

1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to family self-sufficiency; amending
3 ss. 414.14 and 414.175, F.S.; authorizing changes to
4 public assistance policy and federal food assistance
5 waivers to conform to federal law and simplify
6 administration unless such changes increase program
7 eligibility standards; creating s. 414.315, F.S.;
8 requiring the Department of Children and Families to
9 seek federal approval to establish food assistance
10 program resource eligibility standards for all initial
11 applications and recertifications; providing that such
12 standards are subject to changes in federal
13 regulations governing resource eligibility; requiring
14 the department to obtain legislative authorization
15 before seeking federal waivers to expand resource and
16 income eligibility for food assistance; creating s.
17 414.393, F.S.; requiring the department to implement
18 an asset verification service to verify eligibility
19 for public assistance; amending s. 445.004, F.S.;
20 requiring CareerSource Florida, Inc., to include
21 certain data relating to the performance outcomes of
22 local workforce development boards and associated
23 pilot programs in an annual report to the Governor and
24 Legislature; providing legislative findings; providing
25 definitions; requiring CareerSource Florida, Inc., to

26 contract with a vendor to develop a pilot program to
27 increase employment among certain persons receiving
28 temporary cash assistance by a specified date;
29 providing criteria for selecting a vendor; providing
30 criteria for selecting local workforce boards to
31 conduct the pilot program; requiring CareerSource
32 Florida, Inc., to submit a comprehensive report on the
33 outcome of the pilot program to the Governor and
34 Legislature by a specified date; providing
35 appropriations; providing an effective date.

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

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39 Section 1. Section 414.14, Florida Statutes, is amended to
40 read:

41 414.14 Public assistance policy simplification.—To the
42 extent possible, the department shall align the requirements for
43 eligibility under this chapter with the food assistance program
44 and medical assistance eligibility policies and procedures to
45 simplify the budgeting process and reduce errors. If the
46 department determines that s. 414.075, relating to resources, or
47 s. 414.085, relating to income, is inconsistent with federal law
48 governing the food assistance program or medical assistance, and
49 that conformance to federal law would simplify administration of
50 the Temporary Cash Assistance Program or reduce errors without

51 materially increasing the cost of the program to the state, the
52 secretary of the department may propose a change in the resource
53 or income requirements of the program by rule, providing that
54 such change does not increase income or resource eligibility
55 standards for the program.

56 Section 2. Subsection (2) of section 414.175, Florida
57 Statutes, is amended to read:

58 414.175 Review of existing waivers.—

59 (2) The department shall review federal law, including
60 revisions to federal food assistance program requirements. If
61 the department determines that federal food assistance waivers
62 will further the goals of this chapter, including simplification
63 of program policies or program administration, the department
64 may obtain waivers if this can be accomplished within available
65 resources, providing that such waiver does not increase income
66 or resource eligibility standards for the food assistance
67 program above the levels set by federal regulations in 7 C.F.R.
68 s. 273.

69 Section 3. Section 414.315, Florida Statutes, is created
70 to read:

71 414.315 Food assistance program resource eligibility
72 standards.—

73 (1) The department shall seek federal approval to
74 implement the following resource eligibility standards that
75 apply to all initial applications or recertifications for food

76 assistance:

77 (a) A household that does not include an elderly or
78 disabled member may not exceed the maximum allowable resources,
79 including both liquid and nonliquid assets, of \$2,250.

80 (b) A household that includes one or more members who are
81 disabled or one or more members who are age 60 or over may not
82 exceed the maximum allowable resources, including both liquid
83 and nonliquid assets, of \$3,250.

84 (2) The resource eligibility standards established in
85 subsection (1) are subject to any changes to the federal
86 regulations governing resource eligibility for food assistance
87 in 7 C.F.R. s. 273.8 and any applicable cost-of-living
88 adjustment.

89 (3) Unless expressly required by federal law, the
90 department shall obtain specific authorization from the
91 Legislature before seeking, applying for, accepting, or renewing
92 any waiver for food assistance which expands resource
93 eligibility beyond the limits established in subsection (1).

94 (4) This section does not apply to those households that
95 are federally required to be categorically eligible for food
96 assistance under 7 C.F.R. 273.2.

97 Section 4. Section 414.393, Florida Statutes, is created
98 to read:

99 414.393 Applicant asset verification.—The department shall
100 implement an asset verification service for the purpose of

101 determining eligibility for public assistance programs.

102 Section 5. Paragraphs (c) and (d) are added to subsection
 103 (7) of section 445.004, Florida Statutes, and subsection (13) is
 104 added to that section, to read:

105 445.004 CareerSource Florida, Inc.; creation; purpose;
 106 membership; duties and powers.—

107 (7) By December 1 of each year, CareerSource Florida,
 108 Inc., shall submit to the Governor, the President of the Senate,
 109 the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Senate Minority
 110 Leader, and the House Minority Leader a complete and detailed
 111 annual report setting forth:

112 (c) For each local workforce development board,
 113 participant statistics and employment outcomes, by program, for
 114 individuals subject to mandatory work requirements due to
 115 receipt of temporary cash assistance or food assistance under
 116 chapter 414, including:

- 117 1. Individuals served.
- 118 2. Services received.
- 119 3. Activities in which individuals participated.
- 120 4. Types of employment secured.
- 121 5. Individuals securing employment but remaining in each
 122 program.
- 123 6. Individuals exiting programs due to employment.
- 124 7. Employment status at 3 months, 6 months, and 12 months
 125 after exiting the program, for the past 3 years.

126 (d) Interim outcomes of any pilot program implemented by a
127 local workforce development board selected pursuant to
128 subsection (13).

129 (13) The Legislature finds that some mandatory work
130 registrants in the Temporary Cash Assistance Program face
131 significant barriers to employment, which must be addressed with
132 services beyond those offered under a traditional workforce
133 program. To address this problem, CareerSource Florida, Inc., in
134 consultation with the department, shall implement a pilot
135 program to increase unsubsidized employment and earned income
136 among such registrants while reducing their reliance on public
137 assistance. The pilot program may not serve registrants who are
138 assessed as work ready or who do not face significant barriers
139 to employment.

140 (a) For the purposes of this subsection, "significant
141 barriers to employment" means at least one critical barrier or
142 three or more stand-alone barriers.

143 1. "Critical barriers" include substance abuse, mental
144 illness, physical or mental disability, domestic violence,
145 homelessness, and a criminal record affecting employment.

146 2. "Stand-alone barriers" include significant job skill
147 deficiencies; significant soft-skill deficiencies, such as
148 communication, time management, and problem-solving skills;
149 child welfare system involvement; and a negative or nonexistent
150 employment history.

151 (b) CareerSource Florida, Inc., in consultation with the
152 department, shall contract with a vendor by October 31, 2017, to
153 develop the pilot program according to the following guidelines:

154 1. The vendor must have expertise in the design and
155 development of workforce programs.

156 2. The program design shall be based on the best available
157 research and shall include, at a minimum:

158 a. A comprehensive assessment to identify significant
159 barriers to employment, which shall be updated on an ongoing
160 basis. Such an assessment may collect information about the
161 registrant's educational attainment, level of literacy and
162 numeracy, basic skills, work experience, receipt of public
163 benefits, and other indicators of significant barriers.

164 b. An individual responsibility plan based on the
165 assessment, which includes a comprehensive service strategy to
166 address barriers to employment, whether sequentially or
167 simultaneously.

168 c. Intensive case management, including, but not limited
169 to, ongoing one-on-one guidance, motivation, and support for
170 registrants by assessing their needs and barriers, identifying
171 resources, and advising on career and training opportunities.
172 Intensive case management also includes collaborative work with
173 community partners to provide comprehensive services to
174 registrants which are designed to address their barriers and
175 achieve program goals.

176 3. The program may include other elements to address
177 significant barriers, such as a combination of job search
178 assistance, basic skills training, vocational education,
179 strategies that connect registrants to relevant career
180 opportunities by supporting their efforts to obtain educational
181 certificates or industry certification, and transitional
182 employment subsidies to achieve the desired improvements in
183 employment and earnings.

184 (c) CareerSource Florida, Inc., in consultation with the
185 department, shall select at least three local workforce boards
186 to conduct the pilot program based on a board's:

187 1. Commitment to effectively serve the target population;
188 2. Established record of innovation in the delivery of
189 workforce services, preferably to the target population;

190 3. Existing strong community partnerships, including
191 partnerships with nonprofit entities and community colleges, to
192 provide workforce services; and

193 4. Commitment to implement the program for the target
194 population while continuing to serve other Temporary Cash
195 Assistance Program mandatory work registrants.

196 (d) The local workforce boards selected for the pilot
197 program shall contract with vendors to implement the program.
198 The local workforce board shall give preference to vendors with
199 a demonstrated commitment to innovation in providing workforce
200 services or in serving populations with significant barriers.

201 (e) CareerSource Florida, Inc., shall submit a report to
202 the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of
203 the House of Representatives by December 15, 2020. The report
204 shall include the program design; participating entities;
205 participant demographics, including, but not limited to,
206 barriers identified; and the case management processes,
207 assessment processes, and services provided to participants, as
208 compared to those available under the local workforce board's
209 traditional workforce program. The report shall also include an
210 analysis of the effect of the program on participants' barriers
211 to employment, employment outcomes, household income, reliance
212 on public assistance, and other measures of household well-being
213 and self-sufficiency.

214 Section 6. For fiscal year 2017-2018, the sum of
215 \$3,342,525 in nonrecurring funds is appropriated from the
216 Federal Grants Trust Fund to the Department of Children and
217 Families to contract with a vendor to develop an asset
218 verification service for public assistance programs pursuant to
219 s. 414.393, Florida Statutes, as created by this act, and the
220 sum of \$300,000 in nonrecurring funds is appropriated from the
221 Federal Grants Trust Fund to the Department of Children and
222 Families to perform the technology modifications necessary to
223 implement the asset verification service.

224 Section 7. For fiscal year 2017-2018, the sum of \$500,000
225 in nonrecurring funds is appropriated from the Welfare

226 Transition Trust Fund to the Department of Economic Opportunity
227 for distribution to CareerSource Florida, Inc., to contract for
228 development of a program to serve temporary cash assistance work
229 registrants with significant barriers to employment pursuant to
230 this act, including, but not limited to, providing the initial
231 program design, evaluation design, training curricula
232 development and delivery of training, implementation oversight,
233 development of informational materials for participants, and
234 technical assistance; and for distribution to selected local
235 workforce boards for startup expenses incurred by vendors
236 implementing the program, including, but not limited to,
237 information technology updates, program coordination, and staff
238 training. Case management and direct services for all temporary
239 cash assistance recipients shall be provided within current
240 resources.

241 Section 8. This act shall take effect July 1, 2017.