



Senate

General Assembly

File No. 433

February Session, 2008

Substitute Senate Bill No. 660

Senate, April 3, 2008

The Committee on Human Services reported through SEN. HARRIS of the 5th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the Senate, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

***AN ACT CONCERNING ESTABLISHMENT OF A FOOD STAMP
EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING PROGRAM.***

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

- 1 Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2008*) (a) The Department of Social
2 Services shall administer a food stamp employment and training
3 program, authorized under the federal Food Stamp Act of 1977, as
4 amended from time to time, to provide employment and training
5 activities, support services and other programs and services for
6 recipients of the food stamp program. The department shall maximize
7 the use of the fifty per cent federal matching funds provision under the
8 program to the fullest extent permitted by federal law.
- 9 (b) Federal grants received under the program shall be used in
10 accordance with federal law and regulations to fund food stamp
11 employment and training activities described in subsection (d) of this
12 section for recipients of the food stamp program.
- 13 (c) The department shall distribute federal funds received by the

14 state under the fifty per cent match provision to food stamp
15 employment and training providers whose expenditures generated
16 such federal matching funds in the relevant time period on a pro-rata
17 basis. Providers may include community-technical colleges, non-profit
18 agencies, adult education, philanthropic agencies, and other eligible
19 food stamp employment and training providers. Federal matching
20 funds received by such providers pursuant to this subsection shall be
21 used for employment and training activities described in subsection
22 (d) of this section and support services described in subsection (e) of
23 this section in accordance with the recommendations of the Child
24 Poverty and Prevention Council and its plan to reduce child poverty
25 developed pursuant to section 4-67x of the general statutes.

26 (d) Employment and training activities may include case
27 management; job search and work experience; education and training,
28 including adult basic education, high school equivalency preparation,
29 adult literacy classes, vocational training and post-secondary
30 education; tuition; reentry programs; and other such services that
31 improve employability.

32 (e) Support services for food stamp employment and training
33 program participants may include dependent care services;
34 transportation services; medical and dental services necessary for
35 employment; work, training or education-related items, including, but
36 not limited to, costs for uniforms, books or training manuals; and other
37 expenses reasonably necessary and directly related to participation in
38 an employment and training program.

39 (f) The department, in conjunction with the Child Poverty and
40 Prevention Council, shall work with local governments, community-
41 technical colleges, other educational institutions, community action
42 agencies and other entities to continue and expand efforts, within
43 available appropriations, to enroll eligible individuals in the food
44 stamp program and to enroll eligible food stamp participants in
45 education, employment and training activities.

46 (g) On or before January 15, 2009, and annually thereafter, the

47 Commissioner of Social Services, in consultation with the Child
 48 Poverty and Prevention Council, shall report, in accordance with
 49 section 11-4a of the general statutes, to the joint standing committees of
 50 the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to human
 51 services and appropriations on the amount of federal funding received
 52 in the prior fiscal year pursuant to this section and the impact of the
 53 programs utilized to reduce family poverty and promote
 54 employability.

55 (h) The Commissioner of Social Services shall adopt regulations, in
 56 accordance with the provisions of chapter 54 of the general statutes, to
 57 administer the program established pursuant to this section.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	July 1, 2008	New section

Statement of Legislative Commissioners:

Subsection (b) of section 1 was rewritten to clarify that the grants shall be used for purposes allowed under federal law and regulations. In subsection (d) of section 1, "medical and dental services necessary for employment" was moved to subsection (e) for accuracy and for compliance with federal law and regulations governing the food stamp employment and training program. In the first sentence in subsection (c) of section 1, "whose expenditures generated" was substituted for "that generate" for clarity.

HS *Joint Favorable Subst.*

The following fiscal impact statement and bill analysis are prepared for the benefit of members of the General Assembly, solely for the purpose of information, summarization, and explanation, and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose:

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact:

Agency Affected	Fund-Effect
Department of Social Services	GF - See Below

Municipal Impact: None

Explanation

This bill requires the Department of Social Services (DSS) to administer a food stamp employment and training program in order to draw down additional federal matching funds. DSS would work in conjunction with food stamp employment and training providers to identify current programs that may be eligible for the federal matching funds.

As the bill does not require DSS to fund any new programs, only identify current programs that may be eligible for the federal match, no new programmatic costs will result. However, DSS will incur additional administrative expenses for contracting, data-matching, reporting and program support. The extent of these administrative costs will be dependent upon the scope of the program developed by the department.

Should this program succeed, additional federal funds may be drawn down. Although these funds come from the federal government through DSS, the department passes these funds on to the providers. Therefore, this does not result in increased revenue for the General Fund.

The Out Years

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future subject to inflation.

OLR Bill Analysis**sSB 660*****AN ACT CONCERNING ESTABLISHMENT OF A FOOD STAMP EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING PROGRAM.*****SUMMARY:**

This bill codifies the Department of Social Services' (DSS) food stamp employment and training (FSE&T) program authorized under the Federal Food Stamp Act of 1977. It requires DSS to maximize the use of the program's optional 50% federal matching funds component. The program must provide employment and training activities, support services, and other programs and services to food stamp participants. It has two components: (1) 100% federal administrative grants and (2) optional 50% federal matching funds. DSS currently does not seek the federal matching funds.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2008

DISTRIBUTION OF MATCHING FUNDS

The bill requires DSS to distribute federal matching funds to FSE&T providers whose spending generates these funds in the "relevant time period" (the bill does not define this term) and on a prorated basis. Providers include community-technical colleges, nonprofit agencies, adult education, and philanthropic and other entities eligible to provide FSE&T activities.

USE OF MATCHING FUNDS

The bill requires any federal matching funds received under the FSE&T program to be used for employment and training activities and support services. Their use must follow the recommendations of the Child Poverty and Prevention Council's plan to reduce child poverty by 50% by 2014 (CGS § 4-67x). Federal administrative grants received

under the program may be used only for employment and training activities, not support services.

Under the bill, employment and training activities include:

1. case management;
2. job search and work experience;
3. education and training, including adult basic education, high school equivalency preparation, adult literacy classes, vocational training, and post secondary education;
4. tuition;
5. reentry programs; and
6. other services that improve employability.

Support services include dependent care and transportation services; work, training, or education-related items, including costs for uniforms, books, or training manuals; medical and dental services necessary for employment and other reasonable expenses directly related to participation in an employment and training program.

PROGRAM ENROLLMENT

The bill directs DSS, in conjunction with the Child Poverty and Prevention Council, to collaborate with local governments, community-technical colleges, other educational institutions, community action agencies, and other entities to enroll eligible individuals in the food stamp program and to enroll eligible food stamp participants in FSE&T activities. Enrollment efforts must be conducted within available appropriations.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Starting January 15, 2009, the bill requires the DSS commissioner, in consultation with the Child Poverty and Prevention Council, to report annually to the Human Services and Appropriations Committees on

the amount of federal funding received in the prior fiscal year and the impact of the programs used to reduce family poverty and promote employability.

The bill also requires the DSS commissioner to adopt regulations to administer the program.

BACKGROUND

FSE&T Program

The FSE&T program was created by the Food Security Act of 1985; the U.S. Department of Agriculture administers it. The act requires each state to implement an FSE&T program to help food stamp recipients gain skills, training, or experience to increase their ability to obtain regular employment.

Funding for the program traditionally focused on able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWDs), whose food stamp benefits became subject to time limits under federal welfare reform legislation passed in 1996 (P. L. 104-193). These adults, with some exceptions, can receive food stamp benefits for only three months out of each three-year period, except in months they work at least 80 hours or participate in an FSE&T activity. But, the Farm Bill of 2002 (P.L. 107-171) removed the requirement that states spend 80% of FSE&T funds on ABAWDS, giving states greater flexibility in how they use the funds.

FSE&T Funding

Each state receives a 100% federal grant to administer its FSE&T program based on its percentage of mandatory work registrants. States that guarantee to serve all ABAWDs at risk of exceeding the three-month time limit receive additional federal funding. DSS currently receives a federal grant of approximately \$700,000 to administer Connecticut's FSE&T program and uses all funding for ABAWDs.

States may also access optional 50% federal matching funds to pay for program costs that exceed those covered by the 100%

administrative grant. The funds may also be used for support services, including transportation and dependent care. They are uncapped and can be matched with state, local, or private funds. Federal matching funds may be used to provide FSE&T services to both mandatory work registrants and volunteers.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Human Services Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 18 Nay 0 (03/18/2008)