



Session Wrap Up 2024

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INTRODUCTION

In total, 1,162 bills received "died in" actions and 325 bills were passed. This summary is an overview of legislation passed by the Florida Legislature during the 2024 Regular Session that are of interest to or impact the clients and operations of the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF).

For additional information on the 2024 Regular Session, bill actions, legislative staff analyses, and more, please visit the websites below:

Florida House of Representatives: www.myfloridahouse.gov

Florida Senate: www.flsenate.gov

Online Sunshine: www.leg.state.fl.us

Florida Department of State, Laws of Florida: laws.flrules.org/node

Florida Governor Ron DeSantis: www.flgov.com

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DEPARTMENT BILLS

HB 1083: Permanency for Children

Bill Sponsors: Representative Trabulsy and Senator Collins

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Chapter No. 2024-177, Laws of Florida

Overview:

Streamlining Permanency:

- Provides a process for the permanent commitment of a child to DCF for the purpose of adoption when both parents are deceased.
- Creates an emergency modification of placement that will enable DCF and the judiciary to take immediate action to protect children at risk.
- Enables the court, at its discretion, to waive notice for a termination proceeding when the parent is present regardless of whether the parent was served with the petition, thus eliminating continuances and delays.
- Accelerates the time to permanency by reducing the number of months required to close a case in permanent guardianship from 6 to 3 months if the caregiver was previously named as a successor guardian.
- Streamlines the adoption home study process for families who began caring for the child before termination of parental rights.
- Shifts judicial review of DCF's decision on an adoption application from a separate administrative process (Ch. 120 hearing) to the dependency court.

Private Adoptions:

- Requires additional judicial oversight to exceed fees related to living and medical expenses.
- Requires child placing entities to submit to DCF the number of adoptions they complete, as well as the cost associated with the adoption and other basic demographic information.
- Updates statute to specify the advertising of adoption services for out of state entities extends across all written mediums, including the internet.

Adoption Exchange Photos: Strengthens protections for foster children by modifying the Adoption Exchange requirement to publicly post and display a photograph of each child eligible for adoption.

Streamlining Adoptions for Military Families: Requires DCF to adopt rules to streamline the process for military families who have begun the process to adopt in one state and subsequently restationed to Florida.

Independent Living Expansion: Expands the eligibility criteria for Post-Secondary Education and Support (PESS) and Extended Guardianship/Adoption Assistance Programs, to make it easier for young adults aged 18 to 23 who have been in the foster care system to receive benefits as they transition to independence.

Criminal History Checks for Child Placements: Defines the scope of individuals subject to a fingerprint-based background records check for child placements, which will bring the state into compliance with

Federal regulations and maintain DCF's expedited access to the Federal Bureau of Intelligence's criminal history records database.

Adoption Benefits: Increases the adoption benefits for children adopted from the dependency system and expands eligibility for these benefits to health care practitioners with an active Department of Health (DOH) license and tax collector employees.

HB 7089: Health Care Expenses

Bill Sponsor: Representatives Michael Grant and Fiona McFarland, Senator Ileana Garcia

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Chapter No. 2024-183, Laws of Florida

Overview

Procurement Processes:

- Allows for the extension of a Community Based Care (CBC) contract by 1 to 5 years only if the CBC has met performance expectations.
- Defines a related party to include an organization that a director or officer is related to or has an indirect financial/material interest. Also includes a subsidiary, parent entity, associate firm, or joint venture. Allows an exemption for a CBC that holds multiple contracts.
- Prohibits a related party from carrying out administrative and management functions of the CBC, prohibits a CBC or related party from providing more than 35% of services directly unless there is a proven need.
 - The DCF-approved 35% waiver exemption is limited up to 2 years.
 - If a CBC is approved for an exemption to directly provide more than 40% of all child welfare services provided, the CBC will undergo an audit by the Auditor General.
- Prohibits a CBC from contracting with a related party for planning and oversight duties or executive staffing.
- Any related party contract must be disclosed and at fair market value.
- Requires all related party contracts in excess of \$35,000 to be competitively procured.
- Clarifies that all subcontracts must be procured through a competitive process consistent with the federal simplified acquisition threshold and that for the contracting of management services, executive compensation laws apply.

Executive Compensation:

- Clarifies the limits on executive compensation applies regardless of the number of contracts that a CBC has with DCF.

Fiduciary Responsibility:

- Clarifies that the CBC's boards of directors are tasked with ensuring accountability and transparency of operations in addition to providing fiduciary oversight to prevent conflicts of interest, promote accountability and protect state and federal funds from misuse.
- Board members must be trained annually and must act in accordance with section 617.0830, Florida Statutes, Minimum training criteria must be specified in contract by DCF.
- CBCs must post a fidelity bond to cover costs associated with reprocurement and conflict of interest penalties.

- Expands definition of Conflict of Interest to include a director of the CBC and requires disclosure of actual or potential conflicts of interest to DCF.
- Provides for a \$20,000 contractual penalty for a failure to disclose a conflict of interest which results in a contract. Additionally, the board member who did not disclose a known conflict of interest must be removed.
- Beginning on July 1, 2024, each CBC contract must specify terms related to real property including DCF approval for any sale, transfer or disposition of real property purchased through a CBC contract.

Reporting and Corrective Action Plans:

- Requires that CBCs must comply with all financial audits and requests for records.
- Expands the number of required data points which must be maintained on CBC websites regarding performance by including the number of unlicensed placements, recruiting and licensing efforts, and other information.
- Revises criteria for DCF to petition for CBC receivership to allow for petition when a CBC is unlikely to meet financial obligations.
- Requires DCF establish monetary sanctions or disincentives within CBC contracts and that financial penalties revert back to the state as general revenue. By January 1, 2025, all executed CBC contracts will include a list of financial penalties for compliance failures.
- By September 30, 2024, and February 1, 2025, DCF shall report on rules and policies adopted and other implementation actions taken.

Funding Model:

- Repeals s. 409.991, F.S., (the Equity Allocation Model) and creates s. 409.9913, F.S., for the new funding methodology.
- Defines “Core services funding” and “Operational and fixed costs”.
- Requires DCF to collaborate with the CBCs and service providers to create an actuarially sound, reimbursement-based funding methodology that considers specific variable costs and is scaled regionally for cost-of-living factors.
- FY 2025-2026 will be the first year of utilization of the new funding model for CBC allocations.
- New DCF Reports:
 - July – October of 2024 (Monthly): Providing updates on activities and progress in developing the funding methodology.
 - December 1, 2024 (One-Time): Describing a proposed funding methodology and formula that will provide for the annual budget of each lead agency.
 - October 31, 2025, and annually thereafter: Making recommendations for adjustments to the funding methodology for the next fiscal year.

Working Group:

- Creates the Future of Child Protection Contracting and Funding Workgroup within DCF:
 - Chaired by the Secretary with members including:
 - Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) Secretary, Department of Management Services (DMS) Secretary, CBC Executive, service providers, Managing Entity (ME) executives and others in the child welfare space.
 - Terminates immediately upon submission of the work group’s report.
 - October 15, 2025 (One-Time) – Reporting on the work group’s findings and recommendations for the future of the child welfare system’s funding and contracting.

CHILD & FAMILY WELL-BEING (OCFW)

SB 564: Young Adult Aftercare Services

Bill Sponsor: Senator Ileana Garcia

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Ch. 2024-112, Laws of Florida

Overview

Aftercare services are provided to a young adult based on a needs assessment and is intended to be temporary. The services are often used as a bridge to Extended Foster Care (EFC) and Post-Secondary Education Support Services (PESS) and may include mentoring, tutoring, mental health, substance abuse, counseling, and financial assistance. Aftercare has historically been used for young adults who do not meet eligibility criteria for more long-term independent living programs.

The bill expands eligibility for Aftercare services available to young adults. The bill expands the eligible Aftercare population by amending s. 409.1451(3), F.S., to allow for any young adult between the ages of 18 and 22 who was in out-of-home care for at least six months after their 14th birthday, and was not reunified with their parent or guardian, to be eligible for the program.

HB 591: Hot Car Death Prevention

Bill Sponsor: Representative Chuck Brannan III

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Ch. 2024-066, Laws of Florida

Overview

This bill, which is to be known as “Ariya’s Act”, designates the month of April as “Hot Car Death Prevention Month”, and encourages DCF, the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles (DHSMV), DOH, and others to sponsor events that promote public awareness and education related to the dangers of leaving children unattended in motor vehicles.

COMMUNITY SERVICES (OCS)

HB 1365: Unauthorized Public Camping and Public Sleeping

Bill Sponsor: Representative Sam Garrison

Effective Date: October 1, 2024

Ch. 2024-011, Laws of Florida

Overview

The bill prohibits counties and municipalities from authorizing or otherwise allowing regular public camping or sleeping on public property. By a majority vote of the county’s governing body, a county may designate property owned by a county or municipality to be used for a continuous period of no

longer than 1 year for the purposes of public camping or public sleeping. A county designation is not effective until DCF grants a certification.

To gain certification, a county must submit a request to the Secretary of DCF, including documentation that the following criteria are met:

1. There are not sufficient open beds in homeless shelters in the county.
2. The designated property is not contiguous to property designated for residential use in the local government comprehensive plan.
3. The designated property will not adversely affect the property value or safety of other existing residential or commercial property and will not negatively impact the safety of children.
4. The county has developed a plan to satisfy the following requirements:
 - a. Safety and security of the property and persons residing there.
 - b. Maintaining sanitation standards.
 - c. Coordination of mental health services with the local managing entities.
 - d. Prohibition of illegal substance use and alcohol use on the property.

DCF must notify the county the date the request is received, and of any omission or error, within 10 days after receipt. DCF must designate certification within 45 days of a completed submission from a county. A designation will be certified by the 45th day if DCF takes no action. The bill allows the DCF to inspect a local government's designated areas for public camping and public sleeping to determine sufficiency of compliance with minimum standards at any time. The Secretary may provide notice to the county recommending closure of the designated property if requirements are not satisfied. Local government must publish any such notice issued by DCF on the county and the municipality's publicly accessible website within 5 days after receipt of notice.

This bill does not apply to a county during any time period in which a state of emergency has been declared in the county under chapter 870, F.S., or the Governor has declared a state of emergency in the county or another county immediately adjacent to the county. This act shall take effect October 1, 2024. Effective January 1, 2025, the bill authorizes a resident, local business owner, or the Attorney General to bring a civil action against a county or municipality to enjoin practices of allowing unlawful sleeping or camping on public property.

HB 975: Background Screenings and Certifications

Bill Sponsor: Representative Dana Trabulsy

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Ch. 2024-243, Laws of Florida

Overview:

Establishes new requirements for various health and social service professions regarding background screenings, certifications, and qualifications.

- Defines "person with lived experience" as someone with current or past homelessness experience, including those fleeing domestic violence.
- Establishes qualifications for certification as a "person with lived experience" and requires continuum of care lead agencies to submit information for background screening.

- Specifies disqualifying offenses for applicants seeking certification and allows for exemption applications from disqualified applicants.
- Expands background screening requirements to additional health care practitioners and specifies disqualifying offenses under these requirements.
- Requires specified health care practitioners licensed before a certain date to comply with new background screening requirements by their next licensure renewal.
- Prohibits DOH from renewing certain health care practitioner licenses if they do not comply with background screening requirements.
- Revises licensure, registration, or certification requirements for numerous health professions, including the need to submit to background screening.
- Provides an appropriation to DOH for the implementation of these provisions.

HB 7063: Anti-Human Trafficking

Bill Sponsor: Representative Toby Overdorf

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Ch. 2024-184, Laws of Florida

Overview:

Introduces provisions to combat human trafficking and regulate employment in adult entertainment establishments.

- Extends the repeal date of the direct-support organization for the Statewide Council on Human Trafficking to October 1, 2029.
- Updates the hotline telephone number on human trafficking awareness signs to the Florida Human Trafficking Hotline, 1-855-FLA-SAFE.
- Removes obsolete provisions from public lodging establishments' requirements.
- Revises regulations on employing minors by vendors licensed under the Beverage Law.
- Mandates nongovernmental entities contracting with governmental entities to attest they do not use coercion for labor or services.
- Prohibits the employment of individuals under 21 years old in adult entertainment establishments, setting criminal penalties for violations.
- Requires adult entertainment establishments to verify the age of entertainers and other employees using specific forms of identification.
- Disallows the defense of ignorance of a person's age or misrepresentation of age in prosecutions related to employing those under 21 in adult entertainment.

SB 1224: Protection of Children and Victims of Crime

Bill Sponsor: Senator Colleen Burton

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Chapter No. 2024-070, Laws of Florida

Overview

The bill amends multiple statutes to expand the role and operations of the Statewide Guardian Ad Litem Office and specifies the duties and responsibilities of that office and Guardians Ad Litem (GAL). The bill also amends s. 741.29, F.S., to require law enforcement officers who investigate an alleged incident of

domestic violence to administer a lethality assessment if the allegation is against an intimate partner, regardless of whether an arrest is made.

HB 415: Pregnancy and Parenting Resources Website

Bill Sponsor: Representative Berny Jacques

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Ch. 2024-198, Laws of Florida

Overview

The act requires the Department of Health to consult with the DCF to maintain a website under the DOH that provides public and private resources for expectant and new parents.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND MENTAL HEALTH (SAMH)

HB 7021: Mental Health and Substance Abuse

Bill Sponsor: Representative Pat Maney

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Ch. 2024-245, Laws of Florida

Overview

In Florida, the Baker Act provides a legal procedure for voluntary and involuntary mental health examination and treatment. The Marchman Act addresses substance abuse through a comprehensive system of prevention, detoxification, and treatment services. DCF is the single state authority for substance abuse and mental health treatment services in Florida. The bill modifies the Baker and Marchman Acts to improve the processes for obtaining mental health and substance abuse examinations and treatment and to align certain provisions to be consistent between both acts. The bill amends the Baker Act in that it:

- Combines processes for court orders to streamline the process for obtaining involuntary services; expands courts' authority to commit a person to involuntary services; and authorizes courts to order a person to a combination of involuntary outpatient services and involuntary inpatient placement, based on the needs of the individual.
- Grants law enforcement officers' discretion on initiating involuntary examinations.
- Requires the 72-hour examination period to begin when a patient arrives at the facility.
- Extends the maximum period a person may be ordered to involuntary outpatient services from 90 days to 6 months.
- Authorizes remote appearances for the state attorney and witnesses for hearing proceedings.
- Removes the 30-bed cap for crisis stabilization units. The bill amends the Marchman Act in that it:
 - Combines the two-petition process—for assessment and stabilization, and for treatment—into one process.
 - Requires the court to inform a respondent of the right to request an independent assessment.
 - Reduces the court's timeframe to schedule a hearing from 15 days to 10 days.

- Allows the person who filed a petition for an initial treatment order to petition to extend such treatment if the petition includes supporting documentation from the service provider.
- Allows service providers to exceed licensed bed capacity on a limited basis under certain circumstances.
- Authorizes a witness to appear remotely for hearing proceedings. The bill amends both acts in that it:
 - Creates a more comprehensive and personalized discharge planning process.
 - Requires the Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute to prepare and publish certain reports on its website. The bill appropriates \$50,000,000 in recurring funds to DCF to implement its provisions and has no fiscal impact on local government.

SB 330: Behavioral Health Teaching Hospitals

Bill Sponsor: Senator Jim Boyd

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Ch. 2024-012, Laws of Florida

Overview

Creates a new “behavioral health teaching hospital” designation within chapter 395, F. S., for licensed teaching hospitals that partner with a state university school of medicine and offer specific behavioral health education programs.

It requires AHCA to designate the following hospital and university partnerships as Behavioral Health Teaching Hospitals (BHTHs) within 30 days of the bill becoming law: Tampa General Hospital, in affiliation with the University of South Florida; UF Health Shands Hospital, in affiliation with the University of Florida; UF Health Jacksonville, in affiliation with the University of Florida; and Jackson Memorial Hospital, in affiliation with the University of Miami. Beginning July 1, 2025, AHCA may designate additional BHTHs which meet the specified criteria.

The bill requires DCF to contract for a detailed study of the capacity for inpatient treatment services for adults and children with serious emotional and mental health disturbances and to produce a report by January 31, 2025.

QUALITY AND INNOVATION/LICENSING (QI)

HB 1065: Substance Abuse Treatment

Bill Sponsor: Representative Mike Caruso

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Ch. 2024-176, Laws of Florida

Overview

Creates new language surrounding certified recovery residences including a tier system defining the existing four levels of certified recovery residences and a new type of certified recovery residence. The

bill also revises standards for certified recovery residence administrators. Additionally, the bill allows DCF to issue one license for all service components.

ECONOMIC SELF SUFFICIENCY (ESS)

HB 1267: Economic Self-Sufficiency

Bill Sponsor: Representative Adam Anderson

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Chapter No. 2024-240, Laws of Florida

Overview

The bill directs DCF, Florida Department of Commerce (Florida Commerce), and the Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) to implement certain administrative improvements to assist Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients in moving toward self-sufficiency. The bill also requires the development of intake and exit surveys to monitor program effectiveness for improvements and resource allocation. Local Workforce Development Boards will also be required to use the federal Career Ladder Identifier and Financial Forecaster (CLIFF) navigator tool in case management to demonstrate impact of a participant's change in income to effectuate career planning and fiscal stability.

BILLS OF GENERAL APPLICABILITY

HB 49: Employment

Bill Sponsor: Representative Linda Chaney

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Ch. 2024-025, Laws of Florida

Overview:

Amends work hour restrictions for minors in Florida, altering employment conditions for those aged 15 and under, and those aged 16 and 17.

- Allows minors 15 and under to work until 7 p.m. on school nights, with a weekly maximum of 15 hours during school periods and sets holiday and vacation employment limits.
- Permits 16 and 17-year-olds to work until 11 p.m. on school nights, more than 8 hours on holidays or Sundays, and up to 30 hours a week during school, with waiver possibilities for weekly hour limits.
- Mandates breaks for minors working over 4 continuous hours and specifies exceptions to these restrictions for graduated minors, those with exemptions, minors in hardship situations, home educated, or in approved virtual programs.
- Allows DCF to waive work hour restrictions and clarifies employer violations regarding minor employment laws.

SB 66: Revive Awareness Day

Bill Sponsor: Senator Jason Brodeur

Effective Date: Upon Becoming a Law - April 8, 2024

Ch. 2024-067, Laws of Florida

Overview

Designates June 6 as "Revive Awareness Day" to raise awareness of opioid overdose dangers and promote the safe use of opioid antagonists.

- Names the act "Victoria's Law."
- Encourages the Governor to issue an annual proclamation for Revive Awareness Day.
- Suggests the DOH hold events emphasizing the dangers of opioid overdose, and information on the availability and safe use of opioid antagonists like naloxone.

HB 305: Offenses Involving Children

Bill Sponsor: Representative Jessica Baker

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Ch. 2024-071, Laws of Florida

Overview:

Increases the maximum age from 16 to 17 for admissibility of certain out-of-court statements by child victims.

- Modifies the hearsay exception to include statements made by child victims up to age 17 regarding abuse or sexual offenses.
- Mandates defendants of specific sex trafficking offenses involving minors to be designated as sexual predators on their first offense.
- Reenacts various statutes to incorporate the amendments made by this act, including those concerning the Florida Gaming Control Commission, child visitation, termination of parental rights, adoption procedures, change of name, licensing provisions, and reporting requirements for sexual predators and offenders.

SB 556: Protection of Specified Adults

Bill Sponsor: Senator Darryl Rouson

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Chapter No. 2024-200, Laws of Florida

Overview

Summarizes key provisions of a bill aimed at protecting certain vulnerable adults from financial exploitation through the involvement of financial institutions.

- Defines "financial exploitation" as wrongful actions that deprive a specified adult of their assets.
- Specifies that a "specified adult" includes individuals aged 65 or older or vulnerable adults as defined by s. 415.102, F.S.
- Empowers financial institutions to temporarily delay transactions or disbursements if financial exploitation of a specified adult is suspected.

- Requires written notification to relevant parties and record-keeping by the financial institution when a delay is placed.
- Sets initial delay expiration at 15 business days, with a possible extension up to 30 additional business days subject to ongoing suspicion.
- Allows for the delay period to be adjusted by court order.
- Grants immunity to financial institutions acting in good faith from administrative or civil liability for delaying transactions under this section.
- Mandates financial institutions to provide employee training on recognizing and addressing financial exploitation of specified adults.
- Clarifies that the bill does not create new legal rights or duties beyond those aimed at preventing financial exploitation.

HB 775: Surrendered Infants

Bill Sponsor: Representative Jennifer Canady

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Ch. 2024-213, Laws of Florida

Overview

Expands protections and options for parents surrendering infants in Florida, increasing the age limit and clarifying the process.

- Changes the term "newborn infant" to "infant" and increases the age at which a child is considered an infant to 30 days old.
- Authorizes parents to leave an infant with hospital medical staff after delivery, notifying them of voluntary surrender.
- Allows parents to surrender an infant by calling 911 and requesting emergency medical services at a specified location, provided the parent stays with the infant until pickup.
- Affirms that a surrendered infant at a hospital, fire station, or emergency medical services station is not considered abandoned unless there is evidence of abuse or neglect.
- Ensures surrendered infants are eligible for Medicaid and prohibits initiating criminal investigations solely based on the infant's surrender, barring evidence of neglect or abuse.
- Clarifies that licensed child-placing agencies should be contacted for surrendered infants, ensuring immediate care and placement.
- Exempts parents who surrender an infant according to the specified process from being charged with neglect.

SB 958: Local Government Employees

Bill Sponsor: Senator Jonathan Martin

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Ch. 2024-090, Laws of Florida

Overview

Revises the compensation calculation for county tax collectors and school superintendents, defines "tax collector employee," and enhances adoption benefits for certain state employees.

- Revises the base salary calculation for compensation of county tax collectors and district school superintendents.
- Defines "tax collector employee" as an employee of an office of the county tax collector.
- Authorizes tax collector employees to apply for specified monetary benefits if they adopt children from the child welfare system, with benefits ranging from \$5,000 to \$25,000 depending on the situation.
- Allows tax collector employees to receive adoption benefits if they meet domicile and adoption criteria beginning July 1, 2024.
- Requires qualifying adoptive employees, including tax collector employees, to apply to specific departments to obtain monetary benefits.
- Enables tax collectors to budget for and pay hiring or retention bonuses to employees with DCF approval.
- Authorizes district school boards to contract with county tax collector's office for administering road tests on school grounds.

HB 7001: OGSR/Reporter of Child Abuse, Abandonment, or Neglect

Bill Sponsor: Representative Chase Tramont

Effective Date: October 1, 2024

Ch. 2024-038, Laws of Florida

Overview

Amends Florida's public record laws to permanently protect the confidentiality of individuals reporting child abuse, abandonment, or neglect.

- Removes the scheduled repeal of the exemption for public records, ensuring continued confidentiality for reporters.
- Maintains the protection for identifying information of individuals reporting child abuse, abandonment, or neglect from being disclosed.

HB 7009: OGSR/Mental Health Treatment and Services

Bill Sponsor: Representative Griff Griffitts Jr.

Effective Date: October 1, 2024

Chapter No. 2024-224, Laws of Florida

Overview

Extends confidentiality protections for certain mental health treatment records by removing their scheduled repeal.

- Amends s. 394.464, F. S., to ensure ongoing confidentiality for court records related to mental health treatment.
- Removes the expiration date that would have allowed these records to become public under the Open Government Sunset Review Act.
- Includes petitions for voluntary and involuntary admission for mental health treatment, court orders, related records, and personal identifying information in the protection.

SB 7016: Health Care

Bill Sponsor: Senator Colleen Burton

Effective Date: Upon becoming a law, March 21, 2024

Ch. 2024-015, Laws of Florida

Overview

This bill establishes various healthcare-related programs and initiatives in Florida, including the Dental Student Loan Repayment Program, the Florida Reimbursement Assistance for Medical Education Program, and the Health Care Screening and Services Grant Program. It also expands telehealth services for minority maternity care statewide and introduces the Training, Education, and Clinicals in Health (TEACH) Funding Program. Additionally, the bill creates the Interstate Medical Licensure Compact, allowing healthcare professionals licensed in other states to practice in Florida. It provides appropriations for these programs and initiatives and outlines the eligibility requirements, responsibilities, and regulatory authority for participation in these programs.

- Revises purposes and eligibility for the Dental Student Loan Repayment Program and the Florida Reimbursement Assistance for Medical Education Program.
- Establishes the Health Care Screening and Services Grant Program and the TEACH Funding Program.
- Expands telehealth services for minority maternity care statewide.
- Introduces the Interstate Medical Licensure Compact for healthcare professionals.
- Adopts the Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology Interstate Compact and the Physical Therapy Licensure Compact.
- Provides appropriations for healthcare-related programs and initiatives.
- Specifies eligibility, responsibilities, and regulatory authority for participation in these programs.

SB 7018: Health Care Innovation

Bill Sponsor: Senator Gayle Harrell

Effective Date: Upon becoming a law, March 21, 2024

Ch. 2024-016, Laws of Florida

Overview

Establishes the Health Care Innovation Council within DOH to promote innovation in Florida's health care system.

- Defines roles and structure of the Health Care Innovation Council, including membership, meetings, and conflict of interest policies.
- Outlines council duties such as adopting a mission statement, facilitating public meetings, distinguishing impactful health care innovations, and recommending legislative or procedural changes.
- Mandates DOH to provide administrative support, publish relevant information online, and offer technical assistance for innovation funding applicants.
- Directs DCF to administer a revolving loan program to support health care innovations, detailing application, eligibility, and loan terms.
- Requires annual and 5-year evaluation reports on the loan program's financial, economic, and efficiency impacts.
- Includes provisions for appropriations to fund the Council and loan program.

BUDGET

HB 5001: General Appropriations Act (GAA)

Bill Sponsor: House Appropriations Committee

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Ch. 2024-231, Laws of Florida

Overview:

The General Appropriations Act (GAA) provides:

- moneys for annual period beginning July 1, 2024, & ending June 30, 2025;
- supplemental appropriations for period ending June 30, 2024, to pay salaries, capital outlay, such as buildings and other improvements, and for other specified purposes of various agencies of state government.

Effective Date: Except as otherwise provided herein, this act shall take effect July 1, 2024, or upon becoming law, whichever occurs later; however, if this act becomes law after July 1, 2024, then it shall operate retroactively to July 1, 2024.

HB 5003: Implementing the 2024-2025 General Appropriations Act

Bill Sponsor: House Appropriations Committee

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Ch. 2024-228, Laws of Florida

Overview:

Implements provisions for the 2024-2025 fiscal year, focusing on appropriations, fund transfers, and various state program adjustments.

- Mandates the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to purchase land for conservation and negotiate with property owners for agricultural leases within specific corridors.
- Directs agencies to review reports for possible modification or repeal and submit findings by October 2024.
- Exempts certain agencies from using the State Data Center and specifies conditions under which state agencies can acquire vehicles without following state term contracts.
- Establishes a toll relief program for Florida toll facilities users with specific eligibility criteria and reimbursements.
- Requires state agencies to include a technology-related project inventory in their budget request, detailing costs, goals, and implementation status.
- Defines the Florida Turnpike Enterprise to manage a toll relief program with account credits for eligible transactions.
- Specifies that vetoed appropriations or proviso language in the General Appropriations Act voids corresponding provisions in this act.
- Contains provisions that take effect July 1, 2024, or upon the act becoming law if after this date, operating retroactively to July 1, 2024.

Department of Children and Families FY 2024-25 Budget

Total: \$4,721,368,768

- General Revenue: \$2,843,841,666
- Trust Funds: \$1,877,527,102
- 12,974.75 Full Time Positions (FTE)

Administration

Florida Planning, Accounting, and Ledger Management (PALM) Readiness - \$625K (All GR)

- Funding provided to implement the remediation tasks necessary to integrate agency applications with the new PALM System.

Economic Self Sufficiency (ESS)

Mailing Operations (Excela) - \$1.4 M (\$729 K GR and 731K Federal Funds)

- Support the increased cost of mailing operations to continue to meet federal requirements for notifying benefit applicants during case processing.

Customer Call Center - \$12.2 M (\$5 M GR and \$7.2 M Federal Funds)

- Increase Call Center staffing by 196 OPS staff to align data metric outcomes (call volume, handling time, etc.), with workforce needs.

Automated Employment and Income Verification - \$20 M (\$9.7 M GR and \$10.3 M Federal Funds)

- Funds provided for the purpose of acquiring current employment and income information for eligibility determination for public benefit programs, including Medicaid, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.

Increase Personal Needs for Optional State Supplementation Program - \$6.7 M (All GR)

- Increase the personal needs allowance from \$54 to \$160 for individuals in the Optional State Supplementation Program.

Information Technology (OIT)

Child Welfare Software and Enterprise Architecture Modernization - \$17.5 M (\$8.9 M GR and \$8.6 M Federal Funds)

- Continue implementation of the Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System (CCWIS) modernization through year-three funding for replacement of the current legacy system that is over 25-years old.

Information Technology Licensing Renewals - \$2.3 M (\$1.4 M GR and \$158 K State Trust Funds and \$758 K Federal Funds)

- Support the increased cost of licenses for items such as Microsoft Enterprise Solutions.

Close Loop Referral Services - \$243 K (All GR)

- Increase the number of licenses to the current Hope Florida System to allow other Departments' access.

FLORIDA System Modernization - \$36.6 M (\$11.6 M GR and \$25 M Federal Funds)

- Continue implementation of the MyAccess System modernization through year-three funding for replacement of the current legacy system that is over 40-years old.

Electronic Health Records (EHR) - Mental Health Treatment Facilities - \$3.0 M (All GR)

- Continue implementation of the EHR System modernization that will allow facilities to eliminate the paper process, modernize clinical and business processes, improve health information security, and advance the quality of care for residents.

Hotline Operations - \$1.0 M (All GR)

- Upgrade current systems to the new Migration iCloud call and recording/storage solution to replace the end-of-life recording/storage system servers.

Customer Call Center Text Messaging - \$500 K (\$204 K GR and \$296 K Federal Funds)

- Funding to support text message notifications for MyAccess System customer.

Office of Child and Family Wellbeing (OCFW)

Healthy Families Workforce Stabilization - \$2 M (All GR)

- Funding is provided for the Healthy Families Florida program to stabilize their workforce.

Behavioral Qualified Residential Treatment Program (QRTP) - \$5.6 M (\$3.8 M GR and \$1.8 M Federal Funds)

- Create 66 new Behavioral QRTP beds at a \$395 room and board rate to support a targeted population that have higher acuity levels of care outside of traditional therapeutic group homes.

Local Prevention Grant Program – \$6.7 M (All Federal Funds)

- Continue the grant program to award local grants or aid to support primary and secondary prevention services.

Continuation Funding for Behavioral Health Consultants - \$1.6 M (All Federal Funds)

- Continue funding for 14 existing OPS Behavioral Health Consultants (BHC) that connect families to trauma-responsive resources and services.

Children’s Justice Act Task Force Initiatives - \$1.3 M (All Federal Funds)

- Support services/projects proposed by the Children’s Justice Act Task Force that focus on the improvement of Florida’s child investigations process, including assessment, investigation, and prosecution of cases of child abuse and neglect, with an emphasis on limiting additional trauma to child victims.

Adoption Incentive Expansion - \$9.4 M (All GR)

- Increase payments for “difficult to place” children from \$10 K to \$25 K; and “not difficult to place children” from \$5 K to \$10 K for the adoption incentive benefits.
- This will add in Licensed DOH Practitioners and State Tax Collectors to the program.

Maintenance Adoption Subsidy (MAS) Payments - \$13.5 M (\$6.6 M GR and \$6.9 M Federal Funds)

- Support payments to a projected increase of 3,900 finalizations for children in foster care with special needs who are adopted up to the age of 18 (or age 21 if the child meets the eligibility criteria).

Office of Community Service (OCS)

Florida Partnership to End Domestic Violence - \$500 K (All GR)

- Restore nonrecurring funding appropriated in FY 2023-24 to provide support services to the Domestic Violence Program such as training, technical assistance, and on-going general operations.

Elder Justice Act Grant - \$1.0 M (All Federal Funds)

- Expand existing services supported by the Elder Justice Act Grant awarded in August 2023 for activities such as: housing arrangements, repairs, and maintenance on adult residences such as completing handicap bathroom needs, kitchen repairs or purchase of medical beds, and payments to restore utilities that have been disconnected.

Continuation Funding for Hope Line Agents – \$1.4 M (All Federal Funds)

- Continue funding for 20 existing OPS Hope Line Agents that connect families to resources through care coordination services.

Increase Collaboration for Victim Services for Domestic Violence (STOP) - \$8.0 M (All Federal Funds)

- Expand current services under the STOP Grant to develop and strengthen the criminal justice systems response to violence against women.

Human Trafficking Emergency Bed Expansion - \$5.0 M (All GR)

- Expand current bed capacity to add 48 new human trafficking beds.

Human Trafficking Operational Response Expansion - \$978 K (9 FTE) (All GR)

- Expand the current human trafficking workforce by 9 additional FTE that will support statewide coverage through program compliance, training, best practices, and policy implementation.

Independent Living Support Expansion - \$8.1 M (All GR)

- Expand the eligibility for Extended Maintenance Adoption Services (EMAS), Extended Guardianship Assistance Program (EGAP), Postsecondary Education Services and Support (PESS) and aftercare services.

Addressing Domestic Violence Services Waitlist and Child Welfare Services - \$10.0 M (All GR)

- Support survivors currently needing transitional housing.

Quality Office (QI)

Office of Licensing Staff Conversion (OPS to FTE) - \$1.2 M (\$657 K State Funds and \$557 K Federal Funds)

- Convert 25 OPS positions to FTE positions to help provide stability and allow the program to successfully provide quality assessments, technical support, and timely administrative action.

Guardianship Assistance Program (GAP) - \$10.1 M (\$7.3 M GR and 2.8 M Federal Funds)

- Support the program projected client increase of 49.4% based on prior year trends that estimates serving an additional 1,112 individuals.

Level 1 – 4 Foster Home Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) - \$2.7 M (\$1.8 M GR and \$898 K Federal Funds)

- Support the annual and mandated Level I-V foster home cost of living adjustment increases for room and board rates.

Child Care School Readiness - \$555 K (All Federal Funds)

- Increase staffing levels to fully support school readiness inspections between DCF and county supported workforce.

Substance Abuse Licensing Realignment - \$2.7 M (23 FTE Transfer from the facilities) (All GR)

- These positions will aid in improving quality for licensed providers through file review, compliance monitoring, interviews with individuals receiving services, compliant inspections, and support services providers seeking licensure.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health (SAMH)

State Opioid Response (SOR) Grant Increase - \$3.5 M (All Federal Funds)

- Support the grant award increase allocated by our federal partners that will be used to treat individuals with opioid and stimulant use disorders or misuse, provide evidence-based prevention services, establish Oxford Houses, and provide training to increase use of evidence-based practices and increase access to Recovery Community Organizations providing support to individuals throughout the recovery process.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Block Grant Increase - \$17.8 M (All Federal Funds)

- Support grant award set-a-side services such as First Episode Psychosis, Crisis Services, Primary Prevention and ESI/HIV, along with array of behavioral health services provided through our MEs.

Enhancing Mobile Response Teams to Support Crisis Diversion - \$11.5 M (All GR)

- Expand the MRT program by adding an additional 16 teams.

Central Receiving Facilities (CRF) - \$4.3 M (All GR)

- Supports the difference between the budget need for FY 2023-24 (\$35 M) versus what was appropriated (\$31 M).

Opioid Settlement Agreement - \$83.9 M (11 individual issues) (All State Trust Funds)

- Continue current programs implemented in FY 2023-24 supported through the Opioid Settlement Trust Fund for:
 - Applied Research - \$1.0 M
 - Coordinated Opioid Recovery (CORE) - \$5.0 M
 - Court Diversion - \$5.0 M
 - On-Demand and Mobile Medication Assisted Treatment - \$4.5 M
 - Hospital Bridge Program - \$2.0 M
 - Naloxone - \$6.2 M
 - Prevention and Media Campaign - \$18.0 M
 - Peer Supports and Recovery Housing Community Organizations - \$6.8 M
 - Recovery Housing - \$9.5 M
 - Non-Qualified Counties - \$16.2 M
 - Treatment and Recovery Support Services - \$9.7 M

Integrated Behavioral Health Clinics - \$7 M (All GR)

- These funds are to be distributed to nonprofit organizations that were awarded “Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic” (CCBHC) expansion grants from SAMHSA in FY 2023-24 to provide integrated health care for individuals/families with behavioral health conditions across an individual’s life span.
- The purpose of the funding is to serve as bridge funding (\$500,000 per organization) while AHCA awaits federal approval of the state plan amendment (submitted January 2024) seeking Medicaid coverage of the CCBHC model.

Mental Health Facilities

Fixed Capital Outlay - \$6.5 M (All GR)

- Continue to update buildings at three-state operated Mental Health Facilities along with repairs and maintenance in the regions for state owned buildings housed by program staff.

Mental Health Facilities Safety and Security System Upgrades - \$3.2 M (All GR)

- Replace faulty, poor performing, broken or obsolete cameras and convert manual key locking systems to digital badge key card systems and add fiberoptic resources to support the updated security infrastructure in all three-state operated mental health facilities.

Medical Equipment - \$1.1 M (All GR)

- Replace end of life medical equipment across the three-state operated mental health facilities that will improve clinical services.

Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) – Mental Health Contracted Agencies - \$4.5 M (All GR)

- Continue to support an annual 3% cost of living adjustment for private run state hospitals.

Mental Health Forensic Bed Capacity - \$77.8 M (All GR)

- Continue to maintain Civil and Forensic beds supported by contract staff, OPS nursing pool and base FTE across all three state operated facilities.