
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

SENATE BILL

No. 800 Session of
2005

INTRODUCED BY BROWNE, ORIE, GORDNER, ARMSTRONG, KITCHEN,
BOSCOLA, PIPPY AND RHOADES, JUNE 22, 2005

REFERRED TO AGING AND YOUTH, JUNE 22, 2005

AN ACT

1 Providing for the establishment, implementation and
2 administration of a comprehensive retiree welfare-to-work
3 mentoring program for certain individuals; and imposing
4 additional powers and duties on the Department of Aging.

5 The General Assembly finds and declares as follows:

6 (1) Nationally, employment retention and job advancement
7 for former welfare clients and other low-wage workers has
8 become a major focus in work force development.

9 (2) Mentoring provides an avenue for job advancement for
10 those clients so that they can continue to not only be
11 productive but also to enjoy the prosperity required to stay
12 on the job.

13 (3) The Retiree Mentoring Works Program is advantageous
14 for business and government because it addresses problems on
15 the employment site, thereby alleviating costly turnover for
16 companies, and because it ensures job retention so welfare
17 rolls may be reduced.

18 (4) By giving benefits to employers, they are made part

1 owners in a program that is helping solve America's pressing
2 problem of transitioning people from welfare to work and that
3 ensures that those people will remain productive, independent
4 Americans with pride and dignity.

5 (5) In essence, retiree mentors pragmatically teach
6 welfare clients to fight their war on poverty by working
7 their way to prosperity.

8 (6) The Kansas Welfare to Work Senior Mentoring
9 Initiative, known as "Mentoring Works," has been
10 exceptionally effective, exceeding planned enrollment and job
11 placement goals, generating enthusiastic interest among
12 employers and moving individuals from welfare to work. The
13 program has received an award from the United States
14 Committee for the Celebration of the United Nations
15 International Year of Older Persons 1999-United States
16 Committee's National Awards for Excellence in Aging Programs.
17 The United States Department of Labor named the program the
18 winner of the 1999 "Architect of Change Award" for what labor
19 defines as "the most innovative and forward thinking program
20 in the workforce development system."

21 (7) Pennsylvania is fortunate to have the second largest
22 percentage of older persons in the country and inherent in
23 that distinction is the deep well of knowledge and expertise
24 found in this Commonwealth's population of retired
25 individuals. It is incumbent upon the General Assembly,
26 therefore, to utilize the valuable network of retired
27 Pennsylvanians who may be willing to share their knowledge
28 and expertise for the benefit of all Pennsylvanians.

29 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
30 hereby enacts as follows:

1 Section 1. Short title.

2 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Pennsylvania
3 Retiree Mentoring Works Program Act.

4 Section 2. Definitions.

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

8 "Client." A resident of this Commonwealth who receives or
9 has received welfare payments or who is a low-wage worker.

10 "Department." The Department of Aging of the Commonwealth.

11 "Program." The Pennsylvania Retiree Mentoring Works Program
12 established by this act.

13 Section 3. Pennsylvania Retiree Mentoring Works Program.

14 (a) Establishment.--There is hereby established within the
15 department a demonstration program to be known as the
16 Pennsylvania Retiree Mentoring Works Program. The purpose of the
17 program shall be to provide mentoring services to assist
18 individuals who are transitioning from welfare or who are low-
19 wage workers to find and retain employment.

20 (b) Mentors.--The department shall select retired
21 individuals who are 55 years of age or older to serve as mentors
22 in the program. The mentors shall assist clients in removing
23 barriers that have been major obstacles to finding and retaining
24 quality employment in rural, urban and suburban regions of this
25 Commonwealth.

26 Section 4. Powers and duties of the Department of Aging.

27 (a) Mentor recruitment and training.--The department shall
28 establish a process for recruiting quality retiree mentors,
29 training those mentors and purchasing the needed technology to
30 make the program operational.

1 (b) Funding opportunities.--The department may seek
2 potential funding opportunities in the form of grants through
3 government agencies as well as private sector dollars to fund
4 the program.

5 (c) Interagency cooperation.--The department shall work in
6 cooperation with the Team PA Workforce Investment Board, the
7 Department of Labor and Industry and the Department of Public
8 Welfare to ensure the success of this program. The program shall
9 act as a resource to the retention, advancement and rapid re-
10 employment services of the Department of Public Welfare.

11 (d) Local cooperation.--The department shall work in
12 cooperation with the designated area agencies established in
13 section 2206-A of the act of April 9, 1929 (P.L.177, No.175),
14 known as The Administrative Code of 1929, to provide local
15 involvement in the program.

16 (e) Annual report.--The department shall prepare and submit
17 an annual report to the General Assembly on the program. The
18 report shall include pertinent information regarding the
19 effectiveness of the program, as well as findings and
20 recommendations for changes that may be deemed necessary to
21 improve the program's outcomes.

22 Section 5. Responsibilities of mentors.

23 Retiree mentors shall be compensated, as determined by the
24 department, and shall work as advisors, counselors and teachers
25 to welfare clients, former welfare clients and other low-wage
26 workers in one-on-one scenarios where they cover topics on job-
27 seeking and job-keeping skills, work ethic, responsibility as a
28 trusted employee and the difference between wants and needs.

29 Section 6. Rules and regulations.

30 The department shall develop and promulgate rules and

1 regulations necessary to provide for the administration of the
2 program, no later than six months after the effective date of
3 this section. Implementation of the program shall commence no
4 later than six months following final approval of the
5 regulations.

6 Section 7. Program expiration.

7 The program shall remain in effect from the effective date of
8 this section through the close of the third full year of
9 operation, unless otherwise extended by an act of the General
10 Assembly.

11 Section 8. Effective date.

12 This act shall take effect immediately.