
15 treatment programs while incarcerated into certified peer
16 specialist training programs approved under s. 397.417, Florida
17 Statutes.

18 (b) Provide core educational training and on-the-job work
19 experience during each participant's incarceration which meets
20 all of the requirements for peer specialist certification.

21 (c) Assist participants with completing the national
22 certification exam before each participant's release.

23 (d) Assist in placing participants in employment as
24 certified peer specialist professionals upon their release.

25 (2) Inmates at participating facilities may apply to
26 participate in the pilot program. The Department of Corrections
27 shall develop criteria for selecting qualified applicants for
28 the pilot program including, but not limited to, requiring that
29 applicants:

30 (a) Have the appropriate custody classification.

31 (b) Meet certain discipline criteria.

32 (c) Have an expected release date within a specified
33 timeframe.

34 (d) Be housed at the facility providing training.

35 (e) Have served as a positive role model during their
36 incarceration.

37 (f) Express a desire to work in the behavioral health
38 treatment field after release.

39 (g) Not have any convictions for an offense that would



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40 prohibit them from becoming a certified peer specialist.
41 However, an inmate who has been convicted of murder or a felony
42 sexual offense as those terms are defined in s. 98.0751(2),
43 Florida Statutes, or an offense under s. 787.01, Florida
44 Statutes, relating to kidnapping; s. 806.01, Florida Statutes,
45 relating to arson; or s. 784.045, Florida Statutes, relating to
46 aggravated battery may not participate in the program.

47 (3) A person who completes the pilot program's requirements
48 is exempt from the background screening requirements for peer
49 specialists under s. 397.417, Florida Statutes.

50 (4) In assisting persons who have completed the pilot
51 program's requirements with post-incarceration employment, the
52 pilot program:

53 (a) Shall assist potential employers with acquiring bonds
54 from the United States Department of Labor's Federal Bonding
55 Program, if applicable.

56 (b) May offer funding to a potential employer to cover the
57 initial costs of hiring and retaining such persons, if the pilot
58 program secures applicable grant funds for such purpose.

59 (5) After a person who has completed the pilot program's
60 requirements has been released, he or she must provide each
61 prospective employer with a copy of his or her incarceration
62 record before the employer may hire the person. The person must
63 also receive a signed informed consent form from any potential
64 client seeking treatment from him or her. Such consent form must
65 specify that the person has completed the pilot program's
66 requirements and is certified as a peer specialist under s.
67 397.417, Florida Statutes.

68 (6) The Department of Corrections shall adopt rules to



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69 implement this act.

70 (7) The pilot program expires June 30, 2026.

71 Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2023.

72 ===== T I T L E A M E N D M E N T =====

73 And the title is amended as follows:

74 Delete everything before the enacting clause
75 and insert:

76 A bill to be entitled
77 An act relating to the Certified Peer Specialist
78 Gateway Pilot Program; creating the pilot program
79 within the Department of Corrections; providing
80 purpose of and requirements for the pilot program;
81 authorizing inmates at participating facilities to
82 apply to participate in the pilot program; requiring
83 the department to develop certain criteria for
84 selecting qualified applicants; exempting persons who
85 complete the pilot program's requirements from a
86 specified background screening for peer specialists;
87 requiring the pilot program to assist potential
88 employers with acquiring specified bonds; authorizing
89 the pilot program to offer funding to potential
90 employers to cover specified costs under certain
91 circumstances; requiring persons who have completed
92 the pilot program's requirements to provide
93 prospective employers with incarceration records;
94 requiring such persons to receive a signed informed
95 consent form from any potential clients; providing
96 requirements for such form; requiring the department
97 to adopt rules; providing for expiration of the pilot



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program;; providing an effective date.