
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 2753 Session of
1992

INTRODUCED BY RICHARDSON, DeWEESE, KUKOVICH, COHEN, ITKIN,
THOMAS, JOSEPHS, RITTER, CARN, VAN HORNE, JAMES, SCRIMENTI,
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JAROLIN, FREEMAN, STURLA, BISHOP, OLIVER, TRICH, STETLER,
CAPPABIANCA, PRESTON, ROEBUCK, CAWLEY, TIGUE, PESCI AND
MELIO, MAY 18, 1992

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND WELFARE, MAY 18, 1992

AN ACT

1 Amending the act of July 13, 1987 (P.L.342, No.65), entitled "An
2 act authorizing the Department of Public Welfare to establish
3 a grant program for projects which provide employment
4 opportunities for certain individuals," further providing for
5 job training and employment opportunities for certain persons
6 receiving assistance.

7 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
8 hereby enacts as follows:

9 Section 1. The act of July 13, 1987 (P.L.342, No.65), known
10 as the Employment Opportunities Act, is amended by adding a
11 section to read:

12 Section 1.1. Statement of legislative findings.

13 The General Assembly finds and declares as follows:

14 (1) Rather than creating a punitive system as a way to
15 control current escalating costs, true reforms are needed to
16 create a productive and functional public assistance system
17 which helps people become economically independent through

1 education, training and employment.

2 (2) Punitive reform measures create short-term savings,
3 but the long-term cost of such measures is much higher in the
4 form of unmanageable health care costs, unmet shelter needs,
5 the cost of services to the homeless, and an increased need
6 for even less cost-effective measures, such as additional
7 prison beds.

8 (3) Economically disadvantaged and unskilled
9 Pennsylvanians face crippling barriers to employment and are
10 in need of special training, financial assistance and other
11 support services in order to become self-sufficient.

12 (4) In addition to serving as a safety net to ensure
13 basic economic survival, an effective public assistance
14 program must provide adequate transitional financial
15 assistance and support services and other incentives for
16 people who are physically and mentally capable of doing so to
17 become economically independent.

18 Section 2. Section 2 of the act is amended by adding a
19 definition to read:

20 Section 2. Definitions.

21 The following words and phrases when used in this act shall
22 have the meanings given to them in this section unless the
23 context clearly indicates otherwise:

24 * * *

25 "GA." General assistance to needy persons, as administered
26 by the Department of Public Welfare under the act of June 13,
27 1967 (P.L.31, No.21), known as the Public Welfare Code.

28 * * *

29 Section 3. Section 3 of the act is repealed.

30 Section 4. Sections 4, 5, 6 and 7 of the act are amended to

1 read:

2 Section 4. Persons to be served.

3 Projects which receive funding under this act shall serve
4 transitionally needy general assistance recipients and
5 chronically needy general assistance recipients who are
6 participating in a drug or alcohol treatment program [who cannot
7 be placed directly in an employment search program] and who have
8 barriers to employment or have special needs which include, but
9 are not limited to:

10 (1) Persons with an educational grade level under the
11 sixth grade.

12 (2) Persons with limited or no fluency in the English
13 language.

14 (3) Persons with few or no marketable occupation skills.

15 (4) Persons who lack a recent employment history.

16 (5) Persons with drug or alcohol abuse history.

17 (6) Victims of domestic violence.

18 (7) High school dropouts.

19 (8) [Minority persons] Persons ages 18 through 25
20 without full-time employment experience.

21 (9) Displaced homemakers.

22 (10) Ex-offenders.

23 (11) Homeless persons.

24 Section 5. [Types of programs eligible for funding.

25 Grants may be awarded to fund the following types of
26 programs:] Program components.

27 The Department of Public Welfare shall establish and develop
28 under this act a program of supportive services and transitional
29 financial assistance designed to provide support services
30 adequate to ensure that transitionally needy general assistance

recipients secure full-time unsubsidized jobs. This program shall include the following components:

(1) [Work experience projects] The work experience component which [meet] meets the specifications of the Federal Job Training Partnership Act (Public Law 97-300, 96 Stat. 1322) and [do] does not exceed three months' duration per participant. [Such projects] Work experience shall include intensive job-readiness and personal counseling services and job-placement services which aim to place participants in unsubsidized full-time jobs by the time the work experience component is completed. Wages at the applicable State or Federal minimum wage shall be subsidized for participants in this component. [The grantee may subcontract for some or all of the services required or make use of services already available in the community.] Work experience [projects] may be combined with skill-specific literacy training or adult basic education, general equivalency diploma preparation or English as a second language programs.

(2) [Integrated training projects] The integrated training component which effectively [combine] combines adult basic education, general equivalency diploma preparation or English as a second language; vocational or technical training; and job-readiness services which together prepare participants for identifiable jobs within the community. Job-readiness services must occur concurrently with vocational training [or be limited to 30 days. Such projects]. Integrated training shall include provision of job-placement services upon completion of training. [The grantee may subcontract for the services required or make use of services

1 already available in the community. Projects shall provide
2 needs-based payments or services in lieu of needs-based
3 payments] The program shall provide earned training benefits
4 for participants without other sources of income to enable
5 them to participate. [These payments or services shall be
6 sufficient to cover basic personal needs of participants
7 while in training. Needs-based payments are not to exceed the
8 applicable cash assistance grant and shall be limited to six
9 months. Payments shall be disallowed for days of training for
10 which the participant fails to attend.]

11 (3) On-the-job training [projects], including support
12 services and job-readiness counseling. If on-the-job training
13 does not result in permanent employment for participants, the
14 grantee shall provide job-placement services which aim to
15 place participants in unsubsidized full-time employment by
16 the time the on-the-job training is completed. Wages are paid
17 to the participant by the employer. The employer may receive
18 a subsidy from the Commonwealth of up to 50% of the wages
19 paid in compensation for the costs associated with training
20 participants for up to six months. [The grantee may
21 subcontract for some or all of the services required or make
22 use of services already available in the community.]

23 (4) Supported work [projects] for up to six months.
24 [These projects] This supported work may be combined with
25 skill-specific literacy training or other basic education
26 programs.

27 Section 6. Support services.

28 [(a) Types.--Projects] The program shall provide support
29 services, including, but not limited to:

30 [(1) Day care.

1 (2) Transportation.

2 (3) Ongoing supportive counseling services.

3 (4) Provision of needs-based payments.

4 (b) Duration.--Support services, except for needs-based
5 payments, may continue to be provided for a period not to exceed
6 six months after entrance into unsubsidized employment. Pursuant
7 to this act, program operators must demonstrate that any support
8 services provided after entrance into unsubsidized employment
9 are essential for the client to remain in employment. Program
10 operators shall demonstrate that local resources are fully
11 utilized prior to providing supportive services under this act.]

12 (1) Education and training as needed to enable the
13 participant to obtain the skills necessary to maintain steady
14 employment. The Department of Public Welfare shall conduct an
15 assessment to determine what educational and vocational
16 services best meet the individual's needs.

17 (2) Day-care services for the children of program
18 participants for up to one year after the participant becomes
19 ineligible for GA due to earned income.

20 (3) Transportation services as needed.

21 (4) Health insurance coverage, if not provided by the
22 employer, by continuing Medicaid benefits for not more than
23 two years after the participant becomes ineligible for GA or
24 AFDC due to earned income.

25 (5) Special individualized services as needed to enable
26 the participant to maintain steady employment. The Department
27 of Public Welfare shall conduct an assessment of the health
28 related, social, educational and vocational needs of each
29 program participant to determine what barriers to employment
30 exist and whether the participant needs special services in

1 addition to the other services provided pursuant to this act.
2 Special services shall include, but are not limited to, the
3 following: substance abuse counseling and treatment, legal
4 assistance, job counseling, family counseling, parenting
5 skills training, other life skills training, remedial
6 education and tutorial services.

7 (6) An earned training benefits exemption for all
8 recipients of GA enrolled and regularly attending, as defined
9 by the Department of Public Welfare, education or training
10 programs approved by the Department of Public Welfare. The
11 earned training benefit is calculated as equivalent to the
12 Federal minimum hourly training wage for not more than 20
13 hours of training per week for not more than one year with
14 the total benefit, grant level plus earned training benefit,
15 not to exceed 120% of the maximum household grant level.

16 (7) An earned income exemption created by the
17 Commonwealth's standard of need as 100% of poverty. All
18 recipients participating in the program shall be allowed to
19 exempt earned income from wages to fill the gap between their
20 grant level and the standard of need under this earned income
21 exemption. The difference between earned income up to 100% of
22 the Federal poverty level, the State standard of need and the
23 grant level shall be disregarded.

24 Section 7. Selection of projects.

25 The Department of Public Welfare, with the cooperation of the
26 Department of Labor and Industry, [shall evaluate the proposals
27 submitted and select grantees for operation] may contract with
28 any private industry council or designated administrative
29 entity, public or private school, institution of higher
30 learning, business enterprise or nonprofit organization for

1 operation of components of this program using the following
2 criteria:

3 (1) Linkage with and participation of the local county
4 board of assistance and coordination with the private
5 industry councils.

6 (2) The level of locally available support services.

7 (3) That funding will result in the creation of
8 permanent job opportunities for participants.

9 (4) That the training will provide substantial
10 likelihood of job placement.

11 Section 5. This act shall take effect in 60 days.