

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 1109 Session of  
2011

INTRODUCED BY BEAR, AUMENT, BOBACK, BOYD, BROOKS, CALTAGIRONE,  
D. COSTA, CUTLER, DENLINGER, FLECK, GABLER, GEIST, GIBBONS,  
GINGRICH, GROVE, HARRIS, HENNESSEY, HESS, HICKERNELL,  
HORNAMAN, KAUFFMAN, M. K. KELLER, KILLION, KORTZ, MAJOR,  
MANN, MILLER, MILNE, MURT, O'NEILL, PAYTON, PICKETT, PYLE,  
READSHAW, REICHLEY, SAYLOR, SCAVELLO, SIMMONS, STERN, STURLA,  
SWANGER, TALLMAN, J. TAYLOR, TOEPEL AND VULAKOVICH,  
MARCH 17, 2011

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON AGING AND OLDER ADULT SERVICES, MARCH  
17, 2011

AN ACT

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

5 The General Assembly finds and declares that:

6 (1) Nationally, employment retention and job advancement  
7 for former welfare clients and other low-wage workers have  
8 been 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 prosperity and stay on the job.

12 (3) One specific program in place for several years in  
13 Kansas, known as the Kansas Welfare to Work Senior Mentoring  
14 Initiative or "Mentoring Works," was exceptionally effective,  
15 exceeded planned enrollment and job placement goals,

1 generated enthusiastic interest among employers and moved  
2 individuals from welfare to work. The program received an  
3 award from the United States Committee for the Celebration of  
4 the United Nations International Year of Older Persons 1999-  
5 United States Committee's National Awards for Excellence in  
6 Aging Programs. The United States Department of Labor named  
7 the program the winner of the 1999 "Architect of Change  
8 Award" for what labor defines as "the most innovative and  
9 forward thinking program in the workforce development  
10 system."

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

16 (5) By giving benefits to employers, they are made part  
17 owners in a program that is helping solve America's pressing  
18 problem of transitioning people from welfare to work and that  
19 ensures that those people will remain productive, independent  
20 Americans with pride and dignity.

21 (6) Retiree mentors pragmatically teach welfare clients  
22 to fight their war on poverty by working their way to  
23 prosperity.

24 (7) Pennsylvania is fortunate to have a significant  
25 percentage of older persons, and in fact, Pennsylvania's 60  
26 and older population is expected to be 25% of the total  
27 population, or more than 3 million people, by the year 2020.

28 (8) Inherent in our demographic distinction is the deep  
29 well of knowledge and expertise found in this Commonwealth's  
30 population of retired individuals.

(9) It is incumbent upon the General Assembly,  
therefore, to utilize the valuable network of retired  
Pennsylvanians who may be willing to share their knowledge  
and expertise for the benefit of all Pennsylvanians.

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

Section 1. Short title.

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

Section 2. Definitions.

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

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

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

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

Section 3. Pennsylvania Retiree Mentoring Works Demonstration  
Program.

(a) Establishment.--There is established within the  
department a demonstration program to be known as the  
Pennsylvania Retiree Mentoring Works Demonstration Program. The  
purpose of the program shall be to provide mentoring services to  
assist clients to find and retain employment.

(b) Mentors.--

(1) The department shall select retired individuals who  
are at least 60 years of age to serve as mentors in the  
program. The mentors shall assist clients in removing  
barriers that have been major obstacles to finding and

1 retaining quality employment in rural, urban and suburban  
2 regions of this Commonwealth.

3 (2) While serving under the program, mentors shall not  
4 be construed as contractors, employees or agents of the  
5 department or the Commonwealth and shall not have a right or  
6 privilege to any benefits by virtue of such service, except  
7 as otherwise provided under section 5(b).

8 Section 4. Powers and duties of the department.

9 (a) Mentor recruitment and training.--The department shall  
10 establish a process for recruiting quality retiree mentors,  
11 training those mentors and purchasing the needed technology to  
12 make the program operational.

13 (b) Funding opportunities.--The department may seek  
14 potential funding opportunities in the form of grants through  
15 government agencies as well as private sector dollars to fund  
16 the program.

17 (c) Interagency cooperation.--The department shall work in  
18 cooperation with the Team PA Workforce Investment Board, the  
19 Department of Labor and Industry and the Department of Public  
20 Welfare to ensure the success of the program. The program shall  
21 be a resource to the retention, advancement and rapid re-  
22 employment services of the Department of Public Welfare.

23 (d) Local cooperation.--The department shall work in  
24 cooperation with the designated area agencies on aging  
25 established in section 2206-A of the act of April 9, 1929  
26 (P.L.177, No.175), known as The Administrative Code of 1929, to  
27 provide local involvement in the program.

28 (e) Annual report.--The department shall prepare and submit  
29 an annual report on the program to the General Assembly. The  
30 report shall include pertinent information regarding the

effectiveness of the program, as well as findings and recommendations for changes that may be deemed necessary to improve the program's outcome.

#### Section 5. Responsibilities of mentors.

(a) General rule.--Retiree mentors shall serve as advisors, counselors and teachers to clients in one-on-one scenarios where they cover topics, including, but not limited to, job-seeking and job-keeping skills, work ethic and responsibility as a trusted employee.

(b) Expenses.--Retiree mentors shall be reimbursed for expenses incurred by them, as determined by the department.

#### Section 6. General guidelines.

The department shall develop general guidelines to provide for the administration of the program no later than three months after the effective date of this section. Implementation of the program shall commence no later than six months following development of the guidelines.

#### Section 7. Termination of program.

The program shall terminate three years from the date of implementation.

#### Section 8. Effective date.

This act shall take effect immediately.