

LEGISLATIVE BILL 842

Approved by the Governor April 6, 2012

Introduced by Harms, 48; Mello, 5.

FOR AN ACT relating to public assistance; to amend section 68-1721, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska; to change a termination date relating to duties of an applicant family; to require the Department of Health and Human Services to collect certain data regarding aid to dependent children and to provide a report; and to repeal the original section.

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

Section 1. Section 68-1721, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, is amended to read:

68-1721 (1) Under the self-sufficiency contract developed under section 68-1719, the principal wage earner and other nonexempt members of the applicant family shall be required to participate in one or more of the following approved activities, including, but not limited to, education, job skills training, work experience, job search, or employment.

(2) Education shall consist of the general education development program, high school, Adult Basic Education, English as a Second Language, postsecondary education, or other education programs approved in the contract.

(3) Job skills training shall include vocational training in technical job skills and equivalent knowledge. Activities shall consist of formalized, technical job skills training, apprenticeships, on-the-job training, or training in the operation of a microbusiness enterprise. The types of training, apprenticeships, or training positions may include, but need not be limited to, the ability to provide services such as home repairs, automobile repairs, respite care, foster care, personal care, and child care. Job skills training shall be prioritized and approved for occupations that facilitate economic self-sufficiency.

(4) The purpose of work experience shall be to improve the employability of applicants by providing work experience and training to assist them to move promptly into regular public or private employment. Work experience shall mean unpaid work in a public, private, for-profit, or nonprofit business or organization. Work experience placements shall take into account the individual's prior training, skills, and experience. A placement shall not exceed six months.

(5) Job search shall assist adult members of recipient families in finding their own jobs. The emphasis shall be placed on teaching the individual to take responsibility for his or her own job development and placement.

(6) Employment shall consist of work for pay. The employment may be full-time or part-time but shall be adequate to help the recipient family reach economic self-sufficiency.

(7) For purposes of creating the self-sufficiency contract and meeting the applicant's work activity requirement, an applicant shall be allowed to engage in vocational training that leads to an associate degree, a diploma, or a certificate for a minimum of twenty hours per week for up to thirty-six months. This subsection terminates on ~~September 30, 2012.~~ December 31, 2016.

Sec. 2. The Department of Health and Human Services shall collect the following data and information yearly:

(1) The total number of participants in the aid to dependent children program described in section 43-512 pursuing an associate degree;

(2) Graduation rates of such participants, the number of participants that are making satisfactory progress in their educational pursuits, and the length of time participants participate in education to fulfill their work requirement under the program;

(3) The monthly earnings, educational level attained, and employment status of such participants at six months and at twelve months after terminating participation in the aid to dependent children program; and

(4) A summary of activities performed by the department to promote postsecondary educational opportunities to participants in the aid to dependent children program.

Sec. 3. (1) The Department of Health and Human Services shall provide a report to the Governor and the Legislature no later than December 1 each year regarding the data and information collected pursuant to section 2 of this act, including a summary of such data and information.

(2) The data and information collected under such section shall be

considered a public record under section 84-712.01.

Sec. 4. Original section 68-1721, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, is repealed.