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LEGISLATIVE ACTION

Senate

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House

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Floor: 1/AD/2R

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05/12/2026 11:15 AM

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Senator Trumbull moved the following:

**Senate Amendment (with title amendment)**

Delete everything after the enacting clause  
and insert:

Section 1. Paragraph (c) is added to subsection (6) of  
section 216.136, Florida Statutes, to read:

216.136 Consensus estimating conferences; duties and  
principals.—

(6) SOCIAL SERVICES ESTIMATING CONFERENCE.—

(c) The Social Services Estimating Conference shall develop  
official information relating to the pilot program for



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12 individuals with developmental disabilities implemented pursuant  
13 to s. 409.9855, including, but not limited to, data related to  
14 enrollment, caseloads, utilization of services, program  
15 expenditures, and any other information that the conference  
16 determines necessary for the state planning and budgeting system  
17 and to project future budgets and drawdown of federal matching  
18 funds.

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

21 394.495 Child and adolescent mental health system of care;  
22 programs and services.-

23 (8) As authorized by and consistent with funding  
24 appropriated in the General Appropriations Act, the department  
25 may contract with Valerie's House, Inc., a nonprofit  
26 organization exempt from taxation pursuant to s. 501(c)(3) of  
27 the Internal Revenue Code, to provide grief support services to  
28 help children and youth ages 4 to 19 who have experienced the  
29 death of a parent or sibling. The services provided must be at  
30 no cost to the bereaved child or his or her caregiver and may  
31 include, but need not be limited to, grief support groups,  
32 mentoring, individual grief counseling, financial crisis  
33 support, and in-school support services. Valerie's House, Inc.,  
34 may also provide grief awareness training and outreach to local  
35 schools and medical facilities under the contract.

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

38 409.145 Care of children; "reasonable and prudent parent"  
39 standard.-The child welfare system of the department shall  
40 operate as a coordinated community-based system of care which



41 empowers all caregivers for children in foster care to provide  
42 quality parenting, including approving or disapproving a child's  
43 participation in activities based on the caregiver's assessment  
44 using the "reasonable and prudent parent" standard.

45 (3) ROOM AND BOARD RATES.—

46 (a) Effective July 1, 2026 ~~2022~~, room and board rates shall  
47 be paid to foster parents, including relative and nonrelative  
48 caregivers who are licensed as a level I child-specific foster  
49 placement, and to relative and nonrelative caregivers who are  
50 participating in the Relative Caregiver Program and receiving  
51 payments pursuant to s. 39.5085(2)(d)1. or 2., as follows:  
52

Monthly Room and Board Rate

53

0-5 Years	6-12 Years	13-21 Years
Age	Age	Age
<u>\$663.03</u> <del>\$517.94</del>	<u>\$680.01</u> <del>\$531.21</del>	<u>\$795.94</u> <del>\$621.77</del>

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55  
56  
57 (b) Each January, foster parents, including relative and  
58 nonrelative caregivers who are licensed as a level I child-  
59 specific foster placement and relative and nonrelative  
60 caregivers who are participating in the Relative Caregiver  
61 Program and receiving payments pursuant to s. 39.5085(2)(d)1. or  
62 2., shall receive an annual cost of living increase. The  
63 department shall calculate the new room and board rate increase  
64 equal to the percentage change in the Consumer Price Index for



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65 All Urban Consumers, U.S. City Average, All Items, not  
66 seasonally adjusted, or successor reports, for the preceding  
67 December compared to the prior December as initially reported by  
68 the United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor  
69 Statistics. The department shall make available the adjusted  
70 room and board rates annually.

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

74 (d) Effective July 1, 2022, community-based care lead  
75 agencies providing care under contract with the department shall  
76 pay a supplemental room and board payment to foster parents,  
77 including relative and nonrelative caregivers who are licensed  
78 as a level I child-specific foster placement and relative and  
79 nonrelative caregivers who are participating in the Relative  
80 Caregiver Program and receiving payments pursuant to s.  
81 39.5085(2)(d)1. or 2., on a per-child basis, for providing  
82 independent life skills and normalcy supports to children who  
83 are 13 through 17 years of age placed in their care. The  
84 supplemental payment must be paid monthly in addition to the  
85 current monthly room and board rate payment. The supplemental  
86 monthly payment shall be based on 10 percent of the monthly room  
87 and board rate for children 13 through 21 years of age as  
88 provided under this section and adjusted annually.

89 Section 4. Section 409.1455, Florida Statutes, is amended  
90 to read:

91 409.1455 Step into Success Workforce Education and  
92 Internship ~~Pilot~~ Program for foster youth and former foster  
93 youth.-



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94 (1) SHORT TITLE.—This section may be cited as the “Step  
95 into Success Act.”

96 (2) CREATION.—The department shall establish the ~~3-year~~  
97 Step into Success Workforce Education and Internship ~~Pilot~~  
98 Program to give eligible foster youth and former foster youth an  
99 opportunity to learn and develop essential workforce and  
100 professional skills, to transition from the custody of the  
101 department to independent living, and to become better prepared  
102 for an independent and successful future. The ~~pilot~~ program must  
103 consist of an independent living professionalism and workforce  
104 education component and, for youth who complete that component,  
105 an onsite workforce training internship component. In  
106 consultation with subject-matter experts and the community-based  
107 care lead agencies, the office shall develop and administer the  
108 ~~pilot~~ program for interested foster youth and former foster  
109 youth; however, the department may contract with entities that  
110 have demonstrable subject-matter expertise in the transition to  
111 adulthood for foster youth, workforce training and preparedness,  
112 professional skills, and related subjects to collaborate with  
113 the office in the development and administration of the ~~pilot~~  
114 program. The independent living professionalism and workforce  
115 education component of the program must culminate in a  
116 certificate that allows a former foster youth to participate in  
117 the onsite workforce training internship.

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

119 (a) “Community-based care lead agency” has the same meaning  
120 as in s. 409.986(3).

121 (b) “Former foster youth” means an individual 18 years of  
122 age or older but younger than 26 years of age who is currently



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123 or was previously placed in licensed care, excluding Level I  
124 licensed placements pursuant to s. 409.175(5)(a)1., for at least  
125 60 days within this state.

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

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

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

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

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

144 (b) Collaborate with local chambers of commerce and recruit  
145 mentors and organizations within the department's regions,  
146 emphasizing recruitment of mentors and organizations in the  
147 following counties:

- 148 1. Duval.  
149 2. Escambia.  
150 3. Hillsborough.  
151 4. Palm Beach.



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152       5. Polk.

153       (c) Provide eligible former foster youth with a variety of  
154 internship placement opportunities, including by connecting  
155 existing third-party mentorship organizations that focus on  
156 former foster youth with eligible former foster youth who have  
157 an interest in such organizations' programs ~~The pilot program~~  
158 ~~must be administered as part of an eligible foster youth's~~  
159 ~~regular transition planning under s. 39.6035 or as a post-~~  
160 ~~transition service for eligible former foster youth. The office~~  
161 ~~must begin the professionalism and workforce education component~~  
162 ~~of the program on or before January 1, 2024, and the onsite~~  
163 ~~workforce training internship component of the program on or~~  
164 ~~before July 1, 2024.~~

165       (5) INDEPENDENT LIVING PROFESSIONALISM AND WORKFORCE  
166 EDUCATION COMPONENT REQUIREMENTS.—The office shall do all of the  
167 following in connection with the independent living  
168 professionalism and workforce education component for eligible  
169 foster youth and former foster youth:

170       (a) Designate and ensure that the number of qualified staff  
171 is sufficient to implement and administer the component, which  
172 may be part of a larger independent living or life skills  
173 training program if the larger program meets the requirements of  
174 this subsection.

175       (b) Develop all workshops, presentations, and curricula for  
176 the component, including, but not limited to, all written  
177 educational and training materials for foster youth and former  
178 foster youth. Resources may include, but are not limited to,  
179 workshops and materials to assist with preparing résumés, mock  
180 interviews, experiential training, and assistance with securing



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181 an internship or employment. The office must review and update  
182 these materials as necessary. The training materials must  
183 address, but are not limited to, the following:

- 184 1. Interview skills;
- 185 2. Professionalism;
- 186 3. Teamwork;
- 187 4. Leadership;
- 188 5. Problem solving; and
- 189 6. Conflict resolution in the workplace.

190 (c) Require that the training provided be in addition to  
191 any other life skills or employment training required by law.  
192 The training may be developed or administered by the department,  
193 community-based care lead agencies, or the lead agencies'  
194 subcontracted providers, or in collaboration with colleges or  
195 universities or other nonprofit organizations in the community  
196 with workforce education and training resources.

197 (d) Provide relevant written materials from the component  
198 and any relevant tools developed to ensure participants'  
199 successful transition to internships to all participating  
200 organizations that offer workforce training internship  
201 opportunities.

202 (e) Provide materials to inform eligible foster youth and  
203 former foster youth of the program, the requirements for  
204 participation, and contact information for enrollment. The  
205 community-based care lead agencies shall ensure that any  
206 subcontracted providers that directly serve youth receive this  
207 information.

208 (f) Advertise and promote the availability of the education  
209 and internship program to engage as many eligible foster youth



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210 and former foster youth as possible.

211 (g) Assess the career interests of each eligible foster  
212 youth and former foster youth who expresses interest in  
213 participating in the program and determine the most appropriate  
214 internship and post-internship opportunities for that youth  
215 based on his or her expressed interests.

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

220 (a) Develop processes and procedures to implement a trauma-  
221 informed onsite workforce training internship component. The  
222 processes and procedures of the internship component must be  
223 designed so that they can be replicated and scaled to meet  
224 various organizational structures and sizes. The component must  
225 include:

- 226 1. Recruitment of agencies, corporations, and other  
227 entities to host interns as participating organizations;
- 228 2. Assisting participating organizations with mentor  
229 recruitment, training, and matching;
- 230 3. Mentor-led performance reviews, including a review of  
231 the intern's work product, professionalism, time management,  
232 communication style, and stress-management strategies;
- 233 4. Daily mentorship and coaching on topics such as:
  - 234 a. Professionalism;
  - 235 b. Teamwork;
  - 236 c. Leadership;
  - 237 d. Problem solving; and
  - 238 e. Conflict resolution in the workplace;



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239           5. Development of opportunities for interns to become  
240 employees of the participating organization; and

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

242           (b) ~~Develop a minimum of 1 hour of~~ required trauma-informed  
243 training for mentors to satisfy the requirements of sub-  
244 subparagraph (7) (b) 1.e. Such training must include interactive  
245 or experiential components, such as role-playing, scenario  
246 discussion, or case studies. The office may provide at least  
247 four additional 1-hour trainings on mentorship of special  
248 populations as optional training opportunities, which must be  
249 asynchronous and accessible to mentors online at their  
250 convenience, and must inform participating organizations of  
251 these optional training opportunities ~~teach the skills necessary~~  
252 ~~to engage with participating eligible former foster youth.~~

253           (c) Provide assistance to eligible foster youth and former  
254 foster youth interested in participating in the internship  
255 component, including, but not limited to, identifying and  
256 monitoring internship opportunities, being knowledgeable of the  
257 training and skills needed to match eligible foster youth and  
258 former foster youth with appropriate internships, and assisting  
259 eligible foster youth and former foster youth with applying for  
260 post-internship employment opportunities.

261           (d) Publicize specific internship positions in an easily  
262 accessible manner and inform eligible foster youth and former  
263 foster youth of where to locate such information.

264           (e) Provide a participating former foster youth with  
265 financial assistance in the amount of \$1,717 ~~\$1,517~~ monthly and  
266 develop a process and schedule for the distribution of payments  
267 to former foster youth participating in the component, subject



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268 to the availability of funds.

269 (f) Distribute funds appropriated for the compensation of  
270 mentors who are participating in the component as provided in  
271 paragraph (7) (b).

272 (g) By May 1, 2024, provide to the Board of Governors and  
273 the State Board of Education all relevant internship information  
274 necessary to support the award of postsecondary credit or career  
275 education clock hours for internship positions held by former  
276 foster youth participating in the onsite workforce training  
277 internship component.

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

279 1. Former foster youth within 3 months after their  
280 internship start date to ensure successful transition into the  
281 work environment and to gather feedback on how to improve the  
282 experience for future participants.

283 2. Mentors assigned to participating former foster youth.  
284 Such data must be collected by October 1, 2024, and by October 1  
285 annually thereafter, for inclusion in the independent living  
286 services annual report.

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

289 (i) Assign experienced staff to serve as program liaisons  
290 who are available for mentors to contact whenever the mentors  
291 need to debrief or have questions concerning a former foster  
292 youth.

293 (7) REQUIREMENTS FOR PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS.—Each  
294 organization participating in the onsite workforce training  
295 internship component shall:

296 (a) Collaborate with the office to implement a trauma-



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297 informed approach to mentoring and training former foster youth.

298 (b) Recruit employees to serve as mentors for former foster  
299 youth interning with such organizations.

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

301 a. Have worked in his or her career field or area ~~for the~~  
302 ~~participating organization~~ for at least 1 year;

303 b. Have experience relevant to the job and task  
304 responsibilities of the intern;

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

306 d. Allocate at least 1 hour per month to conduct mentor-led  
307 performance reviews, to include a review of the intern's work  
308 product, professionalism, time management, communication style,  
309 and stress-management strategies; and

310 e. Complete ~~a minimum of 1 hour of~~ trauma-informed training  
311 to gain and maintain skills critical for successfully engaging  
312 former foster youth. Before being matched with a former foster  
313 youth, the employee must complete a 1-hour training that covers  
314 core topics, including, but not limited to:

315 (I) Understanding trauma and its impacts.

316 (II) Recognizing and responding to trauma-related  
317 behaviors.

318 (III) De-escalation strategies and crisis response.

319 (IV) Boundaries and mentor self-care.

320 (V) Communication skills.

321

322 The department may offer a 1-hour training to review topics  
323 covered by the training required under this sub-subparagraph  
324 every subsequent year that the employee chooses to serve as a  
325 mentor.



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

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

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

340           (c) When necessary, have a discussion with an intern's  
341 assigned mentor, the participating organization's internship  
342 program liaison, and the office about the creation of a  
343 corrective action plan to address issues related to the intern's  
344 professionalism, work product, or performance and, if  
345 applicable, after giving the intern a reasonable opportunity to  
346 comply with the corrective action plan, document the intern's  
347 failure to do so before discharging him or her.

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

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

353           (8) TIME LIMITATIONS FOR PARTICIPATION.—A former foster  
354 youth who obtains an internship with a participating



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355 organization may participate in the internship component for no  
356 more than 1 year, calculated as 12 monthly stipend periods. The  
357 year begins on his or her start date with a participating  
358 organization. A former foster youth may intern under the  
359 internship program with more than one participating  
360 organization, but may not intern with more than one  
361 participating organization at the same time. A participating  
362 organization may hire the intern as an employee, but the hiring  
363 of a former foster youth may not be for an internship under this  
364 section.

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

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

377 (a) To become a participant in the internship component of  
378 the program, the applicant must be a foster youth or a former  
379 foster youth as those terms are defined in subsection (3) at the  
380 time such youth applies for an internship position with a  
381 participating organization. A foster youth or former foster  
382 youth who has completed the training component with the  
383 department may apply for a position with a participating



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384 organization but may not begin an internship until attaining the  
385 age of 18 years.

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

389 (c) A former foster youth must spend any stipend funds  
390 specified for clothing on clothing that is in compliance with  
391 the dress code requirements of the participating organization  
392 with which the former foster youth is interning. Notwithstanding  
393 any limitation on funds provided to purchase clothing, the  
394 former foster youth must comply with any dress code requirements  
395 of the participating organization with which he or she is  
396 interning.

397 (d) Stipend money earned pursuant to the internship  
398 component may not be considered earned income for purposes of  
399 computing eligibility for federal or state benefits, including,  
400 but not limited to, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance  
401 Program, a housing choice assistance voucher program, the  
402 Temporary Cash Assistance Program, the Medicaid program, or the  
403 school readiness program. ~~Notwithstanding this paragraph, any  
404 reduction in the amount of benefits or loss of benefits due to  
405 receipt of the Step into Success stipend may be offset by an  
406 additional stipend payment equal to the value of the maximum  
407 benefit amount for a single person allowed under the  
408 Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.~~

409 (e) A former foster youth may, at the discretion of a  
410 postsecondary educational institution within this state in which  
411 such youth is enrolled, earn postsecondary credit or career  
412 education clock hours for work performed as an intern under the



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413 internship component. Postsecondary credit and career education  
414 clock hours earned for work performed under the internship  
415 component may be in addition to any compensation earned for the  
416 same work performed under the internship component and may be  
417 awarded for completion of all or any part of the internship  
418 component. Participating organizations shall cooperate with  
419 postsecondary educational institutions to provide any  
420 information about internship positions which is necessary to  
421 enable the institutions to determine whether to grant the  
422 participating former foster youth postsecondary credit or career  
423 education clock hours toward his or her degree.

424 (f) A former foster youth who accepts an internship with a  
425 participating organization pursuant to this section may only be  
426 discharged from the internship component after the participating  
427 organization engages the intern's assigned mentor and the  
428 participating organization's internship program staff to assist  
429 the intern in performing the duties of the internship. Before  
430 discharging the former foster youth, the participating  
431 organization must also document the intern's failure to comply  
432 with a corrective action plan after being given a reasonable  
433 opportunity to do so.

434 (11) REPORT.—The department shall include a section on the  
435 Step into Success Workforce Education and Internship ~~Pilot~~  
436 Program in the independent living annual report prepared  
437 pursuant to s. 409.1451(6) which includes, but is not limited  
438 to, all of the following:

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

441 (b) A list of participating organizations and the number of



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442 interns.

443 (c) A summary of recruitment efforts to increase the number  
444 of participating organizations.

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

448 (e) Recommendations, if any, for actions necessary to  
449 improve the quality, effectiveness, and outcomes of the ~~pilot~~  
450 program.

451 (f) Employment outcomes of former foster youth who  
452 participated in the ~~pilot~~ program, including employment status  
453 after completion of the program, whether he or she is employed  
454 by the participating organization in which he or she interned or  
455 by another entity, and job description and salary information,  
456 if available.

457 (12) RULEMAKING.—The department shall adopt rules to  
458 implement this section.

459 Section 5. Section 409.1475, Florida Statutes, is created  
460 to read:

461 409.1475 Foster and Family Support Grant Program.—

462 (1) The Legislature recognizes that children and families  
463 thrive when caregivers are engaged, supported, and equipped to  
464 meet their responsibilities. It is the intent of the Legislature  
465 to strengthen community-based support that promotes stable  
466 caregiving relationships, responsible parenting, and improved  
467 outcomes for vulnerable children. Therefore, the Foster and  
468 Family Support Grant Program is created within the department.

469 (2) The department shall award grants to not-for-profit,  
470 faith-based organizations to support their efforts in the



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471 recruitment of foster and adoptive families through faith-based  
472 organizations and strengthening local capacity to support  
473 foster, adoptive, and kinship families and families caring for  
474 vulnerable children in underserved and rural communities. The  
475 program shall emphasize sustained, community-based support  
476 beyond initial licensure or training in order to improve  
477 caregiver retention and outcomes for children.

478 (3) Awarded grant funds must be used to provide education,  
479 resources, training, and technical assistance to eligible faith-  
480 based organizations involved in foster care, adoption, and  
481 family preservation activities and to support the development of  
482 trauma-informed, community-based support systems for families  
483 throughout the caregiving continuum. Allowable uses of funds  
484 include, but are not limited to:

485 (a) Outreach and recruitment activities to increase the  
486 number of licensed foster and adoptive families;

487 (b) Training and support for organizations and volunteers  
488 assisting foster, adoptive, and kinship families and families;

489 (c) Trauma-informed training, coaching, and counseling  
490 services for caregivers, families, and individuals involved in  
491 supporting children in out-of-home care or at risk of entry into  
492 care;

493 (d) Program support and other activities to strengthen  
494 local capacities to support foster, adoptive, and kinship  
495 families and families;

496 (e) Expansion of foster parent training initiatives  
497 designed to improve caregiver engagement, retention, and  
498 placement stability;

499 (f) Development of volunteer-based wraparound support



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500 services for foster and adoptive families, including kinship  
501 caregivers;

502 (g) Assistance with essential family needs for families  
503 actively fostering, adopting, or pursuing licensure, consistent  
504 with federal and state law; and

505 (h) Ongoing family mentoring and peer support to promote  
506 placement stability, permanency, and family well-being.

507 (4) Grant recipients must submit reports to the department  
508 in a format and at intervals, at least annually, as prescribed  
509 by the department.

510 (5) The department may adopt rules to implement this  
511 section.

512 Section 6. Upon the expiration and reversion of the  
513 amendments made to s. 409.908, Florida Statutes, pursuant to  
514 section 26 of chapter 2025-199, Laws of Florida, paragraph (b)  
515 of subsection (2) of section 409.908, Florida Statutes, is  
516 amended to read:

517 409.908 Reimbursement of Medicaid providers.—Subject to  
518 specific appropriations, the agency shall reimburse Medicaid  
519 providers, in accordance with state and federal law, according  
520 to methodologies set forth in the rules of the agency and in  
521 policy manuals and handbooks incorporated by reference therein.  
522 These methodologies may include fee schedules, reimbursement  
523 methods based on cost reporting, negotiated fees, competitive  
524 bidding pursuant to s. 287.057, and other mechanisms the agency  
525 considers efficient and effective for purchasing services or  
526 goods on behalf of recipients. If a provider is reimbursed based  
527 on cost reporting and submits a cost report late and that cost  
528 report would have been used to set a lower reimbursement rate



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529 for a rate semester, then the provider's rate for that semester  
530 shall be retroactively calculated using the new cost report, and  
531 full payment at the recalculated rate shall be effected  
532 retroactively. Medicare-granted extensions for filing cost  
533 reports, if applicable, shall also apply to Medicaid cost  
534 reports. Payment for Medicaid compensable services made on  
535 behalf of Medicaid-eligible persons is subject to the  
536 availability of moneys and any limitations or directions  
537 provided for in the General Appropriations Act or chapter 216.  
538 Further, nothing in this section shall be construed to prevent  
539 or limit the agency from adjusting fees, reimbursement rates,  
540 lengths of stay, number of visits, or number of services, or  
541 making any other adjustments necessary to comply with the  
542 availability of moneys and any limitations or directions  
543 provided for in the General Appropriations Act, provided the  
544 adjustment is consistent with legislative intent.

545 (2)

546 (b) Subject to any limitations or directions in the General  
547 Appropriations Act, the agency shall establish and implement a  
548 state Title XIX Long-Term Care Reimbursement Plan for nursing  
549 home care in order to provide care and services in conformance  
550 with the applicable state and federal laws, rules, regulations,  
551 and quality and safety standards and to ensure that individuals  
552 eligible for medical assistance have reasonable geographic  
553 access to such care.

554 1. The agency shall amend the long-term care reimbursement  
555 plan and cost reporting system to create direct care and  
556 indirect care subcomponents of the patient care component of the  
557 per diem rate. These two subcomponents together shall equal the



558 patient care component of the per diem rate. Separate prices  
559 shall be calculated for each patient care subcomponent,  
560 initially based on the September 2016 rate setting cost reports  
561 and subsequently based on the most recently audited cost report  
562 used during a rebasing year. The direct care subcomponent of the  
563 per diem rate for any providers still being reimbursed on a cost  
564 basis shall be limited by the cost-based class ceiling, and the  
565 indirect care subcomponent may be limited by the lower of the  
566 cost-based class ceiling, the target rate class ceiling, or the  
567 individual provider target. The ceilings and targets apply only  
568 to providers being reimbursed on a cost-based system. Effective  
569 October 1, 2018, a prospective payment methodology shall be  
570 implemented for rate setting purposes with the following  
571 parameters:

572 a. Peer Groups, including:

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

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

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

579 (I) Direct Care Costs .....100 percent.

580 (II) Indirect Care Costs .....92 percent.

581 (III) Operating Costs .....86 percent.

582 c. Floors:

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

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

585 (III) Operating Component .....None.

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



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587 .....Personal Property  
588 .....Taxes and Property Insurance.  
589 e. Quality Incentive Program Payment  
590 Pool.....14.77 ~~10~~ percent of September  
591 .....2016 non-property related  
592 .....payments of included facilities.  
593 f. Quality Score Threshold to Qualify for Quality Incentive  
594 Payment.....33 percent of all available points in the Medicaid  
595 Quality Incentive Program ~~20th~~  
596 .....~~percentile of included facilities.~~  
597 g. Fair Rental Value System Payment Parameters:  
598 (I) Building Value per Square Foot based on 2018 RS Means.  
599 (II) Land Valuation.....10 percent of Gross Building value.  
600 (III) Facility Square Footage.....Actual Square Footage.  
601 (IV) Movable Equipment Allowance .....\$8,000 per bed.  
602 (V) Obsolescence Factor .....1.5 percent.  
603 (VI) Fair Rental Rate of Return .....8 percent.  
604 (VII) Minimum Occupancy .....90 percent.  
605 (VIII) Maximum Facility Age .....40 years.  
606 (IX) Minimum Square Footage per Bed .....350.  
607 (X) Maximum Square Footage for Bed .....500.  
608 (XI) Minimum Cost of a renovation/replacements \$500 per bed.  
609 h. Ventilator Supplemental payment of \$200 per Medicaid day  
610 of 40,000 ventilator Medicaid days per fiscal year.  
611 2. The agency shall revise its methodology for calculating  
612 Quality Incentive Program payments to:  
613 a. Include the results of consumer satisfaction surveys  
614 conducted pursuant to s. 400.0225 as a measure of nursing home  
615 quality. The agency shall so revise the methodology after the



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616 surveys have been in effect for an amount of time the agency  
617 deems sufficient for statistical and scientific validity as a  
618 meaningful quality measure that may be incorporated into the  
619 methodology.

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

625 c. Delay the effective date of any change made to its  
626 methodology or scoring due to rebasing for 1 year after any  
627 recalculations have been completed and the scores have been made  
628 available to the public.

629 3. The direct care subcomponent shall include salaries and  
630 benefits of direct care staff providing nursing services  
631 including registered nurses, licensed practical nurses, and  
632 certified nursing assistants who deliver care directly to  
633 residents in the nursing home facility, allowable therapy costs,  
634 and dietary costs. This excludes nursing administration, staff  
635 development, the staffing coordinator, and the administrative  
636 portion of the minimum data set and care plan coordinators. The  
637 direct care subcomponent also includes medically necessary  
638 dental care, vision care, hearing care, and podiatric care.

639 4. All other patient care costs shall be included in the  
640 indirect care cost subcomponent of the patient care per diem  
641 rate, including complex medical equipment, medical supplies, and  
642 other allowable ancillary costs. Costs may not be allocated  
643 directly or indirectly to the direct care subcomponent from a  
644 home office or management company.



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645           5. On July 1 of each year, the agency shall report to the  
646 Legislature direct and indirect care costs, including average  
647 direct and indirect care costs per resident per facility and  
648 direct care and indirect care salaries and benefits per category  
649 of staff member per facility.

650           6. Every fourth year, the agency shall rebase nursing home  
651 prospective payment rates to reflect changes in cost based on  
652 the most recently audited cost report for each participating  
653 provider.

654           7. A direct care supplemental payment may be made to  
655 providers whose direct care hours per patient day are above the  
656 80th percentile and who provide Medicaid services to a larger  
657 percentage of Medicaid patients than the state average.

658           8. Pediatric, Florida Department of Veterans Affairs, and  
659 government-owned facilities are exempt from the pricing model  
660 established in this subsection and shall remain on a cost-based  
661 prospective payment system. Effective October 1, 2018, the  
662 agency shall set rates for all facilities remaining on a cost-  
663 based prospective payment system using each facility's most  
664 recently audited cost report, eliminating retroactive  
665 settlements.

666           9. By October 1, 2025, and each year thereafter, the agency  
667 shall submit to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and  
668 the Speaker of the House of Representatives a report on each  
669 Quality Incentive Program payment made pursuant to sub-  
670 subparagraph 1.e. The report must, at a minimum, include all of  
671 the following information:

672           a. The name of each facility that received a Quality  
673 Incentive Program payment and the dollar amount of such payment



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674 each facility received.

675       b. The total number of quality incentive metric points  
676 awarded by the agency to each facility and the number of points  
677 awarded by the agency for each individual quality metric  
678 measured.

679       c. An examination of any trends in the improvement of the  
680 quality of care provided to nursing home residents which may be  
681 attributable to incentive payments received under the Quality  
682 Incentive Program. The agency shall include examination of  
683 trends both for the program as a whole as well as for each  
684 individual quality metric used by the agency to award program  
685 payments.

686  
687 It is the intent of the Legislature that the reimbursement plan  
688 achieve the goal of providing access to health care for nursing  
689 home residents who require large amounts of care while  
690 encouraging diversion services as an alternative to nursing home  
691 care for residents who can be served within the community. The  
692 agency shall base the establishment of any maximum rate of  
693 payment, whether overall or component, on the available moneys  
694 as provided for in the General Appropriations Act. The agency  
695 may base the maximum rate of payment on the results of  
696 scientifically valid analysis and conclusions derived from  
697 objective statistical data pertinent to the particular maximum  
698 rate of payment. The agency shall base the rates of payments in  
699 accordance with the minimum wage requirements as provided in the  
700 General Appropriations Act.

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



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703           409.9855 Pilot program for individuals with developmental  
704 disabilities.—

705           (6) PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION.—

706           (d) The agency shall collect and analyze data needed to  
707 project program enrollment costs, current and projected  
708 caseloads, utilization, and current and projected expenditures  
709 for the next 3 years. The agency shall report caseload and  
710 expenditure data and trends and any other information requested  
711 by the Social Services Estimating Conference in accordance with  
712 chapter 216.

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

715           409.990 Funding for lead agencies.—A contract established  
716 between the department and a lead agency must be funded by a  
717 grant of general revenue, other applicable state funds, or  
718 applicable federal funding sources.

719           (5) A lead agency may carry forward documented unexpended  
720 state funds from one fiscal year to the next; however, the  
721 cumulative amount carried forward may not exceed 8 percent of  
722 the annual amount of the ~~total~~ contract. Any unexpended state  
723 funds in excess of that percentage must be returned to the  
724 department.

725           (a) The funds carried forward may not be used in any way  
726 that would create increased recurring future obligations, and  
727 such funds may not be used for any type of program or service  
728 that is not currently authorized by the existing contract with  
729 the department.

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



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

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

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

739 414.56 Office of Continuing Care.—The department shall  
740 establish an Office of Continuing Care to ensure young adults  
741 who age out of the foster care system between 18 and 21 years of  
742 age, or 22 years of age with a documented disability, have a  
743 point of contact until the young adult reaches the age of 26 in  
744 order to receive ongoing support and care coordination needed to  
745 achieve self-sufficiency. Duties of the office include, but are  
746 not limited to:

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

750 Section 10. For the purpose of incorporating the amendment  
751 made by this act to section 409.145, Florida Statutes, in a  
752 reference thereto, paragraph (d) of subsection (2) of section  
753 39.5085, Florida Statutes, is reenacted to read:

754 39.5085 Relative Caregiver Program.—

755 (2)

756 (d)1. Relatives or nonrelatives who have a child placed  
757 with them in out-of-home care and who have obtained licensure as  
758 a child-specific level I foster placement, regardless of whether  
759 a court has found the child to be dependent, shall receive a  
760 monthly payment in accordance with s. 409.145(3) from the date



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761 the child is placed in out-of-home care with his or her  
762 relatives or with nonrelatives until the child achieves  
763 permanency as determined by the court pursuant to s. 39.621.

764 2. Relatives or nonrelatives who have a child who has been  
765 found to be dependent placed with them in out-of-home care shall  
766 receive a monthly payment at a rate equal to the rate  
767 established in s. 409.145(3) for licensed foster parents,  
768 regardless of whether the relatives or nonrelatives have  
769 obtained a child-specific level I foster license, from the date  
770 the child is found to be dependent or from the date the child is  
771 placed with them in out-of-home care, whichever is later, for a  
772 period of no more than 6 months or until the child achieves  
773 permanency as determined by the court pursuant to s. 39.621,  
774 whichever occurs first.

775 3. Relatives or nonrelatives who have a child who has been  
776 found to be dependent placed with them in out-of-home care and  
777 who have not obtained a child-specific level I foster license  
778 within 6 months from the date of such placement shall receive a  
779 monthly payment in an amount determined by department rule from  
780 6 months after the date the child is found to be dependent or  
781 from 6 months after the child is placed with them in out-of-home  
782 care, whichever is later, until the relatives or nonrelatives  
783 obtain a child-specific level I foster license or until the  
784 child achieves permanency as determined by the court pursuant to  
785 s. 39.621, whichever occurs first. The monthly payment amount  
786 paid to relatives or nonrelatives pursuant to this subparagraph  
787 must be less than the monthly payment amount provided to a  
788 participant enrolled in the Guardianship Assistance Program  
789 pursuant to s. 39.6225.



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790           4. Relatives or nonrelatives who have a child placed in  
791 their care by permanent guardianship pursuant to s. 39.6221, in  
792 a permanent placement with a fit and willing relative pursuant  
793 to s. 39.6231, or under former s. 39.622 if the placement was  
794 made before July 1, 2006, and who are not enrolled in the  
795 Guardianship Assistance Program pursuant to s. 39.6225 shall  
796 receive a monthly payment in an amount determined by department  
797 rule which must be less than the monthly payment amount provided  
798 to a participant enrolled in the Guardianship Assistance Program  
799 under s. 39.6225.

800           Section 11. For the purpose of incorporating the amendment  
801 made by this act to section 409.145, Florida Statutes, in a  
802 reference thereto, paragraph (d) of subsection (5) of section  
803 39.6225, Florida Statutes, is reenacted to read:

804           39.6225 Guardianship Assistance Program.—

805           (5) A guardian with an application approved pursuant to  
806 subsection (2) who is caring for a child placed with the  
807 guardian by the court pursuant to this part may receive  
808 guardianship assistance payments based on the following  
809 criteria:

810           (d) The department shall provide guardianship assistance  
811 payments in the amount of \$4,000 annually, paid on a monthly  
812 basis, or in an amount other than \$4,000 annually as determined  
813 by the guardian and the department and memorialized in a written  
814 agreement between the guardian and the department. The agreement  
815 shall take into consideration the circumstances of the guardian  
816 and the needs of the child. Changes may not be made without the  
817 concurrence of the guardian. However, the amount of the monthly  
818 payment may not exceed the foster care maintenance payment that



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819 would have been paid during the same period if the child had  
820 been in licensed care at his or her designated level of care at  
821 the rate established in s. 409.145(3).

822 Section 12. For the purpose of incorporating the amendment  
823 made by this act to section 409.145, Florida Statutes, in a  
824 reference thereto, paragraph (b) of subsection (5) of section  
825 393.065, Florida Statutes, is reenacted to read:

826 393.065 Application and eligibility determination.—

827 (5) Except as provided in subsections (6) and (7), if a  
828 client seeking enrollment in the developmental disabilities home  
829 and community-based services Medicaid waiver program meets the  
830 level of care requirement for an intermediate care facility for  
831 individuals with intellectual disabilities pursuant to 42 C.F.R.  
832 ss. 435.217(b)(1) and 440.150, the agency must assign the client  
833 to an appropriate preenrollment category pursuant to this  
834 subsection and must provide priority to clients waiting for  
835 waiver services in the following order:

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

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

841 a. Transitioning out of the child welfare system into  
842 permanency; or

843 b. At least 18 years but not yet 22 years of age and who  
844 need both waiver services and extended foster care services; or

845 2. At least 18 years but not yet 22 years of age and who  
846 withdrew consent pursuant to s. 39.6251(5)(c) to remain in the  
847 extended foster care system.



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848  
849 For individuals who are at least 18 years but not yet 22 years  
850 of age and who are eligible under sub-subparagraph 1.b., the  
851 agency must provide waiver services, including residential  
852 habilitation, and must actively participate in transition  
853 planning activities, including, but not limited to,  
854 individualized service coordination, case management support,  
855 and ensuring continuity of care pursuant to s. 39.6035. The  
856 community-based care lead agency must fund room and board at the  
857 rate established in s. 409.145(3) and provide case management  
858 and related services as defined in s. 409.986(3)(e). Individuals  
859 may receive both waiver services and services under s. 39.6251.  
860 Services may not duplicate services available through the  
861 Medicaid state plan.

862  
863 Within preenrollment categories 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7, the agency  
864 shall prioritize clients in the order of the date that the  
865 client is determined eligible for waiver services.

866 Section 13. For the purpose of incorporating the amendment  
867 made by this act to section 409.145, Florida Statutes, in a  
868 reference thereto, paragraph (b) of subsection (2) of section  
869 409.1451, Florida Statutes, is reenacted to read:

870 409.1451 The Road-to-Independence Program.—

871 (2) POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION SERVICES AND SUPPORT.—

872 (b) The amount of the financial assistance shall be as  
873 follows:

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



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

882           3. For a young adult who remains in foster care, but  
883 temporarily resides away from a licensed foster home for  
884 purposes of attending a postsecondary school as provided in s.  
885 1009.533, the amount is \$1,720 monthly. This takes the place of  
886 the payment provided for in s. 409.145(3).

887           4. For a young adult who remains in foster care, is  
888 attending a postsecondary school as provided in s. 1009.533, and  
889 continues to reside in a licensed group home, the amount is  
890 negotiated between the community-based care lead agency and the  
891 licensed group home provider.

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

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

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

901  
902 ===== T I T L E   A M E N D M E N T =====

903 And the title is amended as follows:

904           Delete everything before the enacting clause  
905 and insert:



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906                                   A bill to be entitled  
907           An act relating to health; amending s. 216.136, F.S.;  
908           requiring the Social Services Estimating Conference to  
909           develop certain official information relating to the  
910           pilot program for individuals with developmental  
911           disabilities; amending s. 394.495, F.S.; authorizing  
912           the Department of Children and Families, as authorized  
913           by and consistent with appropriated funding, to  
914           contract with a specified organization to provide  
915           grief support services to help certain children and  
916           youth; requiring that the services be provided at no  
917           cost; authorizing the contracted organization to also  
918           provide grief awareness training and outreach to local  
919           schools and medical facilities under the contract;  
920           amending s. 409.145, F.S.; revising the monthly room  
921           and board rates the department is required to pay to  
922           certain foster parents and caregivers; amending s.  
923           409.1455, F.S.; renaming the Step into Success  
924           Workforce Education and Internship Pilot Program as  
925           the Step into Success Workforce Education and  
926           Internship Program; deleting a provision limiting the  
927           duration of the program; requiring the Office of  
928           Continuing Care within the department to develop  
929           certain cohorts within specified regions, to  
930           collaborate with certain organizations to recruit  
931           mentors and organizations, and to provide eligible  
932           former foster youth with internship placement  
933           opportunities; deleting a provision requiring that the  
934           program be administered in a certain manner; deleting



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935       obsolete language; requiring the office to develop  
936       trauma-informed training for mentors of certain former  
937       foster youth; providing requirements for the training;  
938       authorizing the office to provide certain additional  
939       trainings on mentorship of special populations;  
940       revising the amount of monthly financial assistance  
941       that the office provides to participating former  
942       foster youth; requiring the office to assign  
943       experienced staff to serve as program liaisons for a  
944       specified purpose; revising qualifications to serve as  
945       a mentor; authorizing the department to offer certain  
946       training to mentors in subsequent years; authorizing  
947       an employee who serves as a mentor to participate in  
948       certain additional trainings; deleting a provision  
949       authorizing the offset of a reduction in or loss of  
950       certain benefits due to receipt of a Step into Success  
951       stipend by an additional stipend payment; creating s.  
952       409.1475, F.S.; providing legislative findings and  
953       intent; creating the Foster and Family Support Grant  
954       Program within the department; requiring the  
955       department to award grants to not-for-profit, faith-  
956       based organizations for specified purposes; requiring  
957       that the program emphasize certain support; specifying  
958       authorized uses for awarded grant funds; requiring  
959       grant recipients to submit reports to the department  
960       in a format and at intervals prescribed by the  
961       department; authorizing the department to adopt rules;  
962       amending s. 409.908, F.S.; revising the parameters for  
963       the prospective payment methodology used for



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964 determining the Agency for Health Care  
965 Administration's long-term care reimbursement plan for  
966 nursing home care; requiring the agency to consider  
967 specified recommendations when revising its  
968 methodology for calculating Quality Incentive Program  
969 payments; requiring the agency to delay the effective  
970 date of any changes to its methodology for a specified  
971 timeframe; amending s. 409.9855, F.S.; requiring the  
972 agency to collect and analyze certain data relating to  
973 the pilot program for individuals with developmental  
974 disabilities for a specified timeframe; requiring the  
975 agency to report specified information to the Social  
976 Services Estimating Conference; amending s. 409.990,  
977 F.S.; revising the cumulative amount of unexpended  
978 state funds that a community-based care lead agency  
979 may carry forward to the next fiscal year; amending s.  
980 414.56, F.S.; conforming a provision to changes made  
981 by the act; reenacting ss. 39.5085(2)(d),  
982 39.6225(5)(d), 393.065(5)(b), and 409.1451(2)(b),  
983 F.S., relating to the Relative Caregiver Program, the  
984 Guardianship Assistance Program, application and  
985 eligibility determinations, and the Road-to-  
986 Independence Program, respectively, to incorporate the  
987 amendment made to s. 409.145, F.S., in references  
988 thereto; providing an effective date.