



Substitute Senate Bill No. 344

Public Act No. 08-161

AN ACT CONCERNING THE FOOD STAMP EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING PROGRAM AND THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CHILD POVERTY AND PREVENTION COUNCIL.

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

Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective October 1, 2008*) (a) As used in sections 1 to 5, inclusive, of this act:

(1) "Poverty reduction strategies" means a coordinated set of actions which may include, but is not limited to, job search and work experience; education and training, including adult basic education, high school equivalency preparation, adult literacy classes, vocational training and post-secondary education; payment of tuition; case management; related services that improve employability; income safety net services; quality child care during work and job training; family support; and reentry programs, that are based on best practices and aimed at reducing poverty or the risk of poverty for individuals and families (A) who are living in census tracts with high poverty rates, (B) whose incomes are at or below two hundred per cent of the federal poverty level, and (C) who are in one or more of the following target populations: (i) Adolescent parents, (ii) older adolescents and young adults, or (iii) low-income working families; and

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(2) "Food stamp employment and training community collaborative" means a consortium of public and private providers, established pursuant to section 3 of this act, to implement poverty reduction strategies.

Sec. 2. (NEW) (*Effective October 1, 2008*) (a) The Department of Social Services shall administer a food stamp employment and training program, authorized under the federal Food Stamp Act of 1977, as amended from time to time, to provide employment and training activities, support services and other programs and services for recipients of the food stamp program. The program shall provide for the receipt of federal matching funds to the state from the United States Department of Agriculture for funds expended on behalf of food stamp recipients by state agencies, local governments, nonprofit entities, institutions of higher education and other eligible food stamp employment and training providers for employment and training activities that qualify for such matching funds under federal law and regulations. The department shall seek to maximize the use of the federal matching funds provision under the program to the fullest extent permitted by federal law.

(b) Federal grants received under the program shall be used in accordance with federal law and regulations to fund food stamp employment and training activities.

(c) The department shall select providers whose employment and training activities qualify for reimbursement under federal law and regulations to participate in the federal matching funds provision of the food stamp employment and training program. Providers shall be selected in a form and manner prescribed by the Commissioner of Social Services. In selecting providers, the department shall give priority to providers who are members of a food stamp employment and training community collaborative and whose strategies are aligned with the recommendations of the Child Poverty and Prevention

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Council and its plan to reduce child poverty developed pursuant to section 4-67x of the general statutes.

(d) The department shall distribute to providers pursuant to subsection (c) of this section federal matching funds in accordance with section 4 of this act. Such funds shall be used for poverty reduction strategies.

Sec. 3. (NEW) (*Effective October 1, 2008*) (a) The Department of Social Services shall select among qualified food stamp employment and training community collaboratives to receive federal matching funds in accordance with section 4 of this act. To be considered for receipt of such funds, each collaborative shall demonstrate its capacity to implement poverty reduction strategies to the department in such form and in such manner as the Commissioner of Social Services prescribes. Each collaborative shall identify (1) its priorities for reducing child poverty in such municipality or region, (2) how funds that are received by the collaborative will be utilized, (3) community partners and resources utilized to support poverty reduction strategies, and (4) its capacity to collect relevant data and measure outcomes.

(b) Each food stamp employment and training community collaborative shall establish a governance structure, determine membership and identify or establish a fiscal agent. A collaborative shall consist of at least five member entities representing institutions of higher education, regional workforce development boards, social services nonprofit agencies, business associations, philanthropic organizations, municipalities, community action agencies or other community partners. A majority of the membership of each collaborative shall be food stamp employment and training providers.

(c) Funds provided to a food stamp employment and training community collaborative shall be used to implement poverty

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reduction strategies in a municipality or region. Such strategies shall be aligned with the recommendations of the Child Poverty and Prevention Council and its plan to reduce child poverty developed pursuant to section 4-67x of the general statutes.

Sec. 4. (NEW) (*Effective October 1, 2008*) (a) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2009, the Department of Social Services may use such funds from the federal matching funds received by the state pursuant to section 2 of this act as are needed for operating expenses and to employ one staff position for purposes directly related to the administration of the matching funds provision for the food stamp employment and training program, and for any fiscal year thereafter may use such funds as is necessary to operate and administer said program.

(b) The remaining federal matching funds received by the state pursuant to section 2 of this act shall be used for poverty reduction strategies and distributed in the following manner: Seventy-five per cent of such remaining funds shall be provided to food stamp employment and training providers whose expenditures generated the federal matching funds on a pro-rata basis, pursuant to section 2 of this act; and twenty-five per cent of such remaining funds shall be provided to food stamp employment and training community collaboratives selected pursuant to section 3 of this act for implementation of poverty reduction strategies.

Sec. 5. (NEW) (*Effective October 1, 2008*) On or before January 15, 2009, and annually thereafter from January 15, 2010, to January 15, 2014, inclusive, the Commissioner of Social Services shall report, in accordance with section 11-4a of the general statutes, to the joint standing committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to human services and appropriations, and to the Child Poverty and Prevention Council on the amount of federal matching funds received by the state pursuant to section 2 of this act,

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the amount used by the Department of Social Services for operating and administrative expenses, the amounts distributed to providers and food stamp employment and training community collaboratives pursuant to section 4 of this act, the use of such federal matching funds, including the population served, and the programs' outcomes using a results-based accountability framework.

Sec. 6. (NEW) (*Effective October 1, 2008*) The Department of Social Services, in conjunction with the member agencies of the Child Poverty and Prevention Council, may work with local governments, institutions of higher education, community action agencies and other entities to continue and expand efforts, within available appropriations, to enroll eligible individuals in the food stamp program and to enroll eligible food stamp participants in education, employment and training activities.

Approved June 12, 2008