

LEGISLATIVE BILL 507

Approved by the Governor March 7, 2012

Introduced by Harms, 48; Mello, 5; Nordquist, 7; Council, 11.

FOR AN ACT relating to the Welfare Reform Act; to amend section 68-1708, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska; to provide for satisfaction of work activity requirements through education; to restrict use of state funds; to provide for reports; to state intent; to harmonize provisions; to provide a termination date; and to repeal the original section.

Be it enacted by the people of the State of Nebraska,

Section 1. Section 68-1708, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, is amended to read:

68-1708 Sections 68-1708 to 68-1734 and sections 2 to 6 of this act shall be known and may be cited as the Welfare Reform Act.

Sec. 2. For purposes of creating the self-sufficiency contract and meeting the applicant's work activity requirement, an applicant who is under twenty years of age and is married or a single head of household is deemed to have met the work activity requirement in a month if he or she:

(1) Maintains satisfactory attendance during such month at secondary school, a general education development program, or the equivalent; or

(2) Participates in education directly related to employment for an average of at least twenty hours per week during such month. Education directly related to employment includes, but is not limited to, Adult Basic Education, English as a Second Language, and a general education development program.

Sec. 3. (1) For purposes of this section, target work rate means fifty percent less the caseload reduction credit submitted by the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services to the United States Department of Health and Human Services for the fiscal year.

(2) For purposes of creating the self-sufficiency contract and meeting the applicant's work activity requirement, an applicant under twenty-four years of age shall be deemed to have met the work activity requirement in a month if he or she is engaged in education directly related to employment for an average of at least twenty hours per week during such month. Education directly related to employment includes, but is not limited to, Adult Basic Education, English as a Second Language, and a general education development program.

(3) No state funds shall be used to carry out this section unless such state funds meet the definition of qualified state expenditures under the federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program, 42 U.S.C. 609(a)(7)(B)(i).

(4) If Nebraska's work participation rate under the federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program, 42 U.S.C. 601 et seq., does not exceed the target work rate by ten percentage points in any month, the Department of Health and Human Services may suspend the requirements of subsection (2) of this section until the work participation rate exceeds the target work rate by ten percentage points for three consecutive months.

Sec. 4. The Department of Health and Human Services shall report annually to the Legislature on October 1 on the following:

(1) The number of persons on a quarterly basis participating in a self-sufficiency contract who are engaged in one of the following activities:

(a) An associate degree program;

(b) A vocational education program not leading to an associate degree;

(c) Postsecondary education other than a program described in subdivision (1)(a) or (b) of this section;

(d) Adult Basic Education;

(e) English as a Second Language; or

(f) A general education development program; and

(2) The number of persons participating in a self-sufficiency contract who obtain or maintain employment for six months, twelve months, eighteen months, and twenty-four months after such persons are no longer eligible for cash assistance due to obtaining employment.

Sec. 5. It is the intent of the Legislature that the Department of Health and Human Services carry out the requirements of sections 2 to 4 of this act within the limits of its annual appropriation.

Sec. 6. Sections 2 to 5 of this act terminate on December 31, 2016.

Sec. 7. Original section 68-1708, Reissue Revised Statutes of

Nebraska, is repealed.