

**FOR CONSIDERATION** By the Committee on Appropriations

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30       obsolete language; requiring the office to develop  
31       trauma-informed training for mentors of certain former  
32       foster youth; providing requirements for the training;  
33       authorizing the office to provide certain additional  
34       trainings on mentorship of special populations;  
35       revising the amount of monthly financial assistance  
36       that the office provides to participating former  
37       foster youth; requiring the office to assign  
38       experienced staff to serve as program liaisons for a  
39       specified purpose; revising qualifications to serve as  
40       a mentor; authorizing the department to offer certain  
41       training to mentors in subsequent years; authorizing  
42       an employee who serves as a mentor to participate in  
43       certain additional trainings; deleting a provision  
44       authorizing the offset of a reduction in or loss of  
45       certain benefits due to receipt of a Step into Success  
46       stipend by an additional stipend payment; creating s.  
47       409.1475, F.S.; providing legislative findings and  
48       intent; creating the Foster and Family Support Grant  
49       Program within the department; requiring the  
50       department to award grants to not-for-profit, faith-  
51       based organizations for specified purposes; requiring  
52       that the program emphasize certain support; specifying  
53       authorized uses for awarded grant funds; requiring  
54       grant recipients to submit reports to the department  
55       in a format and at intervals prescribed by the  
56       department; authorizing the department to adopt rules;  
57       amending s. 409.908, F.S.; revising the parameters for  
58       the prospective payment methodology used for

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59       determining the Agency for Health Care  
60       Administration's long-term care reimbursement plan for  
61       nursing home care; requiring the agency to consider  
62       specified recommendations when revising its  
63       methodology for calculating Quality Incentive Program  
64       payments; requiring the agency to delay the effective  
65       date of any changes to its methodology for a specified  
66       timeframe; amending s. 409.9855, F.S.; requiring the  
67       agency to collect and analyze certain data relating to  
68       the pilot program for individuals with developmental  
69       disabilities for a specified timeframe; requiring the  
70       agency to report specified information to the Social  
71       Services Estimating Conference; amending s. 409.990,  
72       F.S.; revising the cumulative amount of unexpended  
73       state funds that a community-based care lead agency  
74       may carry forward to the next fiscal year; amending s.  
75       414.56, F.S.; conforming a provision to changes made  
76       by the act; reenacting ss. 39.5085(2)(d),  
77       39.6225(5)(d), 393.065(5)(b), and 409.1451(2)(b),  
78       F.S., relating to the Relative Caregiver Program, the  
79       Guardianship Assistance Program, application and  
80       eligibility determinations, and the Road-to-  
81       Independence Program, respectively, to incorporate the  
82       amendment made to s. 409.145, F.S., in references  
83       thereto; providing an effective date.

84  
85       Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

86  
87       Section 1. Paragraph (c) is added to subsection (6) of

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88 section 216.136, Florida Statutes, to read:

89 216.136 Consensus estimating conferences; duties and  
90 principals.—

91 (6) SOCIAL SERVICES ESTIMATING CONFERENCE.—

92 (c) The Social Services Estimating Conference shall develop  
93 official information relating to the pilot program for  
94 individuals with developmental disabilities implemented pursuant  
95 to s. 409.9855, including, but not limited to, data related to  
96 enrollment, caseloads, utilization of services, program  
97 expenditures, and any other information that the conference  
98 determines necessary for the state planning and budgeting system  
99 and to project future budgets and drawdown of federal matching  
100 funds.

101 Section 2. Subsection (8) is added to section 394.495,  
102 Florida Statutes, to read:

103 394.495 Child and adolescent mental health system of care;  
104 programs and services.—

105 (8) As authorized by and consistent with funding  
106 appropriated in the General Appropriations Act, the department  
107 may contract with Valerie's House, Inc., a nonprofit  
108 organization exempt from taxation pursuant to s. 501(c) (3) of  
109 the Internal Revenue Code, to provide grief support services to  
110 help children and youth ages 4 to 19 who have experienced the  
111 death of a parent or sibling. The services provided must be at  
112 no cost to the bereaved child or his or her caregiver and may  
113 include, but need not be limited to, grief support groups,  
114 mentoring, individual grief counseling, financial crisis  
115 support, and in-school support services. Valerie's House, Inc.,  
116 may also provide grief awareness training and outreach to local

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schools and medical facilities under the contract.

Section 3. Subsection (3) of section 409.145, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

409.145 Care of children; "reasonable and prudent parent" standard.—The child welfare system of the department shall operate as a coordinated community-based system of care which empowers all caregivers for children in foster care to provide quality parenting, including approving or disapproving a child's participation in activities based on the caregiver's assessment using the "reasonable and prudent parent" standard.

(3) ROOM AND BOARD RATES.—

(a) Effective July 1, 2026 2022, room and board rates shall be paid to foster parents, including relative and nonrelative caregivers who are licensed as a level I child-specific foster placement, and to relative and nonrelative caregivers who are participating in the Relative Caregiver Program and receiving payments pursuant to s. 39.5085(2)(d)1. or 2., as follows:

### Monthly Room and Board Rate

0-5 Years

6-12 Years

13-21 Years

Age

Age

Age

\$663.03 ~~\$517.94~~

\$680.01 ~~\$531.21~~

\$795.94 ~~\$621.77~~

(b) Each January, foster parents, including relative and nonrelative caregivers who are licensed as a level I child-specific foster placement and relative and nonrelative

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141 caregivers who are participating in the Relative Caregiver  
142 Program and receiving payments pursuant to s. 39.5085(2)(d)1. or  
143 2., shall receive an annual cost of living increase. The  
144 department shall calculate the new room and board rate increase  
145 equal to the percentage change in the Consumer Price Index for  
146 All Urban Consumers, U.S. City Average, All Items, not  
147 seasonally adjusted, or successor reports, for the preceding  
148 December compared to the prior December as initially reported by  
149 the United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor  
150 Statistics. The department shall make available the adjusted  
151 room and board rates annually.

152 (c) The amount of the monthly room and board rate may be  
153 increased upon agreement among the department, the community-  
154 based care lead agency, and the foster parent.

155 (d) Effective July 1, 2022, community-based care lead  
156 agencies providing care under contract with the department shall  
157 pay a supplemental room and board payment to foster parents,  
158 including relative and nonrelative caregivers who are licensed  
159 as a level I child-specific foster placement and relative and  
160 nonrelative caregivers who are participating in the Relative  
161 Caregiver Program and receiving payments pursuant to s.  
162 39.5085(2)(d)1. or 2., on a per-child basis, for providing  
163 independent life skills and normalcy supports to children who  
164 are 13 through 17 years of age placed in their care. The  
165 supplemental payment must be paid monthly in addition to the  
166 current monthly room and board rate payment. The supplemental  
167 monthly payment shall be based on 10 percent of the monthly room  
168 and board rate for children 13 through 21 years of age as  
169 provided under this section and adjusted annually.

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170       Section 4. Section 409.1455, Florida Statutes, is amended  
171 to read:

172       409.1455 Step into Success Workforce Education and  
173 Internship ~~Pilot~~ Program for foster youth and former foster  
174 youth.—

175       (1) SHORT TITLE.—This section may be cited as the "Step  
176 into Success Act."

177       (2) CREATION.—The department shall establish the 3-year  
178 Step into Success Workforce Education and Internship ~~Pilot~~  
179 Program to give eligible foster youth and former foster youth an  
180 opportunity to learn and develop essential workforce and  
181 professional skills, to transition from the custody of the  
182 department to independent living, and to become better prepared  
183 for an independent and successful future. The ~~pilot~~ program must  
184 consist of an independent living professionalism and workforce  
185 education component and, for youth who complete that component,  
186 an onsite workforce training internship component. In  
187 consultation with subject-matter experts and the community-based  
188 care lead agencies, the office shall develop and administer the  
189 ~~pilot~~ program for interested foster youth and former foster  
190 youth; however, the department may contract with entities that  
191 have demonstrable subject-matter expertise in the transition to  
192 adulthood for foster youth, workforce training and preparedness,  
193 professional skills, and related subjects to collaborate with  
194 the office in the development and administration of the ~~pilot~~  
195 program. The independent living professionalism and workforce  
196 education component of the program must culminate in a  
197 certificate that allows a former foster youth to participate in  
198 the onsite workforce training internship.

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(3) DEFINITIONS.—For purposes of this section, the term:

(a) "Community-based care lead agency" has the same meaning as in s. 409.986(3).

(b) "Former foster youth" means an individual 18 years of age or older but younger than 26 years of age who is currently or was previously placed in licensed care, excluding Level I licensed placements pursuant to s. 409.175(5)(a)1., for at least 60 days within this state.

(c) "Foster youth" means an individual older than 16 years of age but younger than 18 years of age who is currently in licensed care, excluding Level I licensed placements pursuant to s. 409.175(5)(a)1.

(d) "Office" means the department's Office of Continuing Care.

(e) "Participating organization" means a state agency, a corporation under chapter 607 or chapter 617, or another relevant entity that has agreed to collaborate with the office in the development and implementation of a trauma-informed onsite workforce training internship program pursuant to subsections (6) and (7).

(4) REQUIREMENTS OF THE DEPARTMENT AND OFFICE.—The department shall establish and the office shall develop and administer the pilot program for eligible foster youth and former foster youth. The office shall do all of the following:

(a) Develop eligible foster youth and former foster youth cohorts within the department's regions.

(b) Collaborate with local chambers of commerce and recruit mentors and organizations within the department's regions, emphasizing recruitment of mentors and organizations in the

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228 following counties:

229     1. Duval.  
230     2. Escambia.  
231     3. Hillsborough.  
232     4. Palm Beach.  
233     5. Polk.

234     (c) Provide eligible former foster youth with a variety of  
235 internship placement opportunities, including by connecting  
236 existing third-party mentorship organizations that focus on  
237 former foster youth with eligible former foster youth who have  
238 an interest in such organizations' programs The pilot program  
239 ~~must be administered as part of an eligible foster youth's~~  
240 ~~regular transition planning under s. 39.6035 or as a post-~~  
241 ~~transition service for eligible former foster youth. The office~~  
242 ~~must begin the professionalism and workforce education component~~  
243 ~~of the program on or before January 1, 2024, and the onsite~~  
244 ~~workforce training internship component of the program on or~~  
245 ~~before July 1, 2024.~~

246     (5) INDEPENDENT LIVING PROFESSIONALISM AND WORKFORCE  
247 EDUCATION COMPONENT REQUIREMENTS.—The office shall do all of the  
248 following in connection with the independent living  
249 professionalism and workforce education component for eligible  
250 foster youth and former foster youth:

251         (a) Designate and ensure that the number of qualified staff  
252 is sufficient to implement and administer the component, which  
253 may be part of a larger independent living or life skills  
254 training program if the larger program meets the requirements of  
255 this subsection.

256         (b) Develop all workshops, presentations, and curricula for

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257 the component, including, but not limited to, all written  
258 educational and training materials for foster youth and former  
259 foster youth. Resources may include, but are not limited to,  
260 workshops and materials to assist with preparing résumés, mock  
261 interviews, experiential training, and assistance with securing  
262 an internship or employment. The office must review and update  
263 these materials as necessary. The training materials must  
264 address, but are not limited to, the following:

- 265 1. Interview skills;
- 266 2. Professionalism;
- 267 3. Teamwork;
- 268 4. Leadership;
- 269 5. Problem solving; and
- 270 6. Conflict resolution in the workplace.

271 (c) Require that the training provided be in addition to  
272 any other life skills or employment training required by law.  
273 The training may be developed or administered by the department,  
274 community-based care lead agencies, or the lead agencies'  
275 subcontracted providers, or in collaboration with colleges or  
276 universities or other nonprofit organizations in the community  
277 with workforce education and training resources.

278 (d) Provide relevant written materials from the component  
279 and any relevant tools developed to ensure participants'  
280 successful transition to internships to all participating  
281 organizations that offer workforce training internship  
282 opportunities.

283 (e) Provide materials to inform eligible foster youth and  
284 former foster youth of the program, the requirements for  
285 participation, and contact information for enrollment. The

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286 community-based care lead agencies shall ensure that any  
287 subcontracted providers that directly serve youth receive this  
288 information.

289 (f) Advertise and promote the availability of the education  
290 and internship program to engage as many eligible foster youth  
291 and former foster youth as possible.

292 (g) Assess the career interests of each eligible foster  
293 youth and former foster youth who expresses interest in  
294 participating in the program and determine the most appropriate  
295 internship and post-internship opportunities for that youth  
296 based on his or her expressed interests.

297 (6) ONSITE WORKFORCE TRAINING INTERNSHIP COMPONENT  
298 REQUIREMENTS.—The office shall do all of the following in  
299 connection with the onsite workforce training internship program  
300 for eligible former foster youth:

301 (a) Develop processes and procedures to implement a trauma-  
302 informed onsite workforce training internship component. The  
303 processes and procedures of the internship component must be  
304 designed so that they can be replicated and scaled to meet  
305 various organizational structures and sizes. The component must  
306 include:

307 1. Recruitment of agencies, corporations, and other  
308 entities to host interns as participating organizations;

309 2. Assisting participating organizations with mentor  
310 recruitment, training, and matching;

311 3. Mentor-led performance reviews, including a review of  
312 the intern's work product, professionalism, time management,  
313 communication style, and stress-management strategies;

314 4. Daily mentorship and coaching on topics such as:

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315 a. Professionalism;

316 b. Teamwork;

317 c. Leadership;

318 d. Problem solving; and

319 e. Conflict resolution in the workplace;

320 5. Development of opportunities for interns to become  
321 employees of the participating organization; and

322 6. Reporting requirements specified in subsection (11).

323 (b) Develop ~~a minimum of 1 hour of~~ required trauma-informed  
324 training for mentors to satisfy the requirements of sub-  
325 subparagraph (7)(b)1.e. Such training must include interactive  
326 or experiential components, such as role-playing, scenario  
327 discussion, or case studies. The office may provide at least  
328 four additional 1-hour trainings on mentorship of special  
329 populations as optional training opportunities, which must be  
330 asynchronous and accessible to mentors online at their  
331 convenience, and must inform participating organizations of  
332 these optional training opportunities to teach the skills necessary  
333 ~~to engage with participating eligible former foster youth.~~

334 (c) Provide assistance to eligible foster youth and former  
335 foster youth interested in participating in the internship  
336 component, including, but not limited to, identifying and  
337 monitoring internship opportunities, being knowledgeable of the  
338 training and skills needed to match eligible foster youth and  
339 former foster youth with appropriate internships, and assisting  
340 eligible foster youth and former foster youth with applying for  
341 post-internship employment opportunities.

342 (d) Publicize specific internship positions in an easily  
343 accessible manner and inform eligible foster youth and former

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344 foster youth of where to locate such information.

345 (e) Provide a participating former foster youth with  
346 financial assistance in the amount of \$1,717 ~~\$1,517~~ monthly and  
347 develop a process and schedule for the distribution of payments  
348 to former foster youth participating in the component, subject  
349 to the availability of funds.

350 (f) Distribute funds appropriated for the compensation of  
351 mentors who are participating in the component as provided in  
352 paragraph (7)(b).

353 (g) By May 1, 2024, provide to the Board of Governors and  
354 the State Board of Education all relevant internship information  
355 necessary to support the award of postsecondary credit or career  
356 education clock hours for internship positions held by former  
357 foster youth participating in the onsite workforce training  
358 internship component.

359 (h) Develop and conduct follow-up surveys with:

360 1. Former foster youth within 3 months after their  
361 internship start date to ensure successful transition into the  
362 work environment and to gather feedback on how to improve the  
363 experience for future participants.

364 2. Mentors assigned to participating former foster youth.  
365 Such data must be collected by October 1, 2024, and by October 1  
366 annually thereafter, for inclusion in the independent living  
367 services annual report.

368 3. Any other persons the office deems relevant for purposes  
369 of continued improvement of the internship component.

370 (i) Assign experienced staff to serve as program liaisons  
371 who are available for mentors to contact whenever the mentors  
372 need to debrief or have questions concerning a former foster

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373 youth.374 (7) REQUIREMENTS FOR PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS.—Each  
375 organization participating in the onsite workforce training  
376 internship component shall:377 (a) Collaborate with the office to implement a trauma-  
378 informed approach to mentoring and training former foster youth.379 (b) Recruit employees to serve as mentors for former foster  
380 youth interning with such organizations.

381 1. To serve as a mentor, an employee must:

382 a. Have worked in his or her career field or area for the  
383 participating organization for at least 1 year;384 b. Have experience relevant to the job and task  
385 responsibilities of the intern;

386 c. Sign a monthly hour statement for the intern;

387 d. Allocate at least 1 hour per month to conduct mentor-led  
388 performance reviews, to include a review of the intern's work  
389 product, professionalism, time management, communication style,  
390 and stress-management strategies; and391 e. Complete a minimum of 1 hour of trauma-informed training  
392 to gain and maintain skills critical for successfully engaging  
393 former foster youth. Before being matched with a former foster  
394 youth, the employee must complete a 1-hour training that covers  
395 core topics, including, but not limited to:396 (I) Understanding trauma and its impacts.397 (II) Recognizing and responding to trauma-related  
398 behaviors.399 (III) De-escalation strategies and crisis response.400 (IV) Boundaries and mentor self-care.401 (V) Communication skills.

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402

403 The department may offer a 1-hour training to review topics  
404 covered by the training required under this sub-subparagraph  
405 every subsequent year that the employee chooses to serve as a  
406 mentor.

407 2. Subject to available funding, an employee who serves as  
408 a mentor and receives the required trauma-informed training is  
409 eligible for a maximum payment of \$1,200 per intern per fiscal  
410 year, to be issued as a \$100 monthly payment for every month of  
411 service as a mentor.

412 3. An employee may serve as a mentor for a maximum of three  
413 interns at one time and may not receive more than \$3,600 in  
414 compensation per fiscal year for serving as a mentor. Any time  
415 spent serving as a mentor to an intern under this section counts  
416 toward the minimum service required for eligibility for payments  
417 pursuant to subparagraph 2. and this subparagraph.

418 4. An employee who serves as a mentor may participate in  
419 additional trainings on the mentorship of special populations as  
420 made available by the office.

421 (c) When necessary, have a discussion with an intern's  
422 assigned mentor, the participating organization's internship  
423 program liaison, and the office about the creation of a  
424 corrective action plan to address issues related to the intern's  
425 professionalism, work product, or performance and, if  
426 applicable, after giving the intern a reasonable opportunity to  
427 comply with the corrective action plan, document the intern's  
428 failure to do so before discharging him or her.

429 (d) Provide relevant feedback to the office at least  
430 annually for the office to comply with paragraph (6) (h).

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(e) Collaborate with the department to provide any requested information necessary to prepare the annual report required under subsection (11).

(8) TIME LIMITATIONS FOR PARTICIPATION.—A former foster youth who obtains an internship with a participating organization may participate in the internship component for no more than 1 year, calculated as 12 monthly stipend periods. The year begins on his or her start date with a participating organization. A former foster youth may intern under the internship program with more than one participating organization, but may not intern with more than one participating organization at the same time. A participating organization may hire the intern as an employee, but the hiring of a former foster youth may not be for an internship under this section.

(9) AWARD OF POSTSECONDARY CREDIT.—The Board of Governors and the State Board of Education shall adopt regulations and rules, respectively, to award postsecondary credit or career education clock hours for eligible former foster youth participating in the internship component pursuant to subsection (4). The regulations and rules must include procedures for the award of postsecondary credit or career education clock hours, including, but not limited to, equivalency and alignment of the internship component with appropriate postsecondary courses and course descriptions.

(10) CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION IN THE INTERNSHIP  
COMPONENT.—

(a) To become a participant in the internship component of the program, the applicant must be a foster youth or a former

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460 foster youth as those terms are defined in subsection (3) at the  
461 time such youth applies for an internship position with a  
462 participating organization. A foster youth or former foster  
463 youth who has completed the training component with the  
464 department may apply for a position with a participating  
465 organization but may not begin an internship until attaining the  
466 age of 18 years.

467 (b) If offered an internship, a former foster youth must be  
468 classified as an intern and must work 80 hours per month to be  
469 eligible for the stipend payment.

470 (c) A former foster youth must spend any stipend funds  
471 specified for clothing on clothing that is in compliance with  
472 the dress code requirements of the participating organization  
473 with which the former foster youth is interning. Notwithstanding  
474 any limitation on funds provided to purchase clothing, the  
475 former foster youth must comply with any dress code requirements  
476 of the participating organization with which he or she is  
477 interning.

478 (d) Stipend money earned pursuant to the internship  
479 component may not be considered earned income for purposes of  
480 computing eligibility for federal or state benefits, including,  
481 but not limited to, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance  
482 Program, a housing choice assistance voucher program, the  
483 Temporary Cash Assistance Program, the Medicaid program, or the  
484 school readiness program. ~~Notwithstanding this paragraph, any~~  
485 ~~reduction in the amount of benefits or loss of benefits due to~~  
486 ~~receipt of the Step into Success stipend may be offset by an~~  
487 ~~additional stipend payment equal to the value of the maximum~~  
488 ~~benefit amount for a single person allowed under the~~

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489 ~~Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.~~

490 (e) A former foster youth may, at the discretion of a  
491 postsecondary educational institution within this state in which  
492 such youth is enrolled, earn postsecondary credit or career  
493 education clock hours for work performed as an intern under the  
494 internship component. Postsecondary credit and career education  
495 clock hours earned for work performed under the internship  
496 component may be in addition to any compensation earned for the  
497 same work performed under the internship component and may be  
498 awarded for completion of all or any part of the internship  
499 component. Participating organizations shall cooperate with  
500 postsecondary educational institutions to provide any  
501 information about internship positions which is necessary to  
502 enable the institutions to determine whether to grant the  
503 participating former foster youth postsecondary credit or career  
504 education clock hours toward his or her degree.

505 (f) A former foster youth who accepts an internship with a  
506 participating organization pursuant to this section may only be  
507 discharged from the internship component after the participating  
508 organization engages the intern's assigned mentor and the  
509 participating organization's internship program staff to assist  
510 the intern in performing the duties of the internship. Before  
511 discharging the former foster youth, the participating  
512 organization must also document the intern's failure to comply  
513 with a corrective action plan after being given a reasonable  
514 opportunity to do so.

515 (11) REPORT.—The department shall include a section on the  
516 Step into Success Workforce Education and Internship ~~Pilot~~  
517 Program in the independent living annual report prepared

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518 pursuant to s. 409.1451(6) which includes, but is not limited  
519 to, all of the following:

520 (a) Whether the ~~pilot~~ program is in compliance with this  
521 section, and if not, barriers to compliance.

522 (b) A list of participating organizations and the number of  
523 interns.

524 (c) A summary of recruitment efforts to increase the number  
525 of participating organizations.

526 (d) A summary of the feedback and surveys received pursuant  
527 to paragraph (6)(h) from participating former foster youth,  
528 mentors, and others who have participated in the ~~pilot~~ program.

529 (e) Recommendations, if any, for actions necessary to  
530 improve the quality, effectiveness, and outcomes of the ~~pilot~~  
531 program.

532 (f) Employment outcomes of former foster youth who  
533 participated in the ~~pilot~~ program, including employment status  
534 after completion of the program, whether he or she is employed  
535 by the participating organization in which he or she interned or  
536 by another entity, and job description and salary information,  
537 if available.

538 (12) RULEMAKING.—The department shall adopt rules to  
539 implement this section.

540 Section 5. Section 409.1475, Florida Statutes, is created  
541 to read:

542 409.1475 Foster and Family Support Grant Program.—

543 (1) The Legislature recognizes that children and families  
544 thrive when caregivers are engaged, supported, and equipped to  
545 meet their responsibilities. It is the intent of the Legislature  
546 to strengthen community-based support that promotes stable

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547 caregiving relationships, responsible parenting, and improved  
548 outcomes for vulnerable children. Therefore, the Foster and  
549 Family Support Grant Program is created within the department.

550 (2) The department shall award grants to not-for-profit,  
551 faith-based organizations to support their efforts in the  
552 recruitment of foster and adoptive families through faith-based  
553 organizations and strengthening local capacity to support  
554 foster, adoptive, and kinship families and families caring for  
555 vulnerable children in underserved and rural communities. The  
556 program shall emphasize sustained, community-based support  
557 beyond initial licensure or training in order to improve  
558 caregiver retention and outcomes for children.

559 (3) Awarded grant funds must be used to provide education,  
560 resources, training, and technical assistance to eligible faith-  
561 based organizations involved in foster care, adoption, and  
562 family preservation activities and to support the development of  
563 trauma-informed, community-based support systems for families  
564 throughout the caregiving continuum. Allowable uses of funds  
565 include, but are not limited to:

566 (a) Outreach and recruitment activities to increase the  
567 number of licensed foster and adoptive families;  
568 (b) Training and support for organizations and volunteers  
569 assisting foster, adoptive, and kinship families and families;  
570 (c) Trauma-informed training, coaching, and counseling  
571 services for caregivers, families, and individuals involved in  
572 supporting children in out-of-home care or at risk of entry into  
573 care;  
574 (d) Program support and other activities to strengthen  
575 local capacities to support foster, adoptive, and kinship

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576 families and families.577 (e) Expansion of foster parent training initiatives  
578 designed to improve caregiver engagement, retention, and  
579 placement stability;580 (f) Development of volunteer-based wraparound support  
581 services for foster and adoptive families, including kinship  
582 caregivers;583 (g) Assistance with essential family needs for families  
584 actively fostering, adopting, or pursuing licensure, consistent  
585 with federal and state law; and586 (h) Ongoing family mentoring and peer support to promote  
587 placement stability, permanency, and family well-being.588 (4) Grant recipients must submit reports to the department  
589 in a format and at intervals, at least annually, as prescribed  
590 by the department.591 (5) The department may adopt rules to implement this  
592 section.593 Section 6. Upon the expiration and reversion of the  
594 amendments made to s. 409.908, Florida Statutes, pursuant to  
595 section 26 of chapter 2025-199, Laws of Florida, paragraph (b)  
596 of subsection (2) of section 409.908, Florida Statutes, is  
597 amended to read:598 409.908 Reimbursement of Medicaid providers.—Subject to  
599 specific appropriations, the agency shall reimburse Medicaid  
600 providers, in accordance with state and federal law, according  
601 to methodologies set forth in the rules of the agency and in  
602 policy manuals and handbooks incorporated by reference therein.  
603 These methodologies may include fee schedules, reimbursement  
604 methods based on cost reporting, negotiated fees, competitive

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605 bidding pursuant to s. 287.057, and other mechanisms the agency  
606 considers efficient and effective for purchasing services or  
607 goods on behalf of recipients. If a provider is reimbursed based  
608 on cost reporting and submits a cost report late and that cost  
609 report would have been used to set a lower reimbursement rate  
610 for a rate semester, then the provider's rate for that semester  
611 shall be retroactively calculated using the new cost report, and  
612 full payment at the recalculated rate shall be effected  
613 retroactively. Medicare-granted extensions for filing cost  
614 reports, if applicable, shall also apply to Medicaid cost  
615 reports. Payment for Medicaid compensable services made on  
616 behalf of Medicaid-eligible persons is subject to the  
617 availability of moneys and any limitations or directions  
618 provided for in the General Appropriations Act or chapter 216.  
619 Further, nothing in this section shall be construed to prevent  
620 or limit the agency from adjusting fees, reimbursement rates,  
621 lengths of stay, number of visits, or number of services, or  
622 making any other adjustments necessary to comply with the  
623 availability of moneys and any limitations or directions  
624 provided for in the General Appropriations Act, provided the  
625 adjustment is consistent with legislative intent.

626 (2)

627 (b) Subject to any limitations or directions in the General  
628 Appropriations Act, the agency shall establish and implement a  
629 state Title XIX Long-Term Care Reimbursement Plan for nursing  
630 home care in order to provide care and services in conformance  
631 with the applicable state and federal laws, rules, regulations,  
632 and quality and safety standards and to ensure that individuals  
633 eligible for medical assistance have reasonable geographic

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634 access to such care.

635 1. The agency shall amend the long-term care reimbursement  
636 plan and cost reporting system to create direct care and  
637 indirect care subcomponents of the patient care component of the  
638 per diem rate. These two subcomponents together shall equal the  
639 patient care component of the per diem rate. Separate prices  
640 shall be calculated for each patient care subcomponent,  
641 initially based on the September 2016 rate setting cost reports  
642 and subsequently based on the most recently audited cost report  
643 used during a rebasing year. The direct care subcomponent of the  
644 per diem rate for any providers still being reimbursed on a cost  
645 basis shall be limited by the cost-based class ceiling, and the  
646 indirect care subcomponent may be limited by the lower of the  
647 cost-based class ceiling, the target rate class ceiling, or the  
648 individual provider target. The ceilings and targets apply only  
649 to providers being reimbursed on a cost-based system. Effective  
650 October 1, 2018, a prospective payment methodology shall be  
651 implemented for rate setting purposes with the following  
652 parameters:

653 a. Peer Groups, including:

654 (I) North-SMMC Regions 1-9, less Palm Beach and Okeechobee  
655 Counties; and

656 (II) South-SMMC Regions 10-11, plus Palm Beach and  
657 Okeechobee Counties.

658 b. Percentage of Median Costs based on the cost reports  
659 used for September 2016 rate setting:

660 (I) Direct Care Costs ..... 100 percent.  
661 (II) Indirect Care Costs ..... 92 percent.  
662 (III) Operating Costs ..... 86 percent.

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## 663 c. Floors:

664 (I) Direct Care Component ..... 95 percent.

665 (II) Indirect Care Component ..... 92.5 percent.

666 (III) Operating Component ..... None.

667 d. Pass-through Payments ..... Real Estate and

668 ..... Personal Property

669 ..... Taxes and Property Insurance.

## 670 e. Quality Incentive Program Payment

671 Pool ..... 14.77 10 percent of September

672 ..... 2016 non-property related

673 ..... payments of included facilities.

674 f. Quality Score Threshold to Qualify for Quality Incentive  
675 Payment ..... 33 percent of all available points in the Medicaid  
676 Quality Incentive Program 20th677 ..... ~~percentile of included facilities.~~

## 678 g. Fair Rental Value System Payment Parameters:

679 (I) Building Value per Square Foot based on 2018 RS Means.

680 (II) Land Valuation ..... 10 percent of Gross Building value.

681 (III) Facility Square Footage ..... Actual Square Footage.

682 (IV) Movable Equipment Allowance ..... \$8,000 per bed.

683 (V) Obsolescence Factor ..... 1.5 percent.

684 (VI) Fair Rental Rate of Return ..... 8 percent.

685 (VII) Minimum Occupancy ..... 90 percent.

686 (VIII) Maximum Facility Age ..... 40 years.

687 (IX) Minimum Square Footage per Bed ..... 350.

688 (X) Maximum Square Footage for Bed ..... 500.

689 (XI) Minimum Cost of a renovation/replacements \$500 per bed.

690 h. Ventilator Supplemental payment of \$200 per Medicaid day  
691 of 40,000 ventilator Medicaid days per fiscal year.

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692       2. The agency shall revise its methodology for calculating  
693       Quality Incentive Program payments to:

694       a. Include the results of consumer satisfaction surveys  
695       conducted pursuant to s. 400.0225 as a measure of nursing home  
696       quality. The agency shall so revise the methodology after the  
697       surveys have been in effect for an amount of time the agency  
698       deems sufficient for statistical and scientific validity as a  
699       meaningful quality measure that may be incorporated into the  
700       methodology.

701       b. During the next rebasing for the Quality Incentive  
702       Program, consider implementing the recommendations proposed in  
703       sections 3.1.2-3.1.5 of the Study of Nursing Home Quality  
704       Incentive Programs Final Report that was prepared by Guidehouse,  
705       Inc., and presented to the agency on December 22, 2025.

706       c. Delay the effective date of any change made to its  
707       methodology or scoring due to rebasing for 1 year after any  
708       recalculations have been completed and the scores have been made  
709       available to the public.

710       3. The direct care subcomponent shall include salaries and  
711       benefits of direct care staff providing nursing services  
712       including registered nurses, licensed practical nurses, and  
713       certified nursing assistants who deliver care directly to  
714       residents in the nursing home facility, allowable therapy costs,  
715       and dietary costs. This excludes nursing administration, staff  
716       development, the staffing coordinator, and the administrative  
717       portion of the minimum data set and care plan coordinators. The  
718       direct care subcomponent also includes medically necessary  
719       dental care, vision care, hearing care, and podiatric care.

720       4. All other patient care costs shall be included in the

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721 indirect care cost subcomponent of the patient care per diem  
722 rate, including complex medical equipment, medical supplies, and  
723 other allowable ancillary costs. Costs may not be allocated  
724 directly or indirectly to the direct care subcomponent from a  
725 home office or management company.

726 5. On July 1 of each year, the agency shall report to the  
727 Legislature direct and indirect care costs, including average  
728 direct and indirect care costs per resident per facility and  
729 direct care and indirect care salaries and benefits per category  
730 of staff member per facility.

731 6. Every fourth year, the agency shall rebase nursing home  
732 prospective payment rates to reflect changes in cost based on  
733 the most recently audited cost report for each participating  
734 provider.

735 7. A direct care supplemental payment may be made to  
736 providers whose direct care hours per patient day are above the  
737 80th percentile and who provide Medicaid services to a larger  
738 percentage of Medicaid patients than the state average.

739 8. Pediatric, Florida Department of Veterans Affairs, and  
740 government-owned facilities are exempt from the pricing model  
741 established in this subsection and shall remain on a cost-based  
742 prospective payment system. Effective October 1, 2018, the  
743 agency shall set rates for all facilities remaining on a cost-  
744 based prospective payment system using each facility's most  
745 recently audited cost report, eliminating retroactive  
746 settlements.

747 9. By October 1, 2025, and each year thereafter, the agency  
748 shall submit to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and  
749 the Speaker of the House of Representatives a report on each

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750        Quality Incentive Program payment made pursuant to sub-  
751        subparagraph 1.e. The report must, at a minimum, include all of  
752        the following information:

753        a. The name of each facility that received a Quality  
754        Incentive Program payment and the dollar amount of such payment  
755        each facility received.

756        b. The total number of quality incentive metric points  
757        awarded by the agency to each facility and the number of points  
758        awarded by the agency for each individual quality metric  
759        measured.

760        c. An examination of any trends in the improvement of the  
761        quality of care provided to nursing home residents which may be  
762        attributable to incentive payments received under the Quality  
763        Incentive Program. The agency shall include examination of  
764        trends both for the program as a whole as well as for each  
765        individual quality metric used by the agency to award program  
766        payments.

767  
768        It is the intent of the Legislature that the reimbursement plan  
769        achieve the goal of providing access to health care for nursing  
770        home residents who require large amounts of care while  
771        encouraging diversion services as an alternative to nursing home  
772        care for residents who can be served within the community. The  
773        agency shall base the establishment of any maximum rate of  
774        payment, whether overall or component, on the available moneys  
775        as provided for in the General Appropriations Act. The agency  
776        may base the maximum rate of payment on the results of  
777        scientifically valid analysis and conclusions derived from  
778        objective statistical data pertinent to the particular maximum

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779 rate of payment. The agency shall base the rates of payments in  
780 accordance with the minimum wage requirements as provided in the  
781 General Appropriations Act.

782 Section 7. Paragraph (d) is added to subsection (6) of  
783 section 409.9855, Florida Statutes, to read:

784 409.9855 Pilot program for individuals with developmental  
785 disabilities.—

786 (6) PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION.—

787 (d) The agency shall collect and analyze data needed to  
788 project program enrollment costs, current and projected  
789 caseloads, utilization, and current and projected expenditures  
790 for the next 3 years. The agency shall report caseload and  
791 expenditure data and trends and any other information requested  
792 by the Social Services Estimating Conference in accordance with  
793 chapter 216.

794 Section 8. Subsection (5) of section 409.990, Florida  
795 Statutes, is amended to read:

796 409.990 Funding for lead agencies.—A contract established  
797 between the department and a lead agency must be funded by a  
798 grant of general revenue, other applicable state funds, or  
799 applicable federal funding sources.

800 (5) A lead agency may carry forward documented unexpended  
801 state funds from one fiscal year to the next; however, the  
802 cumulative amount carried forward may not exceed 8 percent of  
803 the annual amount of the total contract. Any unexpended state  
804 funds in excess of that percentage must be returned to the  
805 department.

806 (a) The funds carried forward may not be used in any way  
807 that would create increased recurring future obligations, and

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808 such funds may not be used for any type of program or service  
809 that is not currently authorized by the existing contract with  
810 the department.

811 (b) Expenditures of funds carried forward must be  
812 separately reported to the department.

813 (c) Any unexpended funds that remain at the end of the  
814 contract period shall be returned to the department.

815 (d) Funds carried forward may be retained through any  
816 contract renewals and any new procurements as long as the same  
817 lead agency is retained by the department.

818 Section 9. Subsection (5) of section 414.56, Florida  
819 Statutes, is amended to read:

820 414.56 Office of Continuing Care.—The department shall  
821 establish an Office of Continuing Care to ensure young adults  
822 who age out of the foster care system between 18 and 21 years of  
823 age, or 22 years of age with a documented disability, have a  
824 point of contact until the young adult reaches the age of 26 in  
825 order to receive ongoing support and care coordination needed to  
826 achieve self-sufficiency. Duties of the office include, but are  
827 not limited to:

828 (5) Developing and administering the Step into Success  
829 Workforce Education and Internship ~~Pilot~~ Program for foster  
830 youth and former foster youth as required under s. 409.1455.

831 Section 10. For the purpose of incorporating the amendment  
832 made by this act to section 409.145, Florida Statutes, in a  
833 reference thereto, paragraph (d) of subsection (2) of section  
834 39.5085, Florida Statutes, is reenacted to read:

835 39.5085 Relative Caregiver Program.—

836 (2)

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837       (d)1. Relatives or nonrelatives who have a child placed  
838 with them in out-of-home care and who have obtained licensure as  
839 a child-specific level I foster placement, regardless of whether  
840 a court has found the child to be dependent, shall receive a  
841 monthly payment in accordance with s. 409.145(3) from the date  
842 the child is placed in out-of-home care with his or her  
843 relatives or with nonrelatives until the child achieves  
844 permanency as determined by the court pursuant to s. 39.621.

845       2. Relatives or nonrelatives who have a child who has been  
846 found to be dependent placed with them in out-of-home care shall  
847 receive a monthly payment at a rate equal to the rate  
848 established in s. 409.145(3) for licensed foster parents,  
849 regardless of whether the relatives or nonrelatives have  
850 obtained a child-specific level I foster license, from the date  
851 the child is found to be dependent or from the date the child is  
852 placed with them in out-of-home care, whichever is later, for a  
853 period of no more than 6 months or until the child achieves  
854 permanency as determined by the court pursuant to s. 39.621,  
855 whichever occurs first.

856       3. Relatives or nonrelatives who have a child who has been  
857 found to be dependent placed with them in out-of-home care and  
858 who have not obtained a child-specific level I foster license  
859 within 6 months from the date of such placement shall receive a  
860 monthly payment in an amount determined by department rule from  
861 6 months after the date the child is found to be dependent or  
862 from 6 months after the child is placed with them in out-of-home  
863 care, whichever is later, until the relatives or nonrelatives  
864 obtain a child-specific level I foster license or until the  
865 child achieves permanency as determined by the court pursuant to

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866 s. 39.621, whichever occurs first. The monthly payment amount  
867 paid to relatives or nonrelatives pursuant to this subparagraph  
868 must be less than the monthly payment amount provided to a  
869 participant enrolled in the Guardianship Assistance Program  
870 pursuant to s. 39.6225.

871 4. Relatives or nonrelatives who have a child placed in  
872 their care by permanent guardianship pursuant to s. 39.6221, in  
873 a permanent placement with a fit and willing relative pursuant  
874 to s. 39.6231, or under former s. 39.622 if the placement was  
875 made before July 1, 2006, and who are not enrolled in the  
876 Guardianship Assistance Program pursuant to s. 39.6225 shall  
877 receive a monthly payment in an amount determined by department  
878 rule which must be less than the monthly payment amount provided  
879 to a participant enrolled in the Guardianship Assistance Program  
880 under s. 39.6225.

881 Section 11. For the purpose of incorporating the amendment  
882 made by this act to section 409.145, Florida Statutes, in a  
883 reference thereto, paragraph (d) of subsection (5) of section  
884 39.6225, Florida Statutes, is reenacted to read:

885 39.6225 Guardianship Assistance Program.—

886 (5) A guardian with an application approved pursuant to  
887 subsection (2) who is caring for a child placed with the  
888 guardian by the court pursuant to this part may receive  
889 guardianship assistance payments based on the following  
890 criteria:

891 (d) The department shall provide guardianship assistance  
892 payments in the amount of \$4,000 annually, paid on a monthly  
893 basis, or in an amount other than \$4,000 annually as determined  
894 by the guardian and the department and memorialized in a written

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895 agreement between the guardian and the department. The agreement  
896 shall take into consideration the circumstances of the guardian  
897 and the needs of the child. Changes may not be made without the  
898 concurrence of the guardian. However, the amount of the monthly  
899 payment may not exceed the foster care maintenance payment that  
900 would have been paid during the same period if the child had  
901 been in licensed care at his or her designated level of care at  
902 the rate established in s. 409.145(3).

903 Section 12. For the purpose of incorporating the amendment  
904 made by this act to section 409.145, Florida Statutes, in a  
905 reference thereto, paragraph (b) of subsection (5) of section  
906 393.065, Florida Statutes, is reenacted to read:

907 393.065 Application and eligibility determination.—

908 (5) Except as provided in subsections (6) and (7), if a  
909 client seeking enrollment in the developmental disabilities home  
910 and community-based services Medicaid waiver program meets the  
911 level of care requirement for an intermediate care facility for  
912 individuals with intellectual disabilities pursuant to 42 C.F.R.  
913 ss. 435.217(b)(1) and 440.150, the agency must assign the client  
914 to an appropriate preenrollment category pursuant to this  
915 subsection and must provide priority to clients waiting for  
916 waiver services in the following order:

917 (b) Category 2, which includes clients in the preenrollment  
918 categories who are:

919 1. From the child welfare system with an open case in the  
920 Department of Children and Families' statewide automated child  
921 welfare information system and who are either:

922 a. Transitioning out of the child welfare system into  
923 permanency; or

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924                   b. At least 18 years but not yet 22 years of age and who  
925 need both waiver services and extended foster care services; or  
926                   2. At least 18 years but not yet 22 years of age and who  
927 withdrew consent pursuant to s. 39.6251(5)(c) to remain in the  
928 extended foster care system.

929  
930                   For individuals who are at least 18 years but not yet 22 years  
931 of age and who are eligible under sub-subparagraph 1.b., the  
932 agency must provide waiver services, including residential  
933 habilitation, and must actively participate in transition  
934 planning activities, including, but not limited to,  
935 individualized service coordination, case management support,  
936 and ensuring continuity of care pursuant to s. 39.6035. The  
937 community-based care lead agency must fund room and board at the  
938 rate established in s. 409.145(3) and provide case management  
939 and related services as defined in s. 409.986(3)(e). Individuals  
940 may receive both waiver services and services under s. 39.6251.  
941 Services may not duplicate services available through the  
942 Medicaid state plan.

943  
944                   Within preenrollment categories 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7, the agency  
945 shall prioritize clients in the order of the date that the  
946 client is determined eligible for waiver services.

947                   Section 13. For the purpose of incorporating the amendment  
948 made by this act to section 409.145, Florida Statutes, in a  
949 reference thereto, paragraph (b) of subsection (2) of section  
950 409.1451, Florida Statutes, is reenacted to read:

951                   409.1451 The Road-to-Independence Program.—

952                   (2) POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION SERVICES AND SUPPORT.—

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953 (b) The amount of the financial assistance shall be as  
954 follows:

955           1. For a young adult who does not remain in foster care and  
956 is attending a postsecondary school as provided in s. 1009.533,  
957 the amount is \$1,720 monthly.

958       2. For a young adult who remains in foster care, is  
959 attending a postsecondary school, as provided in s. 1009.533,  
960 and continues to reside in a licensed foster home, the amount is  
961 the established room and board rate for foster parents. This  
962 takes the place of the payment provided for in s. 409.145(3).

963       3. For a young adult who remains in foster care, but  
964 temporarily resides away from a licensed foster home for  
965 purposes of attending a postsecondary school as provided in s.  
966 1009.533, the amount is \$1,720 monthly. This takes the place of  
967 the payment provided for in s. 409.145(3).

968       4. For a young adult who remains in foster care, is  
969 attending a postsecondary school as provided in s. 1009.533, and  
970 continues to reside in a licensed group home, the amount is  
971 negotiated between the community-based care lead agency and the  
972 licensed group home provider.

5. For a young adult who remains in foster care, but temporarily resides away from a licensed group home for purposes of attending a postsecondary school as provided in s. 1009.533, the amount is \$1,720 monthly. This takes the place of a negotiated room and board rate.

978       6. A young adult is eligible to receive financial  
979 assistance during the months when he or she is enrolled in a  
980 postsecondary educational institution.

981 Section 14. This act shall take effect July 1, 2026.