
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 1743 Session of
2007

INTRODUCED BY BEAR, BENNINGHOFF, BOYD, CALTAGIRONE, CREIGHTON,
CUTLER, DENLINGER, GEIST, GINGRICH, HARRIS, HENNESSEY,
HERSHEY, HICKERNELL, HORNAMAN, KAUFFMAN, KIRKLAND, KORTZ,
KOTIK, MOUL, MYERS, PETRONE, ROAE, ROSS, RUBLEY, SAYLOR,
SCHRODER, STERN, R. STEVENSON, STURLA, SWANGER, J. TAYLOR,
THOMAS, TURZAI AND YOUNGBLOOD, JULY 13, 2007

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON AGING AND OLDER ADULT SERVICES,
JULY 13, 2007

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,
16 generated enthusiastic interest among employers and moved

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

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

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

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

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

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

30 (9) It is incumbent upon the General Assembly,

1 therefore, to utilize the valuable network of retired
2 Pennsylvanians who may be willing to share their knowledge
3 and expertise for the benefit of all Pennsylvanians.

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

6 Section 1. Short title.

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

9 Section 2. Definitions.

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

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

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

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

18 Section 3. Pennsylvania Retiree Mentoring Works Demonstration
19 Program.

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

25 (b) Mentors.--

26 (1) The department shall select retired individuals who
27 are at least 60 years of age to serve as mentors in the
28 program. The mentors shall assist clients in removing
29 barriers that have been major obstacles to finding and
30 retaining quality employment in rural, urban and suburban

1 regions of this Commonwealth.

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

7 Section 4. Powers and duties of the department.

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

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

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

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

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

1 recommendations for changes that may be deemed necessary to
2 improve the program's outcome.

3 Section 5. Responsibilities of mentors.

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

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

11 Section 6. General guidelines.

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

17 Section 7. Termination of program.

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

20 Section 8. Effective date.

21 This act shall take effect immediately.