

The Florida Senate
BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Appropriations Committee on Health and Human Services

BILL: CS/SB 1144

INTRODUCER: Governmental Oversight and Accountability Committee and Senator Burgess

SUBJECT: Hope Florida

DATE: April 14, 2025

REVISED: _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	<u>Harmsen</u>	<u>McVaney</u>	<u>GO</u>	<u>Fav/CS</u>
2.	<u>Sneed</u>	<u>McKnight</u>	<u>AHS</u>	<u>Pre-meeting</u>
3.	_____	_____	<u>AP</u>	_____

Please see Section IX. for Additional Information:

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE - Substantial Changes

I. Summary:

CS/SB 1144 codifies the Office of Hope Florida within the Executive Office of the Governor. The Hope Florida program uses Hope Navigators to coordinate services from both the public and private sectors to help Floridians achieve self-sufficiency, maximize community integration, and build a prosperous future.

The bill defines terms, provides participant eligibility requirements, and outlines the Office’s and participating agencies’ duties, including the operation of a toll-free “Hope Line,” development and maintenance of the program’s website, and creation of a case management system.

The bill is expected to have an insignificant, negative fiscal impact on state expenditures. **See Section V., Fiscal Impact Statement.**

The bill takes effect upon becoming a law.

II. Present Situation:

Hope Florida – a Pathway to Prosperity, Economic Self-Sufficiency and Hope (Hope Florida) was established on September 9, 2021, by First Lady Casey DeSantis.¹ Hope Florida pairs Floridians who reach out to the program (the “client”) with a care navigator. The navigator helps

¹ HopeFlorida, *Timeline*, <https://hopeflorida.com/about-us/timeline.html> (last visited Mar. 25, 2025).

identify the client's goals and pairs the client with resources from faith-based, non-profit, government, and private sector entities to reach those goals.²

Hope Florida was initially implemented by the Department of Children and Families (DCF) in a three-phase rollout, with services beginning in August 2020 in the state's northwest and central regions with 30 full-time care navigators; phase two expanded into the Northeast and Southeast regions in January 2021 with 65 full-time care navigators; phase three launched in July 2021 in the Suncoast and Southern regions with 102 full-time care navigators.³

Hope Florida has since grown to also include the:

- Hope Florida Fund (established July 15, 2022), which “harnesses the charity of the private sector to give funds to deserving local entities.”⁴
- Activate Hope (established August 21, 2024), an emergency response entity that works with the Florida Division of Emergency Management to help Floridians who are recovering from disasters.⁵
- Hope Line – A toll-free hotline, “833-GET-HOPE.”⁶
- Hope Florida – A Pathway to Potential program within the Department of Juvenile Justice and its 40 Hope Navigators, to support vulnerable youth.⁷
- Coordinated efforts between Hope Florida, CareerSource Florida and the DCF to help unemployed Floridians find jobs. This specific program received \$4.3 million in state funds to fund Hope Navigators to work at all local workforce development boards and provide other related services.⁸
- Hope Florida – A Pathway to Purpose program within the Department of Elder Affairs (DOEA) to provide volunteer opportunities for and support to elderly Floridians. The DOEA established their own Hope Navigators to facilitate this program.⁹

² See, Florida Department of Children and Families, *Hope Florida: A Pathway to Prosperity* at 2, <https://www.homelesstrust.org/resources-homeless/library/providers/training/hope-florida.pdf> (last visited Mar. 25, 2025).

³ Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe, *Introducing HOPE FLORIDA A Pathway to Prosperity* (Oct. 2021), <https://www.elcmdm.org/Content/Uploads/elcmdm.org/files/Meeting%20Packages/Hope%20Florida%20PPT.pdf> (last visited Mar. 25, 2025).

⁴ Press Release, the Executive Office of the Governor, *First Lady Casey DeSantis Makes Major Announcements to Support the Hope Florida-a Pathway to Prosperity Initiative* (July 15, 2022), <https://www.flgov.com/eog/news/press/2022/first-lady-casey-desantis-makes-major-announcements-support-hope-florida-pathway> (last visited Mar. 25, 2026).

⁵ Press Release, the Executive Office of the Governor, *Governor Ron DeSantis and First Lady Casey DeSantis Announce Emergency Response Hope Florida Expansion* (Aug. 21, 2024), <https://flgov.com/eog/news/press/2024/governor-ron-desantis-and-first-lady-casey-desantis-announce-emergency-response> (last visited Mar. 26, 2025).

⁶ Hope Florida, *Get Help*, <https://hopeflorida.com/get-help/> (last visited Mar. 26, 2025).

⁷ Press Release, the Executive Office of the Governor, *First Lady Casey DeSantis Announces Hope Florida- A Pathway to Potential, Expanding the Hope Florida Model to Support At-Risk Youth and Their Families* (Mar. 29, 2023), <https://flgov.com/eog/news/press/2024/first-lady-casey-desantis-announces-hope-florida-pathway-potential-expanding-hope> (last visited Mar. 26, 2025).

⁸ Press Release, the Executive Office of the Governor, *First Lady Casey DeSantis Announces Hope Florida to Help Floridians with Barriers to Employment Find Promising Careers* (Jun. 9, 2023), <https://www.flgov.com/eog/news/press/2023/first-lady-casey-desantis-announces-hope-florida-help-floridians-barriers> (last visited Mar. 26, 2025).

⁹ Press Release, the Executive Office of the Governor, *First Lady Casey DeSantis Announces Hope Florida to Support Seniors Through 'A Pathway to Purpose,'* (Aug. 30, 2022), <https://www.flgov.com/eog/news/press/2022/first-lady-casey-desantis-expands-hope-florida-support-seniors-through-pathway> (last visited Mar. 26, 2025).

- Hope Florida – A Pathway to Promise within the Guardian ad Litem office and the DOEA to assist youth who age out of foster care.¹⁰
- Hope Florida – A Pathway for Patriots program within the Department of Veterans’ Affairs to assist veterans navigate their benefits.¹¹

In January 2025, the Hope Florida Office was established within the Executive Office of the Governor to oversee and administer Hope Florida.¹² The Hope Florida Office works with state agencies to “deepen partnerships with both public and private sectors.”

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

Office of Hope Florida Within the Executive Office of the Governor

The bill codifies the establishment of the Office of Hope Florida (Office) within the Executive Office of the Governor to align and coordinate state agency participation in the Hope Florida program. The Office’s duties include:

- Establishing goals and strategies for Hope Florida;
- Facilitating coordination and collaboration among participating agencies to achieve the program’s goals;
- Expanding the Hope Florida Partner Network to meet the needs of those served by the program;
- Developing and implementing care plans for program participants in partnership with Hope Navigators;
- Using participating state agencies and public-private partnerships to serve program participants and help them overcome barriers to self-sufficiency; and
- Overseeing the Hope Florida partner network, which is composed of designated state agencies, private-public partnerships, and nonprofit, private sector, and faith-based organizations that are actively engaged in Hope Florida and provide goods or services to directly support participants’ goals and address identified barriers.

The bill grants the Governor authority to appoint a director of the Office who serves at the pleasure of the Governor.

Hope Navigators

The bill describes Hope Navigators as resources who “must be embedded within communities” and serve as a single point of contact for program participants. The Hope Navigators create care

¹⁰ Press Release, the Executive Office of the Governor, *First Lady Casey DeSantis Announces Hope Florida- A Pathway to Promise, Expanding the Hope Florida Model to Support Youth Aging Out of Foster Care*, (Sept. 20, 2023), <https://www.flgov.com/eog/news/press/2023/first-lady-casey-desantis-announces-hope-florida-pathway-promise-expanding-hope> (last visited Mar. 26, 2025).

¹¹ Press Release, the Executive Office of the Governor, *First Lady Casey DeSantis Announces Hope Florida Initiative Expansion to Serve Florida Veterans* (Nov. 22, 2023), <https://www.flgov.com/eog/news/press/2023/first-lady-casey-desantis-announces-hope-florida-initiative-expansion-serve-florida> (last visited Mar. 26, 2025).

¹² Press Release, the Executive Office of the Governor, *Governor Ron DeSantis and First Lady Casey DeSantis Establish Hope Florida Office Within the Executive Office of the Governor* (Jan. 14, 2025), <https://www.flgov.com/eog/news/press/2025/governor-ron-desantis-and-first-lady-casey-desantis-establish-hope-florida-office> (last visited Mar. 26, 2025).

plans based on the information provided by the program participant to help connect the participant with community resources to help participants achieve their goals, overcome barriers, and realize their full potential. The bill also defines a Hope Navigator as an individual who coordinates care and assists participants and families seeking services through Hope Florida.

The bill defines a “care plan” as a written document that contains information provided by the Hope Florida program participant to develop and customize steps and timelines to achieve their goals. The care plan must include actionable steps and corresponding timelines to address immediate, intermediate, and long-term goals and barriers toward achieving self-sufficiency.

Agency Participation

The bill requires state agencies to participate in Hope Florida at the direction of the Executive Office of the Governor (EOG). However, the Department of Children and Families, Agency for Persons with Disabilities, Department of Juvenile Justice, Statewide Guardian ad Litem Office, Department of Education, Agency for Health Care Administration, Division of Emergency Management, Department of Veterans’ Affairs, Department of Commerce, and the Department of Elder Affairs are required to participate without need for the Governor’s direction.

Each agency must use its existing resources and personnel, to the extent possible, to operate Hope Florida.

The bill allows public-private partners, including CareerSource Florida and the Florida Commission on Community Service, to participate at the direction of the Hope Florida Office.

Participant Eligibility

Participation in Hope Florida is voluntary. Individuals may receive assistance by calling the Hope Line. To participate in Hope Florida, an individual must be:

- A Florida resident;
- A citizen or permanent resident alien of the United States; and
- At least 18 years of age, or, if emancipated, 16 years of age. However, an unemancipated minor may participate with his or her parent or guardian’s consent.

Miscellaneous

The bill creates the “Hope Florida Act” in ss. 23.41-23.45, F.S.

The bill defines the terms:

- “Hope Florida partner network” as a group of entities, including state agencies, public-private partnerships, and nonprofit, private-sector, and faith-based organizations that provides goods or services directly support Hope Florida participants.
- “Hope Line” as a toll-free hotline for Hope Florida inquiries and referrals for individuals and families in need of services.
- “Office” as the Hope Florida Office within the EOG.
- “Participant” as an individual who voluntarily participates in Hope Florida.

- “Participating state agency” as a state agency participating in Hope Florida at the direction of the EOG.

The bill takes effect upon becoming a law.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

Not applicable. The bill does not require counties or municipalities to take an action requiring the expenditure of funds, reduce the authority that counties or municipalities have to raise revenue in the aggregate, nor reduce the percentage of state tax shared with counties or municipalities.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

This bill is linked to SB 1146, which provides a public records exemption for the personal identifying information of a participant in the Hope Florida program.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None identified.

D. State Tax or Fee Increases:

None identified.

E. Other Constitutional Issues:

None identified.

V. Fiscal Impact Statement:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None identified.

B. Private Sector Impact:

The Hope Florida program may make it easier for Floridians in need of services to become aware of public and private nonprofit organizations that may assist them.

C. Government Sector Impact:

The bill is expected to have an insignificant, negative fiscal impact on state expenditures, as agencies are required to utilize existing resources, where feasible, to carry out its provisions. Current staffing and resources within the Hope Florida Office and participating state agencies appear adequate to support continued program operations.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Statutes Affected:

This bill creates the following sections of the Florida Statutes: 23.41, 23.42, 23.43, 23.44, and 23.45.

IX. Additional Information:**A. Committee Substitute – Statement of Substantial Changes:**

(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

CS by Governmental Oversight and Accountability on April 1, 2025:

- Moves the program to chapter 23, regarding “miscellaneous executive functions” and provides a title for the act, the “Hope Florida Act;”
- Adds additional defined terms; and
- Provides a more narrow list of the state agencies that shall participate in the program at the direction of the Executive Office of the Governor.

B. Amendments:

None.