

HB 1045

2023

1 A bill to be entitled

2 An act relating to the Certified Peer Specialist
3 Gateway Pilot Program; creating the pilot program
4 within the Department of Corrections; providing
5 purposes of the pilot program; requiring the pilot
6 program to offer services at specified facilities;
7 authorizing inmates at participating facilities to
8 apply to participate in the pilot program; requiring
9 the department to develop criteria for selecting
10 applicants; exempting persons who complete the pilot
11 program's requirements from a specified background
12 screening for peer specialists; requiring the pilot
13 program to assist potential employers with acquiring
14 specified bonds; authorizing the pilot program to
15 offer funding to potential employer to cover specified
16 costs; requiring the department to adopt rules;
17 providing for the expiration of the pilot program;
18 providing an appropriation; providing an effective
19 date.

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

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23 Section 1. The Certified Peer Specialist Gateway Pilot
24 Program is created within the Department of Corrections. The
25 purpose of the pilot program is to provide participating inmates

26 with a path to becoming certified peer specialists under s.
27 397.417, Florida Statutes, upon release by offering such inmates
28 while incarcerated the necessary training hours and experience
29 needed for certification and to assist inmates who complete the
30 pilot program's requirements with post-incarceration employment.

31 (1) The pilot program shall offer services at all of the
32 following facilities:

33 (a) The Gadsden Re-Entry Center.

34 (b) The Baker Re-Entry Center.

35 (c) The Lowell Annex.

36 (d) The Marion Correctional Institution.

37 (2) Inmates at participating facilities may apply to
38 participate in the pilot program. The Department of Corrections
39 shall develop criteria for selecting qualified applicants for
40 the pilot program.

41 (3) A person who completes the pilot program's
42 requirements is exempt from the background screening
43 requirements for peer specialists under s. 397.417, Florida
44 Statutes.

45 (4) In assisting persons who have completed the pilot
46 program's requirements with post-incarceration employment, the
47 pilot program:

48 (a) Must assist potential employers with acquiring bonds
49 from the United States Department of Labor's Federal Bonding
50 Program, if applicable.

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51 (b) May offer funding to a potential employer to cover the
52 costs of initially hiring and retaining such person.

53 (5) The Department of Corrections shall adopt rules to
54 implement this act.

55 (6) The pilot program expires June 30, 2026.

56 (7) The sum of \$3 million in nonrecurring funds is
57 appropriated from the General Revenue Fund to the Department of
58 Corrections for the purpose of implementing this act.

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