
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 1500 Session of
1991

INTRODUCED BY FOX, NAHILL, KUKOVICH, SAURMAN, BOYES, JAROLIN,
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CESSAR, HAGARTY, PETRONE, STURLA, CORNELL, BELARDI,
COLAFELLA, J. TAYLOR, FARGO AND MELIO, JUNE 3, 1991

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON AGING AND YOUTH, JUNE 3, 1991

AN ACT

1 Establishing a Telephone Reassurance Program; providing for
2 grants; and imposing duties on the Department of Aging.

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

5 Section 1. Short title.

6 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Telephone
7 Reassurance Act.

8 Section 2. Legislative intent.

9 It is the intent of the General Assembly to encourage and
10 promote the establishment of new, and the expansion of existing,
11 telephone reassurance programs by providing grants to area
12 agencies on aging based on need.

1 Section 3. Definitions.

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

5 "Cash contribution." A contribution consisting of funds.

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

7 "In-kind contribution." A contribution consisting of
8 existing resources, including, but not limited to, volunteers,
9 buildings or equipment.

10 "Participant." A senior citizen or permanently disabled
11 person, as defined by this act, who is eligible for services
12 pursuant to this act.

13 "Permanently disabled person." A person 18 years of age or
14 older who is a resident of this Commonwealth and who has mental
15 or physical limitations, or both, which restrict the ability to
16 carry out activities of daily living.

17 "Program." The Telephone Reassurance Program, as established
18 by this act.

19 "Provider." An area agency on aging or a public, private or
20 nonprofit organization or agency which operates a telephone
21 reassurance program pursuant to this act.

22 "Senior citizen." A person 60 years of age or older who is a
23 resident of this Commonwealth.

24 Section 4. Telephone Reassurance Program.

25 (a) Program created.--There is hereby created a Telephone
26 Reassurance Program. This program shall be designed to provide
27 matching grants to area agencies on aging for the establishment
28 or operation, or both, of telephone reassurance programs for the
29 purpose of maintaining a daily telephone contact via operators,
30 volunteers whenever possible, with senior citizens and

1 permanently disabled persons who live alone or with a senior
2 citizen who lives with one or more permanently disabled persons.

3 (b) Operation.--Individual telephone reassurance programs
4 shall be operated in a manner that ensures daily contact, during
5 hours established by the provider, between the participant and
6 the provider and that further ensures that, when contact is not
7 made with the participant, contact will be made with an
8 alternate person designated by the participant, for the purpose
9 of visiting the participant's residence to confirm the
10 participant's safety. In the event the safety of the participant
11 is not confirmed, individual telephone reassurance programs
12 shall ensure that appropriate law enforcement or emergency
13 medical service personnel are notified. The provider at all
14 times shall receive incoming telephone calls made by
15 participants, unless alternate arrangements are made in advance
16 between the provider and the participant.

17 Section 5. Allocation of grants.

18 The department shall allocate funds appropriated pursuant to
19 this act in the form of matching grants only to those area
20 agencies on aging requesting funding. The grants shall match the
21 total dollar amount of cash contributions and in-kind
22 contributions made by the provider. However, no grant shall
23 exceed the area agency on aging's standard allocation determined
24 in accordance with the department's allocation formula as
25 outlined in the State plan developed pursuant to section 2210-
26 A(a) of the act of April 9, 1929 (P.L.177, No.175), known as the
27 Administrative Code of 1929, and the Older Americans Act of 1965
28 (Public Law 89-73, 42 U.S.C. § 3001 et seq.).

29 Section 6. Powers and duties of area agencies on aging.

30 (a) Service provider selection.--Area agencies on aging may

1 provide services directly or enter into an agreement with a
2 public, private or nonprofit organization or agency for the
3 provision of services.

4 (b) Already existing program.--In the event telephone
5 reassurance services are currently being provided in the
6 planning and service area of an area agency on aging receiving
7 funds pursuant to this act, the area agency on aging shall give
8 priority to the provider of these services when making a
9 determination as to the provision of services.

10 (c) Volunteers.--Area agencies on aging shall promote the
11 use of volunteers whenever possible.

12 (d) Program promotion.--Area agencies on aging shall promote
13 the provision of outreach services through telephone reassurance
14 programs whenever possible.

15 Section 7. Powers and duties of department.

16 (a) Volunteer guidelines.--The department shall establish
17 guidelines for use as a model for the training of volunteers
18 working in telephone reassurance programs.

19 (b) Program rules and regulations.--The department shall
20 have the power to promulgate the rules and regulations necessary
21 to carry out the provisions of this act.

22 Section 8. Eligibility.

23 Only those senior citizens and permanently disabled persons
24 who live alone or a senior citizen who lives with one or more
25 permanently disabled persons shall be eligible for services
26 provided through this act.

27 Section 9. Services not mandated.

28 In no way shall this act be interpreted as a mandate for the
29 provision of telephone reassurance by the area agencies on
30 aging.

1 Section 10. Effective date.

2 This act shall take effect in 90 days.