A BILL FOR AN ACT

CONCERNING MODIFICATIONS TO THE COLORADO WORKS PROGRAM.

Bill Summary

(Note: This summary applies to this bill as introduced and does not reflect any amendments that may be subsequently adopted. If this bill passes third reading in the house of introduction, a bill summary that applies to the reengrossed version of this bill will be available at http://leg.colorado.gov.)

The bill allows the state board of human services (state board) to utilize eligibility processes from other public assistance or entitlement programs when promulgating rules for redetermining and verifying eligibility for the Colorado works program (works program).

When determining income requirements for the works program, the bill requires the department of human services (state department) to use an income conversion ratio for converting weekly and biweekly income to a monthly amount using the lowest ratio or methodology that
results in the lowest monthly income amount allowable under federal law.

Current law prohibits a person convicted of a drug-related felony offense from being eligible for assistance under the works program unless the person is determined by a county department of human or social services to have taken action toward rehabilitation. The bill removes the ban on eligibility.

The bill requires the state board to promulgate rules establishing statewide standards and procedures that require counties to offer an extension:

- Beyond the 60-month lifetime maximum for all households that demonstrate good cause, which includes an applicant or participant who is a child-only case, the head of a single parent household and has a child under one year of age, experiencing hardship, or addressing family or medical needs; and

- From work requirements to all households that demonstrate good cause, which includes for an applicant or participant who is the head of a single-parent household and has a child under one year of age, experiencing hardship, or addressing family or medical needs.

The bill requires the state department to annually review and promulgate rules as necessary to update the standard of need to ensure the standard of need is equitable, promotes economic mobility and self-sufficiency, and reflects the current economic status of the state.

The bill requires the state department to disregard any earned income for at least the first 6 months an applicant or participant is employed while enrolled in the works program. The bill requires that the state department determine the amount of earned income that must be disregarded after the first 6 months and ensure a gradual step down of the amount of earned income disregarded and that the appropriate work supports are made available to the applicant or participant.

Current law requires the state department to ensure the amount of a basic cash assistance grant that an applicant or participant receives is equal to or exceeds 102% of the need standard for a participant in a similarly sized household on January 1, 2008. By the 2027-28 state fiscal year, and each state fiscal year thereafter, the bill requires the amount of the basic cash assistance grant to equal or exceed 50% of the federal poverty guidelines established by the federal department of health and human services for a similarly sized household for that fiscal year.

No later than January 1, 2023, the bill requires the state department to begin phasing in the increase in basic cash assistance that is equal to or exceeds 50% of the federal poverty guidelines.

The bill requires a county department to attempt to contact each participant using each method of communication provided by the participant in order to conduct exit and follow-up interviews upon case
closure. The bill expands the purpose of the exit and follow-up interviews to include evaluating the participant's experience with the works program, how well the program met the participant's needs and assisted the participant in meeting the participant's goals, and informing the state department of any changes to rules that are needed to improve the participant's experience.

The bill requires the state department to monitor impacts to counties' workload in the works program and consult with counties regarding additional need for money to administer the works program.

Beginning January 2023, and each January thereafter, the state department is required to submit a report to the general assembly on the effectiveness of the works program.

Current law requires the state board to promulgate rules that require a percentage reduction in the basic cash assistance grant upon the imposition of a sanction affecting the grant, with the percentage to be specified in the rules but not to be less than 25%. The bill requires the percentage not to exceed one dollar.

No later than September 30, 2022, the bill requires the state department to develop an outreach and engagement plan to promote access to the works program for eligible persons.

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

**SECTION 1.** **Legislative declaration.** (1) The general assembly finds and declares that:

(a) "Temporary Assistance for Needy Families" (TANF), known as the "Colorado Works Program" (works program), provides financial assistance and work supports to families living far below the federal poverty level. The works program should promote family safety, stability, and self-sufficiency by assisting with job preparation and supporting career goals and employment. As of fiscal year 2021-22, a parent with two children must make less than $421 per month in income to qualify for a basic cash assistance grant under the works program. The COVID-19 pandemic brought unprecedented hardships and changes to both families and the works program. Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, families enrolled in the works program were facing the greatest barriers to
financial security and well-being.

(b) Families enrolled in the works program are eligible to receive cash assistance to help meet the family's ongoing basic needs, such as diapers, food, bus passes, and school supplies. Cash assistance payments were not adequate at the start of the works program in 1996 and since payments have not adjusted for inflation, cash assistance has eroded even further and failed to keep up with the cost of living in Colorado. In 1996, the amount of Colorado's cash assistance was 32.9% of the federal poverty level, but by 2021 it had fallen to 27.8% with the maximum amount of cash assistance for a parent with two children at $508 per month.

(c) Families can often face a "cliff effect" when the family receives more income through employment or a raise and then abruptly has its public assistance reduced or discontinued. Too often families are left without supports right when they begin to get their feet underneath them. Reducing the "cliff effect" will incentivize work, help parents stay employed, and create a smoother off-ramp toward employment, self-sufficiency, and economic security.

(d) Families can be better supported in the works program by reducing punitive sanctions and overly burdensome work requirements. While sanctions and work requirements are required by the federal government, states have some discretion on how to administer those requirements. Colorado has made some strides in easing these requirements and can do more to be responsive to families' circumstances and needs. Sanctions, or financial penalties that are issued when a participant does not meet the work requirements of the works program, are disproportionately applied to certain families, including families of
color, do not achieve the intended outcome of connecting families to sustainable employment, and increase the administrative burden on case managers and counties. Moreover, families who receive sanctions face the most significant barriers to employment and economic security, such as a child being hospitalized, domestic violence, lack of a vehicle, or less work experience.

(e) Colorado receives federal TANF funds each year and the state is permitted to retain a certain amount of unexpended funds for future use in the event of an economic downturn or caseload growth. Colorado has two sets of TANF reserves: A state TANF long-term reserve and a TANF reserve in each county. Although there was severe economic downturn, including historic unemployment, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the amount of money in the reserves actually increased in Colorado. The beginning fiscal year 2021-22 balance of all county TANF reserves was $61.2 million and the balance in the state TANF long-term reserve, which has a mandatory floor of $33 million, was $76.2 million. In total, there was more than $137 million in TANF reserves in Colorado at the end of the 2020-21 fiscal year.

(2) Therefore, the general assembly declares that Colorado must prioritize strategies and investments to remove barriers to employment and economic security for families and children experiencing extreme poverty in the state. Colorado should ensure a basic cash assistance amount sufficient enough to lift families out of extreme poverty and ensure that it keeps with the rising cost of living; make improvements in the way the works program serves families, including reducing the "cliff effect"; elevate family voices in the works program; and improve outreach and communication about the works program.
SECTION 2. In Colorado Revised Statutes, 26-2-705, amend (2)(a) and (2)(e) as follows:

26-2-705. Works program - purposes. (2) The purposes of the works program are to:

(a) Assist participants to terminate their dependence on government benefits TOWARD SELF-SUFFICIENCY, ECONOMIC MOBILITY, AND FAMILY SAFETY AND STABILITY by promoting job preparation, work, and marriage;

(e) Develop strategies and policies that focus on SUPPORTING PARTICIPANTS IN THE PARTICIPANTS' EMPLOYMENT AND CAREER GOALS, REMOVING BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT FOR PARTICIPANTS, AND ensuring that participants are in work activities as soon as possible so that the state is able to meet or exceed work participation rates specified in the federal law; and

SECTION 3. In Colorado Revised Statutes, 26-2-706, amend (3) and (4); and add (2)(c) as follows:

26-2-706. Target populations. (2) (c) IN DETERMINING THE INCOME REQUIREMENTS PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION (2)(a) OF THIS SECTION, THE STATE DEPARTMENT SHALL USE AN INCOME CONVERSION RATIO FOR CONVERTING WEEKLY AND BIWEEKLY INCOME TO A MONTHLY AMOUNT USING THE LOWEST RATIO OR METHODOLOGY THAT RESULTS IN THE LOWEST MONTHLY INCOME AMOUNT ALLOWABLE UNDER FEDERAL LAW.

(3) A person convicted of a drug-related felony offense under the laws of this state, any other state, or the federal government on or after June 3, 1997, shall not be eligible for assistance under the works program unless such person is determined by the county department to
have taken action toward rehabilitation such as, but not limited to, participation in a drug treatment program:

(4) The state board shall promulgate rules to simplify the requirements relating to determination and verification of eligibility criteria. Eligibility processes from other public assistance or entitlement programs may be used when reDetermining and verifying eligibility. When possible, the state board is strongly encouraged to align reDetermination and verification timelines with other public assistance or entitlement programs. Nothing in this subsection (4) shall authorize the state board to amend or delete eligibility criteria for participation in the works program that the board is not otherwise authorized to amend or delete.

SECTION 4. In Colorado Revised Statutes, 26-2-706.5, add (4) as follows:

26-2-706.5. Restrictions on length of participation - rules.

(4) The state board shall promulgate rules:

(a) Establishing statewide standards and procedures that require counties to offer extensions beyond the sixty-month lifetime maximum for all households that demonstrate good cause, which includes an applicant or participant who is:

(I) A child-only case;

(II) The head of a single parent household unit and has a child under one year of age;

(III) Experiencing hardship, as defined in rules promulgated by the state board; or

(IV) Addressing family or medical needs, including the arrival of a new child, military family needs, or a personal or
FAMILY MEMBER'S SERIOUS HEALTH CONDITION, INCLUDING THE EFFECTS
OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE OR SEXUAL ASSAULT; AND

(b) TO ADDRESS HOW THE STATE WILL MONITOR EXTENSIONS IN
RELATION TO REQUIREMENTS UNDER THE FEDERAL LAW.

SECTION 5. In Colorado Revised Statutes, 26-2-708, add (5.3)
as follows:

26-2-708. Assistance - assessment - individual responsibility
contract - waivers for domestic violence - rules. (5.3) (a) The state
board shall promulgate rules:

(I) Establishing statewide standards and procedures that
require counties to offer an exemption from work requirements
to all households that demonstrate good cause, which includes
an applicant or participant who is:

(A) the head of a single-parent household unit and has a
child under one year of age;

(B) experiencing hardship, as defined in rules promulgated
by the state board; or

(C) addressing family or medical needs, including the
arrival of a new child, military family needs, or a personal or
family member's serious health condition, including the effects
of domestic violence or sexual assault; and

(II) ensuring equal access to TANF services for those
exempted who wish to participate on a voluntary basis.

(b) When promulgating rules pursuant to this subsection
(5.3), the state board shall consider compliance with the federal
law in relation to the calculation of the state's work
participation rates specified in the federal law.
SECTION 6. In Colorado Revised Statutes, 26-2-709, amend
(1)(a) introductory portion, (1)(a)(III), (1)(b), and (1.3) as follows:


(1) Standard of need - basic cash assistance grant. (a) The state
department shall promulgate rules determining the standard of need for
eligibility for a basic cash assistance grant, whether an applicant or
participant meets the standard of need, and the amount of the basic cash
assistance grant. THE STATE DEPARTMENT SHALL ANNUALLY REVIEW AND
PROMULGATE RULES AS NECESSARY TO UPDATE THE STANDARD OF NEED
to ensure the standard of need is equitable, promotes economic
mobility and self-sufficiency, and reflects the current economic
situations in the state. In addition to any other rules necessary for the
implementation of this part 7, the state department's rules shall:

(III) Establish the calculation for determining the amount of an
eligible applicant's or participant's basic cash assistance grant, which
calculation MUST include an earned income disregard which shall be
THAT IS applied to the gross countable earned income of an applicant or
participant who is employed AND A GRADUAL STEP DOWN OF THE AMOUNT
OF INCOME DISREGARDED FOLLOWING THE INITIAL EARNED INCOME
DISREGARD. The INITIAL earned income disregard shall AND GRADUAL
STEP DOWN MUST promote work and self-sufficiency, be responsive to
family circumstances and need, and shall benefit the applicant or
participant by reducing the unintended economic consequences of
becoming employed. ANY EARNED INCOME MUST BE DISREGARDED FOR
AT LEAST THE FIRST SIX MONTHS AN APPLICANT OR PARTICIPANT IS
EMPLOYED WHILE ENROLLED IN THE WORKS PROGRAM. THE STATE
DEPARTMENT SHALL DETERMINE THE AMOUNT OF EARNED INCOME THAT
MUST BE DISREGARDED AFTER THE FIRST SIX MONTHS AND SHALL ENSURE A GRADUAL STEP DOWN OF THE AMOUNT OF EARNED INCOME DISREGARDED AND THAT THE APPROPRIATE WORK SUPPORTS ARE MADE AVAILABLE TO THE APPLICANT OR PARTICIPANT. The rules promulgated by the state department pursuant to this subparagraph (III) shall (1)(a)(III) MUST not establish an earned income disregard that results in an applicant or participant having fewer financial resources available to him or her THE APPLICANT OR PARTICIPANT than a similarly situated applicant or participant would have had under the earned income disregard pursuant to section 26-2-709 as it existed on July 1, 2009; and

(b) (I) In establishing the calculation for determining the amount of an eligible applicant's or participant's basic cash assistance grant, the state department shall ensure that the amount of the basic cash assistance grant that a participant or applicant receives BY THE 2027-28 STATE FISCAL YEAR, AND EACH STATE FISCAL YEAR THEREAFTER, is equal to or exceeds one hundred two percent of the need standard for a participant in a similarly sized household on January 1, 2008. The state department is encouraged to establish a calculation for determining the amount of a basic cash assistance grant that results in a basic cash assistance grant that is equal to or exceeds one hundred twelve percent of the need standard for a participant in FIFTY PERCENT OF THE FEDERAL POVERTY GUIDELINES ESTABLISHED BY THE FEDERAL DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES FOR a similarly sized household on January 1, 2008 FOR THAT FISCAL YEAR. NO LATER THAN JANUARY 1, 2023, THE STATE DEPARTMENT SHALL BEGIN PHASING IN THE INCREASE TO THE BASIC CASH ASSISTANCE GRANT AS FOLLOWS:

(A) NO LATER THAN JULY 1, 2023, THE AMOUNT OF THE BASIC
CASH ASSISTANCE GRANT THAT AN APPLICANT RECEIVES MUST BE EQUAL TO OR EXCEED THIRTY-TWO PERCENT OF THE FEDERAL POVERTY GUIDELINES ESTABLISHED BY THE FEDERAL DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES FOR A SIMILARLY SIZED HOUSEHOLD FOR THAT FISCAL YEAR.

(B) No later than July 1, 2024, the amount of the basic cash assistance grant that an applicant or participant receives must be equal to or exceed thirty-seven percent of the federal poverty guidelines established by the federal department of health and human services for a similarly sized household for that fiscal year.

(C) No later than July 1, 2025, the amount of the basic cash assistance grant that an applicant or participant receives must be equal to or exceed forty-one percent of the federal poverty guidelines established by the federal department of health and human services for a similarly sized household for that fiscal year.

(D) No later than July 1, 2026, the amount of the basic cash assistance grant that an applicant or participant receives must be equal to or exceed forty-six percent of the federal poverty guidelines established by the federal department of health and human services for a similarly sized household for that fiscal year.

(E) No later than July 1, 2027, the amount of the basic cash assistance grant that an applicant or participant receives must be equal to or exceed fifty percent of the federal poverty guidelines established by the federal department of health and human services for a similarly sized household for that fiscal year.
HUMAN SERVICES FOR A SIMILARLY SIZED HOUSEHOLD FOR THAT FISCAL YEAR.

(II) ANY MONEY THE STATE RECEIVES FROM THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT, INCLUDING FUNDS AVAILABLE SPECIFICALLY FOR OR IN TANF RESERVES, MUST BE USED FIRST FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS SUBSECTION (1)(b).


(1.3) Redetermination of eligibility for persons receiving cash assistance. The STATE BOARD SHALL PROMULGATE RULES THAT REQUIRE county department shall DEPARTMENTS TO PERFORM AN ANNUAL REDETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY FOR ALL ASSISTANCE UNITS RECEIVING CASH ASSISTANCE. ELIGIBILITY PROCESSES FROM OTHER PUBLIC ASSISTANCE OR ENTITLEMENT PROGRAMS MAY BE USED WHEN REDETERMINING ELIGIBILITY. WHEN POSSIBLE, THE STATE BOARD IS STRONGLY ENCOURAGED TO ALIGN REDETERMINATION TIMELINES WITH OTHER PUBLIC ASSISTANCE OR ENTITLEMENT PROGRAMS.

SECTION 7. In Colorado Revised Statutes, amend 26-2-709.5 as follows:
26-2-709.5. Exit interviews and follow-up interviews of participants. (1) In order to follow the legislative intent declared in section 26-2-702 (1)(a), a county department is strongly encouraged to SHALL ATTEMPT TO CONTACT EACH PARTICIPANT USING EACH METHOD OF COMMUNICATION PROVIDED BY THE PARTICIPANT IN ORDER TO conduct exit and follow-up interviews upon case closure, either in person or by telephone, with all participants of the Colorado works program, including participants who are or have been receiving short-term assistance payments pursuant to section 26-2-706.6. The interviews shall be CONDUCTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH STATE DEPARTMENT GUIDANCE for the purpose of:

(a) EVALUATING THE PARTICIPANT'S EXPERIENCE WITH THE WORKS PROGRAM;

(b) EVALUATING HOW WELL THE WORKS PROGRAM MET THE PARTICIPANT'S NEEDS AND ASSISTED THE PARTICIPANT IN MEETING THE PARTICIPANT'S GOALS;

(c) INFORMING THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF ANY CHANGES TO RULES THAT ARE NEEDED TO IMPROVE THE PARTICIPANT'S EXPERIENCE; AND

(d) Providing information to the participant and offering assistance with applications for or continuance of assistance under medicaid, food stamps, the Colorado child care assistance program, the earned income tax credit, or other programs such as welfare-to-work or other county benefits or services.

(2) Repealed. The state department shall monitor impacts to counties' workload in the works program and consult with counties regarding additional need for money to administer the
WORKS PROGRAM. IF THE STATE DEPARTMENT, IN CONSULTATION WITH
COUNTIES, IDENTIFIES ADDITIONAL NEED FOR FUNDING TO ADMINISTER
THE WORKS PROGRAM, THE STATE DEPARTMENT IS STRONGLY
ENCOURAGED TO REQUEST STATE GENERAL FUND MONEY OR, IF THE
BALANCE OF THE STATE TANF RESERVE IS GREATER THAN THE
MANDATORY FLOOR, APPROPRIATE ADDITIONAL STATE TANF MONEY TO
FUND COUNTIES’ ADMINISTRATION OF THE WORKS PROGRAM.

(3) BEGINNING JANUARY 2023, AND EACH JANUARY THEREAFTER,
THE STATE DEPARTMENT SHALL SUBMIT A REPORT TO THE HOUSE OF
REPRESENTATIVES PUBLIC AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND HUMAN
SERVICES COMMITTEE AND THE SENATE HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
COMMITTEE, OR THEIR SUCCESSOR COMMITTEES, AS PART OF ITS "State
Measurement for Accountable, Responsive, and Transparent
(SMART) Government Act" PRESENTATION REQUIRED BY SECTION
2-7-203, ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE WORKS PROGRAM. THE STATE
DEPARTMENT SHALL REQUEST A COUNTY DEPARTMENT TO PROVIDE ANY
INFORMATION AND DATA THAT MAY BE NECESSARY TO DEVELOP THE
REPORT, INCLUDING INFORMATION AND DATA FROM EXIT INTERVIEWS
CONDUCTED BY THE COUNTY DEPARTMENTS PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION (1)
OF THIS SECTION. ANY DATA USED MUST PROTECT PERSONAL IDENTIFYING
INFORMATION OF THE PARTICIPANTS AND THE PARTICIPANTS’ FAMILY
MEMBERS. AT A MINIMUM, THE REPORT MUST INCLUDE:

(a) THE TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS ENROLLED IN THE
WORKS PROGRAM IN THE PREVIOUS FISCAL YEAR, DISAGGREGATED BY
CASE TYPE, RACE, AND ETHNICITY;

(b) THE TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS WHO EXITED AND
RE-ENROLLED IN THE WORKS PROGRAM ONE OR MORE TIMES IN THE
PREVIOUS FISCAL YEAR, DISAGGREGATED BY CASE TYPE, RACE, AND
ETHNICITY;

(c) The total number of instances a participant exited and
re-enrolled in the Works Program one or more times in the
previous fiscal year, disaggregated by case type, race, and
ethnicity;

(d) The total number of months each participant remained
enrolled in the Works Program in the previous fiscal year,
disaggregated by case type, race, and ethnicity; and

(e) Data gathered through surveys and exit interviews
with participants in the Works Program regarding participants'
experience with the program, beliefs about the goals of the
program, perceptions of how participation in the program
contributed to the family goals, reasons for leaving the
program, and current employment status and wage rate.

SECTION 8. In Colorado Revised Statutes, 26-2-711, amend
(1)(a) introductory portion, (1)(a)(II), and (1)(a)(III) as follows:

26-2-711. Works program - sanctions against participants -
rules. (1)(a) The state board shall promulgate rules for the imposition of
sanctions affecting the basic cash assistance grant as described in section
26-2-709 (1). The rules shall must require:

(II) A percentage reduction in the basic cash assistance grant
upon the first imposition of a sanction affecting such a basic cash
assistance grant, with the percentage amount to be specified in the rules
but not less than twenty-five percent to exceed one dollar;

(III) Specific reductions in the basic cash assistance grant for
second and subsequent sanctions affecting the basic cash assistance
grant;

SECTION 9. In Colorado Revised Statutes, add 26-2-725 as follows:

26-2-725. Outreach and engagement plan - family voice participation. (1) No later than September 30, 2022, the State Department shall develop an outreach and engagement plan to promote access to the Colorado works program for eligible persons.

(2) The State Department shall partner with counties and nonprofit organizations when developing and implementing the outreach and engagement plan and shall incorporate feedback from current and former participants to ensure participants are influential stakeholders in the process.

(3) At a minimum, the outreach and engagement plan must include specific strategies for:

(a) Outreach to monolingual, non-English speaking communities and families, including a linguistically diverse website and translation of other materials that include information about the works program in the seven most common languages spoken in each county of the state;

(b) Outreach through television and social media;

(c) Developing culturally appropriate messaging;

(d) Sharing information about the services and supports available and participants' rights and responsibilities under the works program;

(e) How to appeal if redetermination is denied;

(f) Confidentiality protections for applicants and
(g) Outreach in a variety of settings, including but not limited to schools, child care centers, food banks, libraries, federally qualified health centers, home visiting programs, mobile home parks, Head Start and Early Head Start centers, and mobile sites.

(4) The state department shall:

(a) Require that county staff working with applicants and participants receive comprehensive training regarding the Works program. The training must include trauma-informed approaches to interacting with participants, consistency in communicating information about child care access and assistance, the alignment of a participant's work requirements with child care access and family medical needs, the full scope of options for the participant to meet work and education requirements in alignment with the participant's goals, and the availability of support services for families.

(b) Strongly encourage counties to assign each participant a case worker, which may include a case worker who works with individuals in connection with other public assistance or entitlement programs;

(c) Develop toolkits, manuals, and other materials for county staff, applicants, and participants that include information about child care access and assistance, the alignment of a participant's work requirements with child care access, the full scope of options for the participant to meet work and education requirements in alignment with the
PARTICIPANT'S GOALS, AND THE AVAILABILITY OF SUPPORT SERVICES FOR FAMILIES;

(d) PARTNER WITH COUNTIES, NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS, AND PARTICIPANTS TO DEVELOP CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE MESSAGING AND ENSURE THAT APPLICANTS AND PARTICIPANTS HAVE ACCESS TO SUFFICIENT SUPPORTS AND COMMUNICATION IN THE SEVEN MOST COMMON LANGUAGES SPOKEN IN EACH COUNTY OF THE STATE;

(e) ENSURE ADEQUATE AND MEANINGFUL REPRESENTATION BY, FEEDBACK FROM, OR ENGAGEMENT WITH CURRENT AND FORMER PARTICIPANTS WHEN MAKING DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING THE WORKS PROGRAM, INCLUDING DURING ANY RULE-MAKING OR REGULATORY PROCESS AND ANY ALLOCATION OR POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEES. TO THE EXTENT POSSIBLE, THE STATE DEPARTMENT SHALL ENSURE THAT PARTICIPANTS INVOLVED PURSUANT TO THIS SUBSECTION (4)(e) ARE DIVERSE WITH REGARD TO RACE, ETHNICITY, AGE, ABILITY, SEXUAL ORIENTATION, GENDER IDENTITY, AND GEOGRAPHY AND THAT PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK HAS A GENUINE OPPORTUNITY TO INFLUENCE SUBSTANTIAL CHANGES TO THE WORKS PROGRAM. THE STATE DEPARTMENT MAY UTILIZE ANY ESTABLISHED COUNCILS AT THE STATE AND LOCAL LEVEL THAT HAVE CURRENT AND FORMER PARTICIPANTS REPRESENTED OR APPOINTED TO COMPLY WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF THIS SUBSECTION (4)(e). TO THE EXTENT POSSIBLE, THE STATE DEPARTMENT SHALL CONSIDER REIMBURSING PARTICIPANTS INVOLVED PURSUANT TO THIS SUBSECTION (4)(e) FOR TRAVEL EXPENSES AND ATTENDANT AND DEPENDENT CARE.

SECTION 10. 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.