

SB 292

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THE STATE SENATE  
Monday, February 23, 2009

Senate Bill No. 292  
As Amended

SENATE BILL NO. 292 - By: Anderson of the Senate and Peters of the House.

[ poor persons - Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) - vouchers - effective date ]

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

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

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

2. The Department shall arrange for administration of a recognized literacy screening for individuals who have not obtained a high school diploma or General Equivalency Degree (GED) and have exhibited a lack of literacy skills. If, in the opinion of the Department, the applicant or recipient who has obtained a high school diploma or GED lacks reading skills to the extent that such insufficiency limits the applicant's or recipient's ability to

1 become self-supporting, the Department shall refer the individual  
2 for a literacy assessment.

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

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

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

15 2. Signed by the applicant or recipient;

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

18 4. Signed by the case manager; and

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

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

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

1       ~~8-~~ 7. Accept responsibility for ensuring that the recipient's  
2 child complies with the attendance requirements of the local school  
3 district and attends school until the child of the recipient either:

4           a. graduates from high school or attains a high school  
5                equivalency certificate, or

6           b. becomes nineteen (19) years of age,

7 whichever occurs first;

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

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

12       ~~11-~~

13       10. a. Undergo a literacy skills assessment utilizing a  
14                testing instrument which measures whether such  
15                recipient is reading at a minimum of an eighth grade  
16                reading level, where the recipient has the capacity to  
17                read at such level or, regardless of reading level,  
18                which indicates that the recipient would benefit from  
19                compulsory participation in a literacy skills  
20                improvement program.

21           b. Based on the results of the assessment, the recipient  
22                shall agree to enroll and actively participate in a  
23                literacy skills improvement program and provide

1 documentation of substantial quantifiable literacy  
2 improvement. Any recipient who is reading at less  
3 than an eighth grade level shall be required to  
4 continue to substantially and quantifiably improve his  
5 or her reading skills until such recipient  
6 demonstrates a level of reading proficiency that is at  
7 least equal to an eighth grade reading level.

8 c. On or before December 31 of each year, the Department  
9 of Human Services shall annually provide to the  
10 Governor, the President Pro Tempore of the Senate and  
11 the Speaker of the House of Representatives a written  
12 report outlining by age the number of recipients:

- 13 (1) assessed for literacy skills,
- 14 (2) who failed to demonstrate eighth grade reading  
15 level proficiency,
- 16 (3) who agreed to enroll and participate in a  
17 literacy skills improvement program, and
- 18 (4) who either provided documentation of substantial  
19 quantifiable literacy skills improvement or whose  
20 case was closed prior to completion.

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

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

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

4 COMMITTEE REPORT BY: COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS, dated 2-11-09 - DO  
5 PASS, As Amended and Coauthored.