

CHAPTER 251

HUMAN SERVICES - SOCIAL SERVICES

HOUSE BILL 21-1270

BY REPRESENTATIVE(S) Exum and Caraveo, Amabile, Bernett, Bird, Boesenecker, Cutter, Duran, Esgar, Froelich, Gonzales-Gutierrez, Gray, Herod, Hooton, Jackson, Jodeh, Kennedy, Kipp, McCormick, Michaelson Jenet, Mullica, Ortiz, Ricks, Titone, Valdez A., Valdez D., Weissman, Woodrow, Young;
also SENATOR(S) Fields and Kirkmeyer, Bridges, Buckner, Danielson, Donovan, Ginal, Moreno, Pettersen, Priola, Rankin, Simpson, Smallwood, Story, Winter, Woodward, Zenzinger, Garcia.

AN ACT

CONCERNING AN APPROPRIATION TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES FOR SERVICES RELATED TO THE COLORADO EMPLOYMENT FIRST PROGRAM WITHIN THE SUPPLEMENTAL ASSISTANCE NUTRITION PROGRAM, AND, IN CONNECTION THEREWITH, MAKING AN APPROPRIATION.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Colorado:

SECTION 1. In Colorado Revised Statutes, **add 26-2-308** as follows:

26-2-308. Colorado employment first - supplemental nutrition assistance program - federal match - legislative declaration - definition - repeal.
(1) (a) THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY FINDS THAT:

(I) THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC THAT SPREAD THROUGH COLORADO BEGINNING IN FEBRUARY 2020 HAS LED TO EXTENSIVE JOB LOSS THROUGHOUT THE STATE;

(II) PERSISTENT UNEMPLOYMENT AND LOSS OF INCOME AS A RESULT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC HAS LED MANY COLORADANS TO RELY ON CRITICAL PUBLIC ASSISTANCE BENEFITS, SUCH AS THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM, WHICH HELPS STRUGGLING FAMILIES PAY FOR FOOD;

(III) IN ADDITION TO PROVIDING ESSENTIAL EMERGENCY FOOD ASSISTANCE FOR COLORADANS AND THEIR FAMILIES, THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM ALSO INCLUDES RESOURCES DEDICATED TO EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION, AND TRAINING SERVICES, KNOWN AS THE COLORADO EMPLOYMENT FIRST PROGRAM;
AND

Capital letters or bold & italic numbers indicate new material added to existing law; dashes through words or numbers indicate deletions from existing law and such material is not part of the act.

(IV) THE COLORADO EMPLOYMENT FIRST PROGRAM PROMOTES LONG-TERM SELF-SUFFICIENCY AND INDEPENDENCE BY PREPARING SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS FOR MEANINGFUL EMPLOYMENT THROUGH WORK-RELATED EDUCATION AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES.

(b) THEREFORE, THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY DECLARES THAT INVESTING STATE DOLLARS INTO THE COLORADO EMPLOYMENT FIRST PROGRAM WILL ENHANCE THE PROGRAM'S ABILITY TO HELP SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS ACHIEVE ECONOMIC SELF-SUFFICIENCY BY DRAWING DOWN A FIFTY PERCENT FEDERAL MATCH FOR THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM, WHICH IS A FLEXIBLE SOURCE OF SUPPORT FOR WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SERVICES.

(2) AS USED IN THIS SECTION, UNLESS THE CONTEXT OTHERWISE REQUIRES, "COLORADO EMPLOYMENT FIRST" MEANS THE EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING PROGRAM WITHIN THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

(3)(a) THE STATE DEPARTMENT SHALL DIRECT COUNTY DEPARTMENTS AND ANY THIRD-PARTY PARTNERS TO PRIORITIZE THE MONEY APPROPRIATED PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION (4) OF THIS SECTION AND THE FEDERAL MATCH TO FUND EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT AND JOB RETENTION SERVICES, AS THOSE SERVICES ARE DESCRIBED IN SECTION 8-83-404 (5)(b), AND TO SUPPORT WORK-BASED LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR COLORADO EMPLOYMENT FIRST PARTICIPANTS.

(b) ANY REMAINING MONEY MAY BE USED TO INITIATE AND ENHANCE CURRENT AND ADDITIONAL STATE-OR COUNTY-INITIATED THIRD-PARTY PARTNERSHIPS, WHICH MUST INCLUDE ALLOWING THIRD-PARTY PARTNERS TO RECEIVE AND USE STATE MONEY AND ANY MONEY RECEIVED THROUGH THE FEDERAL MATCH IN ORDER TO PROVIDE COLORADO EMPLOYMENT FIRST SERVICES TO PARTICIPANTS.

(c) THE STATE DEPARTMENT, COUNTY DEPARTMENTS, OR ANY THIRD-PARTY CONTRACTOR THAT RECEIVES STATE OR FEDERAL MONEY PURSUANT TO THIS SECTION MAY USE UP TO TEN PERCENT OF THE MONEY FOR ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS INCURRED IMPLEMENTING THIS SECTION.

(4) FOR THE 2020-21 STATE FISCAL YEAR, THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY SHALL APPROPRIATE THREE MILLION DOLLARS FROM THE GENERAL FUND TO THE STATE DEPARTMENT FOR THE PURPOSES DESCRIBED IN SUBSECTION (3) OF THIS SECTION. IF ANY UNEXPENDED OR UNENCUMBERED MONEY APPROPRIATED FOR THE FISCAL YEAR REMAINS AT THE END OF THE FISCAL YEAR, THE STATE DEPARTMENT MAY EXPEND THE MONEY FOR THE SAME PURPOSES IN THE NEXT FISCAL YEAR WITHOUT FURTHER APPROPRIATION.

(5) THIS SECTION IS REPEALED, EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2023.

SECTION 2. Appropriation. (1) For the 2021-22 state fiscal year, \$3,000,000 is appropriated to the department of human services for use by the office of self sufficiency. This appropriation is from the general fund. To implement this act, the office may use this appropriation for food stamp job search units program costs. Any money appropriated in this section not expended prior to July 1, 2021, is

further appropriated to the office for the 2021-22 state fiscal year for the same purpose.

(2) For the 2021-22 state fiscal year, the general assembly anticipates that the department of human services will receive \$3,000,000 in federal funds for the office of self sufficiency to implement this act. The appropriation in subsection (1) of this section is based on the assumption that the department will receive this amount of federal funds, which is subject to the "(I)" notation as defined in the annual general appropriation act for the same fiscal year.

SECTION 3. Safety clause. The general assembly hereby finds, determines, and declares that this act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety.

Approved: June 17, 2021