

By Senator Burgess

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1                   A bill to be entitled  
2           An act relating to the Hope Florida program; creating  
3           s. 14.37, F.S.; providing legislative intent; defining  
4           terms; establishing the Office of Hope Florida within  
5           the Executive Office of the Governor; providing the  
6           purpose of the office; providing for appointment of a  
7           director of the office; specifying duties of the  
8           office; specifying the functions of hope navigators  
9           under the Hope Florida program; specifying eligibility  
10          requirements for participation in the program;  
11          specifying how individuals may request assistance  
12          under the program; providing for participation in the  
13          program by specified state agencies, subject to  
14          certain requirements; requiring the Executive Office  
15          of the Governor to designate agencies to perform  
16          certain functions under the program; providing an  
17          effective date.

18  
19 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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21           Section 1. Section 14.37, Florida Statutes, is created to  
22           read:

23           14.37 Hope Florida program.-

24           (1) It is the intent of the Legislature to establish the  
25           Hope Florida program to streamline access to support and  
26           services to assist Floridians in need in reaching their full  
27           potential within their local communities by holistically  
28           coordinating care through hope navigators. Furthermore, the Hope  
29           Florida program will break down traditional silos and establish

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30 a seamless network of supports, managed more effectively through  
31 a centralized system, composed of private businesses, nonprofit  
32 entities, state agencies, and faith-based organizations to  
33 achieve desired outcomes and sustain long-term results,  
34 including greater self-sufficiency, community integration, and  
35 the reduction of the participants' sole reliance on government  
36 programs. To this end, the Legislature intends for the Hope  
37 Florida program to empower and assist Floridians in identifying  
38 and achieving immediate, intermediate, and long-term goals and  
39 removing barriers to goal achievement through the development  
40 and implementation of a care plan in partnership with hope  
41 navigators.

42 (2) As used in this section, the term:

43 (a) "Care plan" means a written tool that contains  
44 information provided by the individual to develop and customize  
45 actionable steps and corresponding timelines to achieve  
46 immediate, intermediate, and long-term goals and address  
47 barriers through direct connection to community resources and  
48 opportunities to achieve their goals. Goals may include, but are  
49 not limited to, those relating to mentorship and coaching, life  
50 skills development, employment, educational obtainment,  
51 community engagement and volunteerism, and addressing barriers  
52 such as basic needs, transportation, and untreated medical and  
53 behavioral health conditions.

54 (b) "Hope Florida Partner Network" means designated  
55 organizations actively engaged in Hope Florida by providing  
56 goods or services that directly support Hope Florida  
57 participants' goals and address identified barriers.

58 (c) "Hope Line" means a toll-free number used to serve as a

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59 hotline for Hope Florida inquiries and referrals for individuals  
60 and families in need of services.

61 (d) "Hope navigators" means individuals designated by a  
62 Hope Florida participating agency to coordinate care and assist  
63 participants and families seeking services through Hope Florida.

64 (3) (a) The Office of Hope Florida is established within the  
65 Executive Office of the Governor. The primary purpose of the  
66 office is to facilitate alignment and coordination of state  
67 agencies participating in Hope Florida. The Governor shall  
68 appoint a director of the Office of Hope Florida who shall serve  
69 at the pleasure of the Governor.

70 (b) Duties of the office include, but are not limited to,  
71 the following:

72 1. Establishing goals and strategies for Hope Florida.

73 2. Facilitating coordination and collaboration amongst  
74 participating agencies to achieve the goals of the program.

75 3. Expanding the Hope Florida partner network to meet the  
76 needs of participating Floridians.

77 4. Overseeing the Hope Florida Partner Network. The Hope  
78 Florida Partner Network shall be composed of designated state  
79 agencies, private-public partnerships, and nonprofit, private  
80 sector, and faith-based organizations actively engaged in Hope  
81 Florida by supporting and addressing the goals and barriers of  
82 participants. To sustain the effectiveness of Hope Florida and  
83 the partner network, the office shall continue to foster  
84 development of both new and existing partnerships.

85 (4) The program shall utilize government agencies,  
86 nonprofit organizations, faith-based organizations, and the  
87 private sector to serve families holistically in achieving self-

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88 sufficiency, maximizing community integration, and building a  
89 prosperous future. Barriers to self-sufficiency may include, but  
90 are not limited to, lack of stable employment, increased wages,  
91 skills for greater independence, educational or training,  
92 meeting basic needs, and stable housing. The program shall refer  
93 participants requiring assistance with employment or vocational  
94 training to CareerSource Florida, Inc., the local workforce  
95 development boards, or other appropriate entities to prepare,  
96 train, and place individuals in meaningful employment.

97 (5) The program shall use hope navigators as resources that  
98 are embedded to serve as a catalyst and single point of contact  
99 for participants by using participant information jointly to  
100 develop and implement care plans and navigate and actively  
101 leverage community-based supports and opportunities throughout  
102 each step to create a sustainable network of supports to allow  
103 participants to achieve their goals, overcome barriers, and  
104 realize their full potential. Hope navigators shall assist  
105 participants in identifying their personal goals, developing an  
106 individualized plan for achieving immediate, intermediate, and  
107 long-term goals, identifying and addressing barriers, and  
108 actively connecting participants to community resources and  
109 opportunities to achieve their goals.

110 (6) (a) In order to participate in Hope Florida, individuals  
111 must be:

112 1. A resident of this state and a citizen of the United  
113 States or a permanent resident alien of the United States, as  
114 determined by the United States Bureau of Citizenship and  
115 Immigration Services; and

116 2. Eighteen years of age or older or, if emancipated, 16

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117 years of age or older. However, any unemancipated minor may  
118 participate with the consent of his or her parent or guardian.

119 (b) Participation in Hope Florida is voluntary.

120 (c) Individuals may request assistance by calling the Hope  
121 Line, requesting assistance through the Hope Florida website, or  
122 through proactive outreach by a participating agency, and  
123 referrals may be made on behalf of an individual by community  
124 organizations to the Hope Line, Hope Florida website, or  
125 participating state agency hope navigator.

126 (7) (a) State agencies shall participate in Hope Florida at  
127 the direction of the Executive Office of the Governor. At a  
128 minimum, the Department of Children and Families, the Agency for  
129 Persons with Disabilities, the Department of Juvenile Justice,  
130 the Statewide Guardian ad Litem Office, the Department of  
131 Education, the Agency for Health Care Administration, the  
132 Department of Corrections, the Division of Emergency Management,  
133 the Department of Veterans' Affairs, the Department of Commerce,  
134 and the Department of Elderly Affairs shall participate in the  
135 program.

136 (b) In order to use government resources more effectively  
137 and efficiently, participating state agencies shall use existing  
138 resources and personnel, to the extent possible, to operate Hope  
139 Florida.

140 (c) Other public-private partners may participate in Hope  
141 Florida, at the direction of the Executive Office of the  
142 Governor, including, but not limited to, CareerSource Florida,  
143 Inc., and Volunteer Florida, Inc.

144 (8) The Executive Office of the Governor shall designate  
145 agencies to perform the following functions under the program:

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146 (a) Operate the Hope Line, which must be available, at a  
147 minimum, during business hours Monday through Friday.

148 (b) Develop and maintain a website for individuals to  
149 connect with Hope Florida or to volunteer their time or donate  
150 resources.

151 (c) Develop and maintain a Hope Florida case management  
152 system that, at a minimum, conducts intake for Hope Florida  
153 inquiries and referrals for individuals and families in need of  
154 services. The case management system must be developed and  
155 maintained by the responsible designated agency for purposes of  
156 care planning functionality, closed loop referrals, and  
157 tracking, at a minimum.

158 (d) Work with the Department of Commerce and CareerSource  
159 Florida, Inc., to maintain a portal for designating employers as  
160 "Hope Florida Employers." Such portal must be integrated with  
161 the Department of Commerce's one-stop delivery system to ensure  
162 all Floridians served through Hope Florida have access to  
163 employment and training services.

164 Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2025.