

By Senator Mitchell

4-958-01

1                                   A bill to be entitled  
 2           An act relating to disability services;  
 3           creating s. 402.74, F.S; creating the  
 4           Clearinghouse on Disability Information Office  
 5           in the Department of Management Services;  
 6           requiring the office to establish a statewide  
 7           toll-free disability information and referral  
 8           system; creating an advisory council; providing  
 9           qualifications for staff of the office;  
 10          providing for the sharing of information by  
 11          state agencies; providing for an annual report;  
 12          providing an effective date.

13  
 14 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

15  
 16           Section 1. Section 402.74, Florida Statutes, is  
 17 created to read:

18           402.74 Clearinghouse on Disability Information Office;  
 19 functions; advisory council; staff; collaborations; annual  
 20 report.--

21           (1) It is the intent of the Legislature that a  
 22 statewide system of disability service and resource  
 23 information be developed whereby individuals with  
 24 disabilities, family members, professionals assisting  
 25 individuals with disabilities, and the public can easily  
 26 ascertain information concerning disability-related services  
 27 and resources available in the state.

28           (2) The Clearinghouse on Disability Information Office  
 29 is created and administratively placed in the Department of  
 30 Management Services. The Department of Management Services  
 31 shall provide administrative support to the Clearinghouse on

1 Disability Information Office, including office space and  
2 assistance with personnel, accounting, and  
3 management-information systems. The Clearinghouse on  
4 Disability Information Office is not subject to control,  
5 supervision, or direction by the Department of Management  
6 Services in the performance of its duties. The Clearinghouse  
7 on Disability Information Office shall annually prepare a  
8 budget request that is not to be changed by the department,  
9 but shall be transmitted to the Governor for transmittal to  
10 the Legislature.

11 (3) The Clearinghouse on Disability Information Office  
12 shall develop and maintain a statewide toll-free information  
13 and referral system that provides information and referral for  
14 all disability-related services, programs, assistance, and  
15 resources, as well as generic services and assistance that  
16 individuals having disabilities and their families may need.  
17 The purpose of this information and referral system is to ease  
18 the complexity of systems that individuals having disabilities  
19 and their families must identify and navigate in order to  
20 secure the assistance needed by providing both information on  
21 where to find the service and an understanding of the  
22 processes required to access the service. It is recognized  
23 that a significant disability-related and generic information  
24 and referral infrastructure already exists in this state.  
25 Therefore, the Clearinghouse on Disability Information Office  
26 is to provide a central point through which a user is directed  
27 to existing information and referral systems and, when no such  
28 system exists, other disability resources to address the  
29 user's questions or needs.

30  
31

1           (4) The toll-free disability information and referral  
2 system operated by the office shall perform the following  
3 functions:

4           (a) Provide information pertaining to all disabilities  
5 and all ages of individuals having disabilities.

6           (b) Provide information pertaining to all types of  
7 disability-related services, as well as generic services that  
8 individuals having disabilities and their families may need.

9           (c) Provide information through both a toll-free  
10 telephone and web-site modalities.

11           (d) Provide sufficient information concerning the  
12 available services, eligibility, processes, and expectations  
13 to help users to navigate the system.

14           (e) Direct individuals to existing information  
15 systems, targeting the specific disability, age, or services  
16 needed, when available, and not duplicate existing  
17 disability-related or generic information systems.

18           (f) Develop and maintain a comprehensive compilation  
19 of disability resources that consist of existing  
20 disability-related and generic information systems and  
21 disability resources from new sources. However, the office may  
22 not recollect information already available through existing  
23 information systems.

24           (g) Determine gaps in existing information systems and  
25 develop information resources to address this need.

26           (h) Provide all information and materials in  
27 alternative formats upon request. The office will be  
28 accessible through TTY.

29           (i) Develop the capacity to offer information in  
30 multiple languages to make this service available to the  
31 diverse populations of this state.

1           (j) Advertise statewide the availability of the  
2 toll-free information and referral system.

3           (5)(a) The Clearinghouse on Disability Information  
4 Office shall establish an advisory council, not to exceed 20  
5 members, to assist the office in planning and developing its  
6 services. The advisory council shall meet at least four times  
7 each year. The office shall rely on the advisory council for  
8 advice and technical assistance in establishing and operating  
9 its delineated functions, including, but not limited to:

10           1. Collaborating with the disability-related programs,  
11 services, and organizations;

12           2. Using existing information and referral systems,  
13 both telephone and web-site based, where available;

14           3. Creating a system that is accepted and used by the  
15 disability community;

16           4. Forming linkages through which important changes in  
17 the disability services and systems could be provided to the  
18 office and through which the services of the office could be  
19 provided to the disability community;

20           5. Developing the services and systems for performing  
21 the identified office functions; and

22           6. Recommending improvements to the services and  
23 systems of the office.

24           (b) Members of the advisory council shall include  
25 representatives of state agency disability services and  
26 programs, statewide organizations providing disability-related  
27 information and referral systems, statewide organizations  
28 representing disability populations or disability services,  
29 and statewide organizations representing the generic  
30 information and referral systems. At least one-third of the  
31 advisory council members must be individuals having

1 disabilities or family members of individuals having  
2 disabilities. Representatives of state agencies may not  
3 comprise more than one-third of the advisory council. Members  
4 of the advisory council must reflect the diversity of the  
5 population and disabilities found in the state. Appointments  
6 to the advisory council shall be made in the following manner:  
7 two members by the Secretary of Children and Family Services,  
8 two members by the Commissioner of Education, two members by  
9 the Secretary of Elderly Affairs, two members by the Secretary  
10 of Health, one member by the Secretary of Management Services,  
11 one member by the Secretary of Transportation, and one member  
12 by the head of the Agency for Health Care Administration. The  
13 specified appointees shall identify the remaining members of  
14 the advisory council. Advisory council members shall serve  
15 without compensation, but are entitled to reimbursement for  
16 per diem and travel expenses as provided in s. 112.061.  
17 Reimbursement for travel expenses includes personal assistance  
18 services for individuals with disabilities who require such  
19 services.

20 (6) Staff to the Clearinghouse on Disability  
21 Information Office shall consist of a director, information  
22 specialist, and support staff, at a minimum, who will be  
23 dedicated solely to performing the functions of this office.  
24 Those staff that will be working directly with information and  
25 referral system users must have experience in the disability  
26 field. Strong consideration must be given to individuals  
27 having a disability or family members of individuals having a  
28 disability. The director must have a minimum of 5 years of  
29 experience in the disability field and, preferably, experience  
30 with information and referral services. The Department of  
31 Management Services shall select the director from three

1 candidates recommended by the advisory council, each of whom  
2 must meet the state requirements for the position. The  
3 candidates for the first director selected shall be  
4 recommended by a selection committee composed of the President  
5 of The ABLE Trust, the Executive Director of the Family  
6 Network on Disabilities, Inc., a member of the Board of  
7 Directors of the Florida Alliance of Information and Referral  
8 Services, the Bureau Chief of the Department of Health, Brain,  
9 and Spinal Cord Injury Program, the Executive Administrator  
10 for the Governor's Working Group on the Americans with  
11 Disabilities Act, and an individual having a developmental  
12 disability or a parent of an individual having a developmental  
13 disability to be appointed by the Secretary of Children and  
14 Family Services. The director of the office shall select the  
15 remaining staff for the office, each of whom must meet the  
16 state requirements for the positions.

17 (7) The state agencies providing services for  
18 individuals having disabilities or their families shall  
19 collaborate with the Clearinghouse on Disability Information  
20 Office in the sharing of information necessary to establish  
21 and maintain the statewide information and referral system.

22 (8) To the extent possible, the Clearinghouse on  
23 Disability Information Office will adopt professional  
24 standards of information and referral that will facilitate  
25 common data-sharing and quality assurance. The office shall  
26 collaborate with the Florida Alliance of Information and  
27 Referral Services to assist with the goal of forming a  
28 statewide information and 211 network.

29 (9) All components of the program and delivery of  
30 services must fully comply with the Americans with  
31 Disabilities Act.

1           (10) Initially, the toll-free statewide information  
2 and referral system established by the Clearinghouse on  
3 Disability Information Office shall consist of a base of  
4 state-level resources and services, including the federal  
5 social security disability income program and supplemental  
6 security income program. The state-level resources and  
7 services shall include state agencies providing services for  
8 individuals having disabilities, statewide disability-specific  
9 information and referral systems, statewide disability  
10 organizations having resources to assist with  
11 disability-related issues, and statewide generic information  
12 and referral systems. Once a base of state-level resources and  
13 services has been established, the office, with the assistance  
14 of the advisory council, will examine and determine how to  
15 capture and provide linkages to local community-based  
16 services, both disability-specific and generic, without  
17 duplicating existing information and referral systems. The  
18 capturing and providing of linkages to local community-based  
19 services must use existing state and local information and  
20 referral and service systems, where available. When gaps in  
21 disability information are identified at the local level,  
22 local information and referral and service systems should be  
23 used to the fullest extent possible to secure the information.

24           (11) The Clearinghouse on Disability Information  
25 Office shall annually prepare a report describing the services  
26 provided by the office and submit the report by December 31 to  
27 the Governor, to the President of the Senate, to the Speaker  
28 of the House of Representatives, and to each state agency  
29 offering services for individuals having disabilities. This  
30 report must include, but is not limited to, a description of  
31 the resources contained in and types of services offered

1 through the information and referral system, data concerning  
2 the requests received, activities of the advisory council, an  
3 explanation of the office's compliance with the delineated  
4 functions, and improvements made to the system.

5 Section 2. This act shall take effect upon becoming a  
6 law.

7  
8 \*\*\*\*\*

9 SENATE SUMMARY

10 Creates the Clearinghouse on Disability Information  
11 Office within the Department of Management Services to  
12 administer a statewide system of disability service and  
13 resource information.  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29  
30  
31