
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Carol Liu, Chair
2015 - 2016 Regular

Bill No: AB 2285
Author: McCarty
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Urgency: No
Consultant: Lynn Lorber
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Fiscal: Yes

Subject: State employment: former foster youth

SUMMARY

This bill requires the Sacramento County Office of Education to develop and administer the Former Foster Youth Job Readiness Training Pilot Program to prepare former foster youth who are 25 years of age or younger for entry-level employment in state service.

BACKGROUND

Existing law:

- 1) Establishes the State Civil Service Act for filling certain state positions through the process of examinations and the establishment of eligible lists and promotional lists. (Government Code § 18570, et seq.)
- 2) Establishes the Consolidated Work Program Fund for the receipt of moneys deposited pursuant to the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, and requires the Employment Development Department to administer this fund. (Unemployment Code § 14004.5)
- 3) Requires moneys in the Consolidated Work Program Fund to be expended consistent with the purposes of the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and the State Plan required by the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. (UC § 14004.5)

ANALYSIS

This bill requires the Sacramento County Office of Education to develop and administer the Former Foster Youth Job Readiness Training Pilot Program to prepare former foster youth who are 25 years of age or younger for entry-level employment in state service, and appropriates \$1,100,000 for this purpose. Specifically, this bill:

Training program

- 1) Appropriates \$1,100,000 from the Consolidated Work Program Fund to the Sacramento County Office of Education (SCOE) for the purposes of implementing the Former Foster Youth Job Readiness Training Pilot Program.

- 2) Requires Sacramento County Office of Education (SCOE) to develop and administer the Former Foster Youth Job Readiness Training Pilot Program for the purpose of preparing the aged out foster care population for entry-level employment in state service.
- 3) Requires SCOE to develop an application and create criteria for selecting eligible organizations to provide job readiness training to eligible participants.
- 4) Requires SCOE to award grants to selected eligible organizations that are to be used for the following purposes:
 - a) To pay for trainers to provide job readiness training to eligible participants.
 - b) To provide a stipend to an eligible participant who satisfies both of the following:
 - i) Remains actively engaged in and attends the training pursuant to the individual service plan (see #12(c)).
 - ii) Is enrolled, actively engaged in, and attending a high school equivalency exam preparation class if he or she has not received a high school diploma or equivalency certificate.

Entry-level unclassified positions

- 5) Requires a participant in the training program, after being trained in an unclassified position for three months, but before being trained for nine months, to take a written exam for the classification in which he or she is trained, if a written exam is required for that classification.
- 6) Provides that a participant in the training program is eligible to take the written exam only after receiving a positive recommendation from the appropriate supervisor.
- 7) Requires that a participant in the training program who does not pass the written exam or who does not receive a favorable promotional rating by the supervisor of the training to be released from the training program.
- 8) Prohibits a participant in the training program from applying for a classification unless he or she meets the minimum qualifications for that classification.
- 9) Requires the Department of Human Resources, in consultation with the Department of Social Services and SCOE, to promote the training of foster youth who participate in the training readiness program in specified entry-level unclassified positions for their eventual hiring in classified positions with any state agency or department that is located within the County of Sacramento, as determined by the Department of Human Resources.

Training program data

- 10) Requires Sacramento County Office of Education (SCOE) to compile disaggregated data on the number of participants:
 - a) Enrolling in the program.
 - b) Completing the program.
 - c) Receiving a placement after completing the program.
 - d) Receiving state employment after completing a placement.
- 11) Requires SCOE, upon request, to make this data available to the Department of Human Resources and the Legislature.

Miscellaneous

- 12) Provides the following definitions:
 - a) “Eligible organization” as an organization that satisfies all of the following:
 - i) The organization is a 501(c)(3) non-profit and is in compliance with all applicable laws and requirements.
 - ii) The organization demonstrates expertise in providing job readiness training.
 - iii) Any additional criteria required by SCOE to promote the job readiness training of eligible participants.
 - b) “Eligible participant” means an individual who is 25 years of age or younger and who is certified by the Department of Social Services as having been, for at least one year at any time on or after the date that the individual turns 15 years of age, either a recipient of foster care maintenance payments or in a foster care program under the responsibility of the State of California.
 - c) “Job readiness training” as an individual service plan that develops core competencies that create an experience and educational base for an individual to meet the qualifications for entry-level employment in state services.
- 13) Sunsets the provisions of this bill on January 1, 2020.
- 14) States Legislative intent that the state assist foster youth in securing permanent employment in state government by providing them access to needed training positions.

- 15) States Legislative findings and declarations relative to the unique needs of foster youth.

STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) ***Need for the bill.*** According to the author, “Foster youth often have more barriers to finding, getting and keeping a job than youth that are permanently connected to a family, and the emotional and economic support they provide. In California, 45% of emancipated foster youth are unemployed, 30% are on welfare and 1/3 of former foster youth have incomes at or below \$6,000 per year – substantially below the federal poverty level. As a result, these youth face a bleak future fraught with disproportionately high levels of unemployment, young parenthood, homelessness and incarceration. By creating a pathway towards employment, AB 2285 will provide foster youth with valuable employment skills and ‘on the job’ training necessary to maintain employment and become productive members of society.”
- 2) ***Sacramento County Office of Education.*** This bill appropriates \$1.1 million to the Sacramento County Office of Education (SCOE) for the administration of state job training program. This bill contains a statement that a special law is necessary because of the need to enact this program on a trial basis and is therefore applied to one large and diverse county.
- 3) ***Consolidated Work Program Fund.*** This fund is administered by the Employment Development Department (EDD) and consists of a blend of federal and state funds. The EDD awards funds from Consolidated Work Program Fund to eligible training providers offering a variety of training opportunities. It is unclear if the fund is currently used to providing training that is specific to state employment. This bill directs \$1,100,000 from the Consolidated Work Program Fund specifically for training foster youth for entry-level state employment.
- 4) ***What about AB 12 youth?*** Pursuant to AB 12 (Beall, Ch. 559, 2010), the California Fostering Connections to Success Act, youth may remain in foster care until they reach 21 years of age. This bill applies only to former foster youth. The author’s intent is for the bill to apply to current or former foster youth aged 18-25. **Staff recommends amendments** to include current foster youth who are at least 18 years of age.
- 5) ***Verification of foster youth status.*** This bill defines an “eligible participant” as an individual who is 25 years of age or younger and who is certified by the Department of Social Services as having been, for at least one year at any time on or after the date that the individual turns 15 years of age, either a recipient of foster care maintenance payments or in a foster care program under the responsibility of the State of California. **Staff recommends an amendment** to strike reference to the Department of Social Services and instead provide that the county in which the youth was in foster care is to certify the youth’s status as a current or former foster youth.
- 6) ***Similar programs.*** San Mateo County began the Supportive Training and Employment Program (STEP) in 2009. The STEP is a 12 week internship that

supports emancipated foster youth and non-minor dependents between the ages of 18 to 24. The program pays youth to learn the basics required for successful employment. Youth are also paired with a coach who receives training on the specific issues and needs of foster youth. This program is funded through the San Mateo County General Fund.

Santa Clara County's Emancipated Foster Youth (EFY) Program provides entry-level work opportunities for foster youth between the ages of 18 and 24, who are aging out of the child welfare system. The program is authorized by the Charter of the County of Santa Clara that allows for the hiring, either in the classified or unclassified service, of employees under a specially designed program to assist persons who are unemployed, disabled, or untrained. This program is authorized and funded by county charter. This bill contains provisions that are very similar to Santa Clara County's program.

Los Angeles County provides employment opportunities for youth, and area employers launched the 100,000 Opportunities Initiative in 2015 with the goal of hiring at least 100,000 youth by 2018. The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors voted in February 2016, to utilize existing youth job resources (local workforce investment board funds) to subsidize the first 100 hours for youth internships. This initiative is not specifically targeted to foster youth.

- 7) **Fiscal impact.** This bill appropriates \$1.1 million from the Consolidated Work Program Fund. According to the Assembly Appropriations Committee, this bill imposes annual costs in the range of \$350,000 (Consolidated Work Program Fund).
- 8) **Prior legislation.** Early versions of AB 671 (Beall, 2007) established the Emancipated Foster Youth Program to provide state employment opportunities for qualified foster youth and former foster youth. AB 671 was amended to address an unrelated topic.

SUPPORT

Aspiranet
National Association of Social Workers, California Chapter

OPPOSITION

None received.

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