



Senate

General Assembly

File No. 215

February Session, 2022

Senate Bill No. 192

Senate, March 30, 2022

The Committee on Human Services reported through SEN. MOORE of the 22nd Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the Senate, that the bill ought to pass.

AN ACT CONCERNING EMPLOYMENT SERVICES ASSESSMENT INTERVIEWS AND SANCTIONS FOR TEMPORARY FAMILY ASSISTANCE BENEFICIARIES WHO FAIL TO COMPLY WITH EMPLOYMENT SERVICES REQUIREMENTS.

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

1 Section 1. Subsection (b) of section 17b-688c of the general statutes is
2 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*
3 *2022*):

4 (b) In no event shall temporary family assistance be granted to an
5 applicant for such assistance, who is not exempt from participation in
6 the employment services program, prior to the applicant's attendance at
7 an initial scheduled employment services assessment interview and
8 participation in the development of an employment services plan. The
9 Department of Social Services shall [not delay temporary family
10 assistance to an applicant in cases where the department schedules]
11 promptly conduct an application interview with an applicant for
12 temporary family assistance to determine whether such applicant is

13 exempt from participation in the employment services program. If the
14 department determines that such applicant is not exempt, the
15 department shall schedule the initial employment services assessment
16 interview not later than ten business days after the date of the
17 application interview. In cases where the department does not schedule
18 the initial employment services assessment interview [more than]
19 within ten business days [after] of the date on which the application [for
20 assistance is made, or in cases where] interview was completed, or
21 where the Labor Department does not complete an employment
22 services plan for the benefit of the applicant within ten business days of
23 the date on which the applicant attends an employment services
24 assessment interview, the Department of Social Services shall not delay
25 granting temporary family assistance to an applicant who is otherwise
26 eligible for such assistance. The Commissioner of Social Services shall
27 refer any applicant denied temporary family assistance, who may be in
28 need of emergency benefits, to other services offered by the Department
29 of Social Services or community services that may be available to such
30 applicant. The Department of Social Services shall reduce the benefits
31 awarded to a family under the temporary family assistance program
32 when a member of the family who is required to participate in the
33 employment services program fails to comply with an employment
34 services requirement without good cause. [The first instance of
35 noncompliance with an employment services requirement shall result
36 in a twenty-five per cent reduction of such benefits for three consecutive
37 months. The second instance of noncompliance with such requirement
38 shall result in a thirty-five per cent reduction of such benefits for three
39 consecutive months. A third or subsequent instance of noncompliance
40 with such requirement shall result in the termination of such benefits
41 for three consecutive months.] The Department of Social Services shall
42 impose this reduction by excluding the noncompliant family member
43 from the household when calculating the family's monthly benefit. Such
44 exclusion shall continue until the noncompliant family member (1)
45 begins to comply with employment services requirements, (2) becomes
46 exempt from such requirements, or (3) demonstrates good cause for his
47 or her failure to comply with such requirements. If only one member of

48 a family is eligible for temporary family assistance and such member
 49 fails without good cause to comply with an employment services
 50 requirement, the department shall [terminate all benefits of such family
 51 for three consecutive months Notwithstanding the provisions of this
 52 subsection, the department shall terminate the benefits awarded to a
 53 family under the temporary family assistance program if a member of
 54 the family who is not exempt from the twenty-one-month time limit
 55 specified in subsection (a) of section 17b-112 fails, without good cause,
 56 to: (1) Attend any scheduled assessment appointment or interview
 57 relating to the establishment of an employment services plan, except
 58 that such individual's benefits shall be reinstated if the individual
 59 attends a subsequently scheduled appointment or interview within
 60 thirty days of the date on which the department has issued notification
 61 to the individual that benefits have been terminated, or (2) comply with
 62 an employment services requirement during a six-month extension of
 63 benefits. Any individual who fails to comply with the provisions of
 64 subdivision (1) of this subsection may submit a new application for such
 65 benefits at any time after termination of benefits] reduce such family's
 66 benefit by twenty-five per cent for each month such member fails to
 67 comply.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	July 1, 2022	17b-688c(b)

HS *Joint Favorable*

The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact: See Below

Municipal Impact: None

Explanation

The bill could result in an impact to the Department of Social Services (DSS) associated with adjusting penalties for recipients of Temporary Family Assistance (TFA) benefits for noncompliance. For context, the average monthly TFA benefit is \$478 per case. The impact is dependent on the portion of the family benefit applicable to the non-compliant TFA-eligible participant and the number of months of non-compliance.

The Out Years

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

Sources: Department of Social Services Caseload Information

OLR Bill Analysis**SB 192*****AN ACT CONCERNING EMPLOYMENT SERVICES ASSESSMENT INTERVIEWS AND SANCTIONS FOR TEMPORARY FAMILY ASSISTANCE BENEFICIARIES WHO FAIL TO COMPLY WITH EMPLOYMENT SERVICES REQUIREMENTS.*****SUMMARY**

By law, Temporary Family Assistance (TFA) applicants who are subject to work requirements through the employment services program must (1) attend an assessment interview with the Labor Department and (2) participate in developing an employment plan before the Department of Social Services (DSS) may grant them cash assistance under TFA. This bill starts the 10-day time frame for DSS to schedule an assessment interview on the day DSS completes an application interview, rather than on the day the application is made. It also changes the way DSS calculates penalties for a TFA participant's failure to comply with work requirements.

The bill also eliminates provisions under current law requiring DSS to terminate TFA benefits awarded to a family under certain circumstances. Specifically, the department must terminate these benefits when a family member who is not exempt from the program's 21-month time limit fails, without good cause, to do either of the following:

1. attend any scheduled assessment appointment or interview related to establishing an employment services plan, unless he or she attends a subsequently scheduled appointment or interview within 30 days of receiving DSS's notice that benefits are terminated, or
2. comply with a work requirement during a six-month extension

of benefits.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2022

APPLICATION PROCESS AND INTERVIEWS

The bill requires DSS to promptly conduct an application interview with a TFA applicant to determine whether he or she is exempt from work requirements under the Labor Department's employment services program. Under the bill, if DSS determines the applicant is not exempt, the department must schedule the initial employment services interview with the Labor Department within 10 business days after the application interview. If DSS fails to do so within that timeframe, the bill prohibits DSS from delaying TFA benefits to an applicant who is otherwise eligible.

Additionally, the bill eliminates a provision prohibiting DSS from delaying TFA benefits to an applicant when the department schedules the initial employment services assessment interview more than 10 business days after the applicant submits the application.

Existing law also prohibits DSS from delaying benefits when the Labor Department does not complete the applicant's employment services plan within 10 business days of the applicant's employment services assessment interview.

PENALTY CALCULATIONS

Under current law, DSS must reduce TFA benefits awarded to a family when a member of that family fails to comply with a work requirement without good cause, as follows:

1. for the first instance, a 25% reduction in benefits for three consecutive months;
2. for the second instance, a 35% reduction in benefits for three consecutive months; and
3. for third and subsequent instances, termination of benefits for three consecutive months.

The bill instead requires DSS to reduce benefits for failure to comply with work requirements by excluding the noncompliant family member from the household when calculating the family’s monthly benefit. (TFA benefits are based, in part, on household size. Generally, reducing the number of people in the household reduces the household’s benefit amount.) Under the bill, DSS must exclude the noncompliant family member until he or she (1) begins to comply with work requirements, (2) becomes exempt from work requirements, or (3) demonstrates good cause for failing to comply.

In cases where only one member of a family is eligible for TFA and he or she fails to comply with a work requirement, current law requires DSS to terminate the family’s benefits for three consecutive months. Under the bill, DSS must instead reduce the family’s benefit by 25% for each month the person fails to comply, and only if the failure to comply is without good cause.

**COMMITTEE ACTION **

Human Services Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 20 Nay 0 (03/17/2022)