

FLORIDA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

BILL ANALYSIS

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BILL #: [CS/HB 1267](#)

TITLE: Temporary Cash Assistance Eligibility

SPONSOR(S): Hart-Lowman

COMPANION BILL: [CS/SB 1462](#) (Bracy Davis)

LINKED BILLS: None

RELATED BILLS: None

Committee References

[Human Services](#)

15 Y, 0 N, As CS

[Health Care Budget](#)

[Health & Human Services](#)

SUMMARY

Effect of the Bill:

PCS for HB 1267 revises the prohibition against individuals with felony drug trafficking convictions receiving benefits under Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA) program, such that an individual who was a victim of human trafficking at the time they trafficked drugs may not be denied benefits solely on the basis of the drug trafficking conviction.

Fiscal or Economic Impact:

The PCS has an indeterminate negative fiscal impact on the Department of Children and Families.

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ANALYSIS

EFFECT OF THE BILL:

CS/HB 1267 creates an exemption to the prohibition against individuals with felony drug trafficking convictions receiving [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program](#) (SNAP) and the [Temporary Cash Assistance](#) (TCA) program benefits, applicable only to victims of human trafficking. Under the bill, the Department of Children and Families (DCF) may not deny SNAP or TCA benefits to an individual solely on the basis of a drug trafficking conviction, if DCF determines that the individual was a victim of [human trafficking](#) at the time of the drug trafficking. (Section 1).

The bill provides an effective date of July 1, 2026. (Section 2).

FISCAL OR ECONOMIC IMPACT:

STATE GOVERNMENT:

The bill has an indeterminate negative fiscal impact on the Department of Children and Families.

RELEVANT INFORMATION

SUBJECT OVERVIEW:

Public assistance programs help low-income families meet their basic needs, such as housing, food, and utilities.¹ The social safety net for American families depends on the coordination of a complex patchwork of federal, state, and local funding and program administration.² Through various programs, public assistance is capable of helping

¹ National Conference of State Legislatures, *Introduction to Benefits Cliffs and Public Assistance Programs* (2023). Available at <https://www.ncsl.org/human-services/introduction-to-benefits-cliffs-and-public-assistance-programs> (last visited February 8, 2026).

² Brookings Institute, *State Social Safety Net Policy: How are States Addressing Economic Need?* (2023). Available at <https://www.brookings.edu/events/state-social-safety-net-policy-how-are-states-addressing-economic-need/> (last visited February 8, 2026).

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families to keep children in their family home through economic difficulties³ and reducing the material hardship that has been linked to negative outcomes in children;⁴ as well as driving the economy in times of market downturns⁵ and supporting the career advancement of low-income adults striving to break the cycle of intergenerational poverty.⁶

Two of the most commonly utilized public assistance programs in Florida are the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or food assistance, and the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA) program.⁷

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families

Florida's [TCA](#) program is Florida's cash assistance program under the federal TANF block grant, authorized under the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA).⁸ The program is intended to provide short-term financial assistance to low-income families with children while promoting work, self-sufficiency, and family stability.⁹ In Florida, the TCA program is administered by the DCF.¹⁰ To receive TCA benefits, an applicant must meet financial eligibility criteria and comply with work registration and participation requirements, unless exempt.¹¹ Eligibility determinations and ongoing reviews are conducted by the DCF, which also monitors continued compliance with program requirements.¹² As of December 2025, there were 16,563 families receiving TCA benefits.¹³

TCA Eligibility

The TCA program requires applicants to meet the following criteria to be eligible:

- Be a U.S. citizen or qualified noncitizen;¹⁴
- Qualified noncitizens include refugees, asylees, lawful permanent residents, Cuban or Haitian entrants, and certain battered individuals eligible under the Violence Against Women Act.¹⁵
- Each member of the family household must provide a Social Security number or proof of application for a Social Security number.¹⁶

³ Providing assistance to needy families so that children can be cared for in their own homes is one of the four purposes of the TANF program. *See*, Office of Family Assistance, *About TANF* (2022). Available at <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ofa/programs/tanf/about> (last visited February 8, 2026). *See also*, Gennetian, L. & Magnuson, K., *Three Reasons Why Providing Cash to Families with Children is a Sound Policy Investment* (2022). Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. Available at <https://www.cbpp.org/research/income-security/three-reasons-why-providing-cash-to-families-with-children-is-a-sound> (last visited February 8, 2026).

⁴ Karpman, M., Gonzalez, D., Zuckerman, S., & Adams, G., *What Explains the Widespread Material Hardships among Low-Income Families with Children?* (2018). Urban Institute. Available at https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/99521/what_explains_the_widespread_material_hardship_among_low-income_families_with_children_0.pdf (last visited February 8, 2026).

⁵ Vogel, S., Miller, C., & Ralston, K., *Impact of USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) on Rural and Urban Economies in the Aftermath of the Great Recession* (2021). USDA, Economic Research Service Economic Research Report Number 296. Available at <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3938336> (last visited February 8, 2026).

⁶ Duncan, G. & Holzer, H., *Policies that Reduce Intergenerational Poverty* (2023). The Brookings Institute. Available at <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/policies-that-reduce-intergenerational-poverty/> (last visited February 8, 2026).

⁷ Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA). *Research Memorandum: Economic Self-Sufficiency*, Research Product 10. On file with the Human Services Subcommittee.

⁸ Pub. L. 104-193, § 103, 110 Stat. 2105 (1996), <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/PLAW-104publ193/pdf/PLAW-104publ193.pdf>; and [ss. 414.025\(12\), F.S.](#), [414.035, F.S.](#), and [414.045, F.S.](#)

⁹ [Ss. 414.025, F.S.](#), [414.085, F.S.](#), [414.095\(1\), F.S.](#), and [414.105, F.S.](#)

¹⁰ *See generally* Ch. 414, F.S.; and Florida Department of Children and Families, *Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA)*, <https://www.myflfamilies.com/services/public-assistance/temporary-cash-assistance> (last visited February 8, 2026).

¹¹ [S. 414.095\(1\), F.S.](#)

¹² *Id.*

¹³ Florida Department of Children and Families, *ESS Standard Reports: Flash Points*. Available at

<https://www.myflfamilies.com/services/public-assistance/additional-resources-and-services/ess-standard> (last visited February 7, 2026).

¹⁴ S. 414.095(2)(a)1., F.S.

¹⁵ [S. 414.095\(3\), F.S.](#)

¹⁶ S. 414.095(2)(a)3., F.S.

- Be a legal resident of Florida;¹⁷
- Have a minor child residing with a custodial parent or relative caregiver;¹⁸
- For pregnant woman with no other children, TCA benefits are generally restricted to the final month of pregnancy, with limited exceptions for medically restricted individuals during the last trimester.¹⁹
- Have a gross family household income of 185 percent or less of the federal poverty level;²⁰
- Have liquid and nonliquid resources, for all members of the family household, valued at no more than \$2,000 (excluding vehicles valued up to \$8,500, or up to any value if vehicle is used for and equipped for the transportation of a disabled family household member);²¹ and
- Register for work with the local workforce development board, unless an applicant qualifies for an exemption.²²

Applications must be acted upon within 30 days, and benefits generally begin either upon approval or 30 days after application, whichever occurs first.²³ TCA is generally limited to a lifetime maximum of 48 months unless the individual qualified under the following: hardship extension; exemption for victims of domestic violence; Supplemental Security Income or Social Security Disability Insurance recipient or applicant; individual caring for a disabled family member; or child-only case.²⁴

TCA Benefit Amounts

Florida law establishes a three-tier shelter payment standard, linking benefit levels to family size and shelter obligations.²⁵ A “shelter obligation” exists when the family household has the responsibility to pay for the cost of housing, such as mortgage, rent or room and board payment.²⁶ The following chart depicts the top levels of temporary cash assistance:

Family Size	Zero Shelter Obligation	Greater than Zero Less than or Equal to \$50	Greater than \$50 Shelter Obligation or Homeless
1	\$95	\$153	\$180
2	\$158	\$205	\$241
3	\$198	\$258	\$303
4	\$254	\$309	\$364
5	\$289	\$362	\$426
6	\$346	\$414	\$487
7	\$392	\$467	\$549
8	\$438	\$519	\$610
9	\$485	\$570	\$671
10	\$534	\$623	\$733
11	\$582	\$676	\$795
12	\$630	\$728	\$857
13	\$678	\$781	\$919

¹⁷ S. 414.095(2)(a)2., F.S.

¹⁸ S. 414.095(2)(a)4., F.S.

¹⁹ [S. 414.095\(5\), F.S.](#)

²⁰ [S. 414.085\(1\)\(a\), F.S.](#); see also U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, *U.S. Federal Poverty Guidelines Used to Determine Financial Eligibility for Certain Programs*, HHS (2026). Available at <https://aspe.hhs.gov/topics/poverty-economic-mobility/poverty-guidelines> (last visited February 8, 2026).

²¹ [S. 414.075, F.S.](#)

²² [S. 414.095\(1\), F.S.](#)

²³ [S. 414.095\(8\), F.S.](#)

²⁴ [S. 414.105, F.S.](#)

²⁵ [S. 414.095\(10\), F.S.](#)

²⁶ 65A-4.220(2)(b), F.A.C.

Benefits are calculated based on the average monthly gross family income, earned and unearned, less any applicable disregards (\$200 plus one-half of the remainder). The resulting monthly net income amount is then subtracted from the applicable payment standard to determine the monthly benefit amount.²⁷ The following table shows examples on how the shelter payment standard is applied in practice.

Family Size	Shelter Obligation Tier	Payment Standard	Gross Income	Countable Net Income	Monthly TCA Grant
3	> \$50 / Homeless	\$303	\$0	\$0	\$303
2	> \$50 / Homeless	\$241	\$900	$\$900 - \$200 = \$700$ $\$700 / 2 = \350	$\$241 - \$350 = -\$109$ \$0
2	> \$0 and \leq \$50	\$205	\$600	$\$600 - \$200 = \$400$ $\$400 / 2 = \200	$\$205 - \$200 = \$5$ \$5
3	\$0	\$198	\$500	$\$500 - \$200 = \$300$ $\$300 / 2 = \150	$\$198 - \$150 = \$48$ \$48

TCA is issued as a single household grant and paid to one designated payee rather than distributed individually to each household member. It may be paid as follows:

- Direct payment through state warrant, electronic transfer of temporary cash assistance, or voucher.
- Payment to an alternative payee.
- Payment for subsidized employment.
- Pay-after-performance arrangements with public or private not-for-profit agencies.²⁸

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

The [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program](#) (SNAP) is the nation's food and nutrition program for low-income Americans; the program provides nutritional assistance to millions of individuals and families each year through monthly benefits that can be used to purchase eligible food items²⁹ at authorized retailers via electronic benefit transfer (EBT).³⁰ The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), under the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), administers the SNAP at the federal level.³¹ SNAP benefits reduce the effects of poverty and increase food security for families while supporting economic activity across communities, as SNAP directly benefits farmers, retailers, food processors and distributors, and their employees.³²

²⁷ S. 414.095(11)-(12), F.S.

²⁸ [S. 414.095\(13\), F.S.](#)

²⁹ Benefits cannot be spent on tobacco, alcohol, or nonfood items. With limited exceptions, benefits cannot be used on foods sold hot. See, USDA, Economic Research Service, *Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)*. Available at <https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap> (last visited December 16, 2025).

³⁰ U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service. *Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Overview*. Available at <https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap/> (last visited December 16, 2025).

³¹ The Food Stamp Program (FSP) originated in 1939 as a pilot program for certain individuals to buy stamps equal to their normal food expenditures: for every \$1 of orange stamps purchased, people received 50 cents worth of blue stamps, which could be used to buy surplus food. The FSP expanded nationwide in 1974. Under the federal welfare reform legislation of 1996, Congress enacted major changes to the FSP, including limiting eligibility for certain adults who did not meet work requirements. The Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 renamed the FSP the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and implemented priorities to strengthen program integrity; simplify program administration; maintain states' flexibility in how they administer their programs; and improve access to SNAP. See, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service. *Short History of SNAP*. Available at <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/short-history-snap> (last visited December 16, 2025).

³² U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service. *Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Economic Linkages*.

Available at <https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap/economic-linkages/> (last visited December 30, 2025).

As a federal program, federal regulations define eligibility requirements, benefit levels, and administrative processes which are, generally, nationally uniform.³³ At the state-level, SNAP is administered by the Department of Children and Families (DCF).³⁴ DCF is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the program and determines eligibility, calculates benefits, issues benefits to participants, and monitors compliance with work requirements.³⁵

SNAP funding can be broadly categorized as either administrative costs or benefits expenses. Administrative costs are those a state uses to implement and administer the program, whereas benefit expenses are strictly the allotment distributed to SNAP recipients. Until recently, the state and federal governments shared the administrative costs of the program equally, while the federal government funded 100 percent of the benefit amount distributed to recipients.³⁶

In Florida, there were 2,680,794 individuals, including 1,042,627 children, in 1,518,330 different households receiving SNAP benefits in November 2025.³⁷

SNAP Eligibility & Work Requirements

SNAP is available to all households that meet the program's income and asset criteria, subject to certain work and immigration status requirements. To be eligible for SNAP, households must meet the following basic criteria: (1) gross monthly income must be at or below 130 percent of the poverty level; (2) net income must be equal to or less than the poverty level; and (3) assets must be below the limits set based on household composition.³⁸ Individuals may be deemed ineligible for SNAP for any of the following:³⁹

- Conviction for drug trafficking;
- Fleeing a felony warrant;
- Breaking SNAP or TANF⁴⁰ program rules;
- Failure to cooperate with the child support enforcement agency; or
- Being a noncitizen without qualified status.

Able-bodied, non-elderly adults are generally required to participate in work activities in order to be eligible for SNAP. Federal policy outlines two tiers of work requirements for SNAP recipients: the general work requirement and the Able-Bodied Adult Without Dependents (ABAWD) work requirement.

The general work requirement applies to all recipients between 16 and 54⁴¹ years of age, unless they qualify for an exemption.⁴² The general work requirements include requiring a recipient to register for work, participating in

³³ USDA, Economic Research Service, *Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)*. Available at <https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap> (last visited December 16, 2025).

³⁴ [S. 414.31, F.S.](#)

³⁵ USDA, Economic Research Service, *Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)*. Available at <https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap> (last visited December 16, 2025).

³⁶ Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. *Policy Basics: The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)*. Available at <https://www.cbpp.org/research/food-assistance/the-supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap>. (last visited December 16, 2025).

³⁷ Email from Chancer Teel, Legislative Affairs Director, Department of Children and Families. Re: Information Request. Received December 17, 2025.

³⁸ U.S. Department of Agriculture, *Indicators of Diet Quality, Nutrition, and Health for Americans by Program Participation Status, 2011-2016: SNAP Report. Final Report* (2021). Available at <https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/Indicators-Diet-QualitySNAP.pdf> (last visited December 16, 2025).

³⁹ Florida Department of Children and Families, *SNAP Eligibility*. Available at <https://www.myflfamilies.com/services/public-assistance/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap/snap-eligibility> (last visited December 16, 2025). See also, [S. 414.32, F.S.](#)

⁴⁰ The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program is a federal block grant that funds state-level benefits and services for low-income families. TANF funds Florida's Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA) program which provides direct cash assistance to families who meet specific technical, income, and asset requirements. DCF administers TCA in Florida. See, ss. 414.045-414.295, F.S.

⁴¹ Federal law previously imposed work requirements for this group up to age 54; thereafter, Florida law raised the age to 59. [7 U.S.C.s. 2015.; [S. 414.455, F.S.](#) On July 4, 2025, H.R. 119th Congress (2025), Section 10102 was signed into law, changing the age limit from 54 to 64.

SNAP Employment and Training (E&T) or workfare if assigned, taking a suitable job if offered, and not voluntarily quitting a job or reducing work hours below 30 hours per week without a good reason.⁴³

The ABAWD work requirement applies to adults between age 18 and 64, who are able-bodied, and without dependents. This population may only receive SNAP benefits for 3 months out of a 36-month period, unless the participant works or participates in a qualifying workforce program for at least 80 hours per month. All ABAWDs are subject to this additional work requirement and time limit, unless otherwise exempt.⁴⁴ Until recently, ABAWD work requirements applied to adults ages 18-54.⁴⁵

SNAP Benefit Allotment

After DCF determines that a household is eligible to enroll in SNAP, DCF will next calculate the household's monthly benefit allotment. The calculation accounts for the size of the household, the maximum benefit for the fiscal year, and the household's net income; benefits increase with household size and decrease with household income.

The maximum monthly benefit allotment is tied to the cost of purchasing a nutritionally adequate, low-cost diet, as measured by the USDA-developed Thrifty Food Plan (TFP). The TFP is a minimal cost food plan which reflects current nutrition standards and guidance, the nutrient content and cost of food, and consumption patterns of low-income households to serve as the basis for the determination of SNAP benefits.⁴⁶ The maximum allotments are set at the monthly cost of the TFP for a four-person family consisting of a couple between ages 20 and 50 and two school-age children, adjusted for family size, and rounded down to the nearest whole dollar.⁴⁷

The formula used to determine SNAP benefits assumes that a household will spend 30 percent of their net income on food purchases. A household's monthly benefit amount is the difference between the maximum allotment for their household size under the Thrifty Food Plan and 30 percent of their net income.⁴⁸ The structure of this formula ensures that the lowest income households receive the most benefits.

Prohibition on Receiving TCA and Food Assistance - Felony Drug Convictions

PRWORA establishes a lifetime federal ban on TANF benefits for individuals convicted of a felony offense involving possession, use, or distribution of a controlled substance.⁴⁹ However, PRWORA expressly allows states to opt out of

⁴² A person may be excused from the general work requirement if he or she is already working at least 30 hours per week, meeting the work requirements for another program, taking care of a child under 6 or an incapacitated person, unable to work due to a physical or mental limitation, participating regularly in an alcohol or drug treatment program, or studying in school or a training program at least half-time. *See, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service. SNAP Work Requirements.* Available at <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/work-requirements> (last visited December 16, 2025).

⁴³ U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service. *SNAP Work Requirements.* Available at <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/work-requirements> (last visited December 16, 2025).

⁴⁴ *Id. See also, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) ABAWD Policy Guide (2023).* Available at <https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/SNAP-ABAWD-Policy-Guide-September-2023.pdf> (last visited December 30, 2025). Adults who are unable to work due to a physical or mental limitation, are pregnant, have someone under 14 in their SNAP household, are excused from the general work requirement, or are eligible for Indian Health Services are exempt from the ABAWD requirements.

⁴⁵ Federal law previously imposed work requirements for this group up to age 54; thereafter, Florida law raised the age to 59. [7 U.S.C s. 2015.; [s. 414.455, F.S.](#) On July 4, 2025, H.R. 119th Congress (2025), Section 10102 was signed into law, changing the age limit from 54 to 64.

⁴⁶ U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service. *Nutrition Assistance Program Report: Barriers That Constrain the Adequacy of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Allotments: Survey Findings* (2021). Available at <https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/SNAP-Barriers-SurveyFindings.pdf> (last visited December 15, 2025).

⁴⁷ Congressional Research Service, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP): A Primer on Eligibility and Benefits. Available at https://www.everycrsreport.com/files/2025-09-29_R42505_97291714b6b908467cf5d2713f3153111f423cb.pdf (last visited December 15, 2025).

⁴⁸ U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service. *Nutrition Assistance Program Report: Barriers That Constrain the Adequacy of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Allotments: Survey Findings* (2021). Available at <https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/SNAP-Barriers-SurveyFindings.pdf> (last visited December 15, 2025).

⁴⁹ Pub. L. 104-193, § 115, 110 Stat. 2105 (1996).

or modify this ban through state law. Florida has opted to impose a modified ban wherein an applicant may not be denied benefits solely based on a felony drug conviction, unless the conviction is for trafficking,⁵⁰ including agreeing, conspiring, combining, or confederating with another person to commit an act after August 22, 1996. Florida's ban prohibits an individual convicted of drug trafficking from receiving either TCA or SNAP benefits.⁵¹

Under Florida law, drug trafficking is a first-degree felony punishable by up to 30 years of imprisonment and—depending upon the drug type and amount trafficked—fines from \$25,000 to \$500,000.⁵² During the application process, individuals seeking public benefits self-attest if they have been convicted of felony drug trafficking. This information is then confirmed by an eligibility specialist during the applicant's interview. If the illegal behavior that led to the conviction occurred on or before August 22, 1996, the disqualification does not apply regardless of the date of the conviction. If a court expunges the felony drug trafficking conviction, the individual is not subject to the disqualification.⁵³

In Florida, while an individual is disqualified, his or her family may still apply for and receive benefits. In such instances, the disqualified individual's needs are excluded in calculating the family's benefits, although the individual's income and assets are included in determining the household's eligibility. This means that while those with felony drug trafficking convictions may still apply for assistance for their children, the overall household receives less support because of the current bans.

According to DCF, in 2025, three individuals were denied TCA benefits and 62 individuals were denied SNAP benefits on the basis of a drug trafficking conviction.⁵⁴ The number of people otherwise eligible who choose not to apply due to disqualification due to a felony drug trafficking conviction is unknown.

Recidivism Studies

Studies have shown that public assistance such as TANF and SNAP reduces recidivism, while banning access to assistance has been linked to increased recidivism. The Bureau of Justice Statistics reports that approximately 66 percent of state prisoners were rearrested within three years of release, and 82 percent were arrested within 10 years.⁵⁵ Such odds of recidivating can be offset through providing support; the barriers to re-entering society as productive members of society are reduced when people are able to meet their basic needs. A Harvard Law School study found that access to SNAP and TANF significantly reduced an individual's risk of being reincarcerated by up to 10 percent within one year.⁵⁶ Additionally, a study of recidivism before and after the Florida ban took effect estimated the ban increased drug traffickers' likelihood of returning to prison by at least 9.5 percent.⁵⁷

Human Trafficking

⁵⁰ [S. 414.095, F.S.](#) Any person may be convicted of drug trafficking if they knowingly sell, purchase, manufacture, deliver, or bring into this state specified illegal drugs, such as cannabis, morphine, cocaine, fentanyl, hydrocodone, oxycodone, or if they are knowingly in actual or constructive possession of these drugs and the drugs are over a certain amount. [S. 893.135, F.S.](#) Drug trafficking also includes those who agree, conspire, combine, or confederate with another person to commit the act.

⁵¹ [S. 414.095, F.S.](#); *see also*, DCF's ESS Policy Manual 1420.2200, Individual Convicted of Felony Drug Trafficking (TCA). Available at <https://www.myflfamilies.com/sites/default/files/2023-02/1410.pdf> (last visited February 8, 2026).

⁵² [S. 893.135, F.S.](#)

⁵³ *Supra*, note 51.

⁵⁴ Email from Chancer Teel, Legislative Affairs Director of the Florida Department of Children & Families. Received Monday, February 9, 2026. On file with the Human Services Subcommittee.

⁵⁵ U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics, *Recidivism of Prisoners Released in 24 States in 2008: A 10-Year Follow-Up Period (2008–2018)*, Special Report (2021). Available at https://bjs.ojp.gov/BJS_PUB/rpr24s0810yfup0818/Web%20content/508%20compliant%20PDFs (last visited January 25, 2024).

⁵⁶ Yang, C., *Does Public Assistance Reduce Recidivism?* (2017). Harvard Law School. Available at http://www.law.harvard.edu/programs/olin_center/papers/pdf/Yang_920.pdf (last visited February 8, 2026).

⁵⁷ Tuttle, C., *Snapping Back: Food Stamp Bans and Criminal Recidivism* (2019). American Economic Journal: Economic Policy, 11(2): 301–327, <https://pubs.aeaweb.org/doi/pdfplus/10.1257/pol.20170490>.

Human trafficking is a form of modern-day slavery involving the transporting, soliciting, recruiting, harboring, providing, enticing, maintaining, or obtaining another person for the purpose of exploiting that person.⁵⁸ Federal law defines human trafficking as the use of force, fraud, or coercion to compel a person into commercial sex acts, labor, or services against their will. Instances involving a minor induced into commercial sex is considered human trafficking regardless of the presence of force, fraud, or coercion.⁵⁹ Cases of human trafficking have been reported in all 50 US states and Washington, D.C.⁶⁰ Human trafficking can affect individuals of any age, gender, or nationality; however, some people are more vulnerable than others. Significant risk factors include recent migration or relocation, substance use, mental health concerns, and involvement in the child welfare system.⁶¹

The National Human Trafficking Hotline

The National Human Trafficking Hotline (Hotline) is a free, non-governmental service to connect victims and survivors of sex and labor trafficking with services and supports to find help and safety. The Hotline also receives tips about potential situations of sex and labor trafficking and facilitates reporting that information to the appropriate authorities. The Hotline services are available through toll-free phone and SMS text lines and a live online chat function 24-hours a day, every day of the year.⁶² In 2024, the Hotline identified 11,999 cases⁶³ involving 21,865 victims in the United States.⁶⁴ Of these, 832 cases involving 1,874 victims were located in Florida.⁶⁵

Identifying Victims of Human Trafficking

The cases identified through the Hotline or through criminal investigations are likely only a fraction of the actual instances of human trafficking in the United States. Human trafficking is notoriously underreported and victims are frequently criminalized by law enforcement.⁶⁶ Victims of human trafficking often do not self-identify as victims, fear retribution from their exploiter, and distrust the authorities.⁶⁷ The University of South Florida's Trafficking in Persons Risk to Resilience Research Lab estimates that in 2024, there were approximately 200,000 victims of sex trafficking and 540,000 victims of labor trafficking in Florida.⁶⁸

A public health approach to identifying victims of trafficking recognizes that victims often intersect with multiple systems of care, such as health care settings, through which victims can be identified and provided with assistance.⁶⁹ Victims of human trafficking often experience significant health consequences as a result of being

⁵⁸ [S. 787.06. F.S.](#)

⁵⁹ *Id. See also*, 22 USC § 7102

⁶⁰ Polaris. *2019 data report: the U.S. National Human Trafficking Hotline*. Available at <https://humantraffickinghotline.org/sites/default/files/2022-12/Polaris-2019-US-National-Human-Trafficking-Hotline-Data-Report.pdf> (last visited January 15, 2026).

⁶¹ National Human Trafficking Hotline. *Human Trafficking: What Human Trafficking is, and isn't*. Available at <https://humantraffickinghotline.org/en/human-trafficking> (last visited January 14, 2026).

⁶² National Human Trafficking Hotline, *About Us*. Available at <https://humantraffickinghotline.org/en/about-us> (last visited January 14, 2026).

⁶³ The National Human Trafficking Hotline uses the word "case" to represent distinct situations of trafficking reported to the hotline. National Human Trafficking Hotline, *National Statistics* (2026). Available at <https://humantraffickinghotline.org/en/statistics> (last visited January 14, 2026).

⁶⁴ *Id.*

⁶⁵ National Human Trafficking Hotline, *Florida*. Available at <https://humantraffickinghotline.org/en/statistics/florida> (last visited January 14, 2026).

⁶⁶ University of South Florida, Trafficking in Persons Risk to Resilience Research Lab, *Statewide Repository for Anonymous Human Trafficking Data: 2024 Annual Report* (2025). Available at <https://usf.app.box.com/s/yyub2nzjao514cjbzow7uflrn1c0kl8c/file/1907389717649?sb=/details> (last visited January 29, 2026).

⁶⁷ Farrell, A., et al., (2019). *Failing victims? Challenges of the police response to human trafficking*. *Criminology & Public Policy*, 18: 649– 673. Available at <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/1745-9133.12456> (last visited January 15, 2026).

⁶⁸ *Supra*, note 66, at p. 20.

⁶⁹ Department of Health & Human Services, Administration for Children & Families (2018). *Adult Human Trafficking Screening Tool and Guide*. Available at https://acf.gov/sites/default/files/documents/otip/adult_human_trafficking_screening_tool_and_guide.pdf (last visited January 15, 2026).

trafficked, including physical injuries, sexual transmitted infections, and psychological symptoms.⁷⁰ Consequently, many human trafficking victims come into contact with a health care provider during their exploitation and screening tools have been developed in order to identify victims in health care settings.⁷¹

BILL HISTORY

COMMITTEE REFERENCE	ACTION	DATE	STAFF DIRECTOR/ POLICY CHIEF	ANALYSIS PREPARED BY
Human Services Subcommittee	15 Y, 0 N, As CS	2/12/2026	Mitz	Osborne
THE CHANGES ADOPTED BY THE COMMITTEE:	Limited the exception to the prohibition on individuals convicted of drug trafficking to apply only to victims of human trafficking.			
Health Care Budget Subcommittee				
Health & Human Services Committee				

THIS BILL ANALYSIS HAS BEEN UPDATED TO INCORPORATE ALL OF THE CHANGES DESCRIBED ABOVE.

⁷⁰ Zimmerman, C., et al. (2008). *The Health of Trafficked Women: A Survey of Women Entering Posttrafficking Services in Europe*. American Journal of Public Health, 98:1, pp. 55-59. Available at <https://ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/full/10.2105/AJPH.2006.108357> (last visited January 15, 2026).

⁷¹ Hainaut, M., Thompson, K.J., Ha, C.J., Herzog, H.L., Roberts, T., Ades, V., (2022). *Are Screening Tools for Identifying Human Trafficking Victims in Health Care Settings Validated? A Scoping Review*. Public Health Reports, 2022;137(1_suppl):63S-72S. doi:[10.1177/00333549211061774](https://doi.org/10.1177/00333549211061774)