



General Assembly

Substitute Bill No. 5024

February Session, 2006

* _____HB05024HS_APP032106_____*

**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.

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	<i>Joint Favorable Subst. C/R</i>	HS
HS	<i>Joint Favorable C/R</i>	APP