



General Assembly

February Session, 2006

**Substitute Bill No. 5024**

\*           HB05024HEDHS\_030706           \*

**AN ACT CONCERNING THE WORKFORCE READINESS OF THE  
JOBS FIRST PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS.**

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1       Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) The Labor Department shall  
2       implement a pilot program to enhance the employability of  
3       participants in the Jobs First program administered by the  
4       Commissioner of Social Services and the temporary family assistance  
5       programs. The Labor Commissioner shall implement a competitive  
6       grant program with input from the design team for the Jobs First  
7       program. For purposes of sections 1 to 3, inclusive, of this act, the "Jobs  
8       First program" shall mean the employment services program  
9       established in sections 17b-698c of the general statutes. Funds  
10      appropriated pursuant to section 4 of this act shall be used for:

11      (1) Supplemental assessments of Jobs First program participants  
12      who will be deemed eligible for the pilot programs created by this act  
13      if they lack a high school diploma, or the equivalent, or who are  
14      identified as having mathematics or reading skills which are a barrier  
15      to employment at wages which enable the participant and the  
16      participant's family to be self-sufficient. These assessments shall be  
17      designed to determine effective education, training or other action to  
18      mitigate identified barriers to employment;

19      (2) Pilot programs to provide education in basic skills necessary for

20 employment, including, but not limited to, English as a second  
21 language, literacy and numeracy programs, and high school  
22 completion and General Equivalency Degree programs, for the Jobs  
23 First program participants and other temporary family assistance  
24 recipients identified as needing such education to obtain employment  
25 at wages which enable the participant and the participant's family to  
26 be self-sufficient. Such basic skills programs shall combine education,  
27 training and work-related experience. Priority for funding shall be  
28 given to innovative models of adult learning in the context of  
29 employment; or

30 (3) Pilot vocational education programs that integrate basic skills  
31 education for the Jobs First program participants and other temporary  
32 family assistance recipients identified as needing such education to  
33 obtain employment at wages that enable the participant and the  
34 participant's family to be self-sufficient.

35 Sec. 2. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) (a) Programs to develop basic  
36 skills, as described in subdivision (2) of section 1 of this act, and  
37 vocational education programs funded pursuant to section 4 of this act  
38 shall report every six months to the regional workforce development  
39 boards established pursuant to section 31-3k of the general statutes, on  
40 the number of participants who participated in basic skills training and  
41 vocational education programs and attained employment during or  
42 after completing the training or programs, the kind of employment  
43 and pay level of the employment and the length of time that the  
44 participant retained employment.

45 (b) Each regional workforce development board shall report  
46 annually to the Labor Department and the local temporary assistance  
47 for needy families council on the number of participants in its region  
48 who participated in basic skills training and vocational education  
49 programs and the number who attained employment during or after  
50 completing the training or programs, the kind of employment and pay  
51 level of the employment and the number of participants who retained  
52 employment for three months and for six months.

53 (c) Basic skills programs shall (1) provide a minimum of ten hours  
54 of education or training per week; and (2) be available throughout the  
55 year and at times of the day when Jobs First program participants are  
56 available to participate.

57 Sec. 3. Subsection (c) of section 17b-112 of the general statutes is  
58 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from*  
59 *passage*):

60 (c) A family who is subject to time-limited benefits may petition the  
61 Commissioner of Social Services for six-month extensions of such  
62 benefits. The commissioner shall grant not more than two extensions to  
63 such family who has made a good faith effort to comply with the  
64 requirements of the program and despite such effort has a total family  
65 income at a level below the payment standard, or has encountered  
66 circumstances preventing employment including, but not limited to:  
67 (1) Domestic violence or physical harm to such family's children; or (2)  
68 other circumstances beyond such family's control. The commissioner  
69 shall disregard ninety dollars of earned income in determining  
70 applicable family income. The commissioner may grant a subsequent  
71 six-month extension if each adult in the family meets one or more of  
72 the following criteria: (A) The adult is precluded from engaging in  
73 employment activities due to domestic violence or another reason  
74 beyond the adult's control; (B) the adult has two or more substantiated  
75 barriers to employment including, but not limited to, the lack of  
76 available child care, substance abuse or addiction, severe mental or  
77 physical health problems, one or more severe learning disabilities,  
78 domestic violence or a child who has a serious physical or behavioral  
79 health problem; (C) the adult is working thirty-five or more hours per  
80 week, is earning at least the minimum wage and continues to earn less  
81 than the family's temporary family assistance payment standard; [or]  
82 (D) the adult is employed and works less than thirty-five hours per  
83 week due to (i) a documented medical impairment that limits the  
84 adult's hours of employment, provided the adult works the maximum  
85 number of hours that the medical condition permits, or (ii) the need to  
86 care for a disabled member of the adult's household, provided the

87 adult works the maximum number of hours the adult's caregiving  
 88 responsibilities permit; or (E) the adult is actively engaged in one of  
 89 the pilot programs created under section 1 of this act. Families  
 90 receiving temporary family assistance shall be notified by the  
 91 department of the right to petition for such extensions.  
 92 Notwithstanding the provisions of this section, the commissioner shall  
 93 not provide benefits under the state's temporary family assistance  
 94 program to a family that is subject to the twenty-one month benefit  
 95 limit and has received benefits beginning on or after October 1, 1996, if  
 96 such benefits result in that family's receiving more than sixty months  
 97 of time-limited benefits unless that family experiences domestic  
 98 violence, as defined in Section 402(a)(7)(B), P.L. 104-193. For the  
 99 purpose of calculating said sixty-month limit: [(I)] (i) A month shall  
 100 count toward the limit if the family receives assistance for any day of  
 101 the month, and [(II)] (ii) a month in which a family receives temporary  
 102 assistance for needy families benefits that are issued from a jurisdiction  
 103 other than Connecticut shall count toward the limit.

104 Sec. 4. (*Effective from passage*) The sum of three million dollars is  
 105 appropriated to the Labor Department, from the General Fund, for the  
 106 fiscal years ending June 30, 2006, and June 30, 2007, for the purposes of  
 107 carrying out the provisions of sections 1 and 2 of this act.

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|---|---------------------|-------------|
| This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections: |                     |             |
| Section 1   | <i>from passage</i> | New section |
| Sec. 2  | <i>from passage</i> | New section |
| Sec. 3  | <i>from passage</i> | 17b-112(c)  |
| Sec. 4  | <i>from passage</i> | New section |

**Statement of Legislative Commissioners:**

The effective date of section 4 was changed for consistency with sections 1 and 2 of the bill.

**HED**

*Joint Favorable Subst. C/R*

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