

THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Wednesday, April 8, 2009

Committee Substitute for
ENGROSSED
Senate Bill No. 292

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR ENGROSSED SENATE BILL NO. 292 - By:
ANDERSON of the Senate and PETERS of the House.

An Act relating to poor persons; amending 56 O.S. 2001, Section 230.65, which relates to the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program; deleting certain requirement of the personal responsibility agreement; repealing 56 O.S. 2001, Section 230.58, which relates to TANF vouchers; and providing an effective date.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

1 SECTION 1. AMENDATORY 56 O.S. 2001, Section 230.65, is amended to read
2 as follows:

3 Section 230.65 A. 1. The Department of Human Services shall conduct an
4 employability assessment of the education, training, skills, prior work experience and
5 supportive service needs of individuals applying for and receiving assistance pursuant to
6 the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program.

7 2. The Department shall arrange for administration of a recognized literacy
8 screening for individuals who have not obtained a high school diploma or General
9 ~~Equivalency Degree~~ Educational Development (GED) credential and have exhibited a
10 lack of literacy skills. If, in the opinion of the Department, the applicant or recipient who

1 has obtained a high school diploma or GED lacks reading skills to the extent that such
2 insufficiency limits the applicant's or recipient's ability to become self-supporting, the
3 Department shall refer the individual for a literacy assessment.

4 3. The Department shall utilize existing community resources, including, but not
5 limited to, volunteer literacy groups and adult basic education programs, when arranging
6 for literacy assessments and remediation of clients who lack sufficient reading skills.

7 B. The Department of Human Services shall require services to be provided to each
8 applicant or recipient of benefits in any program according to a written personal
9 responsibility agreement. The agreement shall reflect the education, training, skills,
10 prior work experience and supportive service needs of the applicant or recipient and shall
11 be:

12 1. Written in English, or translated into Spanish or other language, according to
13 the applicant's or recipient's needs;

14 2. Signed by the applicant or recipient;

15 3. Signed by the parent of the applicant or recipient if the applicant or recipient is
16 under eighteen (18) years of age;

17 4. Signed by the case manager; and

18 5. Reviewed by both the applicant or recipient and the case manager at least once a
19 year. The agreement may be revised from time to time according to the needs of the
20 recipient, the recipient's family and the program.

21 C. The personal responsibility agreement shall set forth the specific responsibilities
22 of the recipient, at a minimum, to:

- 1 1. Develop a detailed plan for achieving self-sufficiency;
- 2 2. Participate in any educational or training program required by the Department
- 3 pursuant to the results of the employability and literacy assessments;
- 4 3. Participate in life-skills training including, but not limited to, financial
- 5 management classes, conflict resolution training, and social skills development;
- 6 4. Be available for and actively seek and maintain employment, and accept any
- 7 reasonable employment as soon as it becomes available as required by the TANF
- 8 program;
- 9 5. Participate in a community service, public works or private sector job pursuant
- 10 to the requirements of the Statewide Temporary Assistance Responsibility System and
- 11 the results of the employability and literacy assessments;
- 12 6. ~~Acknowledge that additional benefits pursuant to the Temporary Assistance for~~
- 13 ~~Needy Families (TANF) program will be paid for a child born more than ten (10) months~~
- 14 ~~after the recipient qualifies for assistance only pursuant to a voucher system;~~
- 15 7. If the recipient is a minor parent, live in a supervised adult setting;
- 16 8. 7. Accept responsibility for ensuring that the recipient's child complies with the
- 17 attendance requirements of the local school district and attends school until the child of
- 18 the recipient either:
- 19 a. graduates from high school or attains a high school equivalency
- 20 certificate, or
- 21 b. becomes nineteen (19) years of age,
- 22 whichever occurs first;

1 ~~9.~~ 8. Accept responsibility for attending any classes required by a program at least
2 ninety percent (90%) of the time;

3 ~~10.~~ 9. Immunize the recipients' minor children pursuant to the State Department of
4 Health's immunization schedule; and

5 ~~11.~~

6 10. a. Undergo a literacy skills assessment utilizing a testing instrument
7 which measures whether such recipient is reading at a minimum of an
8 eighth grade reading level, where the recipient has the capacity to read
9 at such level or, regardless of reading level, which indicates that the
10 recipient would benefit from compulsory participation in a literacy
11 skills improvement program.

12 b. Based on the results of the assessment, the recipient shall agree to
13 enroll and actively participate in a literacy skills improvement
14 program and provide documentation of substantial quantifiable
15 literacy improvement. Any recipient who is reading at less than an
16 eighth grade level shall be required to continue to substantially and
17 quantifiably improve his or her reading skills until such recipient
18 demonstrates a level of reading proficiency that is at least equal to an
19 eighth grade reading level.

20 c. On or before December 31 of each year, the Department of Human
21 Services shall annually provide to the Governor, the President Pro
22 Tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of

1 Representatives a written report outlining by age the number of
2 recipients:

- 3 (1) assessed for literacy skills,
- 4 (2) who failed to demonstrate eighth grade reading level proficiency,
- 5 (3) who agreed to enroll and participate in a literacy skills
6 improvement program, and
- 7 (4) who either provided documentation of substantial quantifiable
8 literacy skills improvement or whose case was closed prior to
9 completion.

10 D. The Department may sanction or impose financial penalties on a recipient for
11 failure to comply with the provisions of the personal responsibility agreement.

12 SECTION 2. REPEALER 56 O.S. 2001, Section 230.58, is hereby repealed.

13 SECTION 3. This act shall become effective November 1, 2009.

14 COMMITTEE REPORT BY: COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS AND BUDGET,
15 dated 04-07-09 - DO PASS, As Amended.