



Ohio Legislative Service Commission

Bill Analysis

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S.B. 240

131st General Assembly
(As Introduced)

Sens. Eklund, Gardner, Cafaro, Seitz, Patton, Williams, Skindell, Beagle, Bacon, Yuko

BILL SUMMARY

- Requires the Director of Job and Family services to submit amendments to the state's plan for child welfare services to expand foster care and adoption assistance for persons up to age 21.
- Establishes qualification standards and various other procedures and requirements for receiving payments under the foster care and adoption assistance expansion.
- Requires the Department of Job and Family Services to adopt rules to implement the foster care and adoption assistance expansion, including a rule to create an advisory council to evaluate and make recommendations regarding the bill's statewide implementation and rules establishing the scope of practice and training for foster care workers and their supervisors.
- Makes an appropriation to provide for the planning for, and the expansion of, the foster care and adoption assistance payments.

CONTENT AND OPERATION

Extension of foster care and adoption assistance payments up to age 21

The bill requires the Director of Job and Family Services, by January 1, 2017, to submit two amendments to the state's plan for child welfare services to the United States Secretary of Health and Human Services. The first amendment is to expand federal Title IV-E foster care payments. The second amendment is to expand adoption assistance. With the first amendment (Title IV-E payments), the plan would permit payments directly to, or on behalf of, persons up to age 21. The second amendment (adoption assistance payments) would permit payments to the adoptive parents with respect to an adopted person up to age 21. All payments are to be made in accordance

with federal law, as generally proposed to be adopted as Ohio law by the bill (described below).¹ The Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) is required to pay the full nonfederal share of the payments required under the bill. No public children services agency (PCSA) is to be responsible for those costs.²

Qualifications for foster care payments

To qualify for the foster care payments as provided in the bill, a person must:

- (1) Have reached age 18, but not yet reached age 21;
- (2) Sign a voluntary participation agreement;
- (3) Have been in the custody of a PCSA upon reaching age 18;³ and
- (4) Meet at least one of the following criteria:
 - (a) Is completing secondary education or a program leading to an equivalent credential;
 - (b) Is enrolled in an institution that provides post-secondary or vocational education;
 - (c) Is participating in a program or activity designed to promote, or remove barriers to, employment;
 - (d) Is employed for at least 80 hours per month; or
 - (e) Is incapable of doing any of the activities described in (a) to (d) above because of a medical condition, which incapacity is supported by regularly updated information in the case record or plan of the child.⁴

Qualifications for adoption assistance payments

To qualify for the adoption assistance payments as provided in the bill, an adoptive parent must meet all the following requirements:

¹ R.C. 5101.141 and 5101.1411.

² R.C. 5101.1413.

³ R.C. 5101.1411(A)(1).

⁴ R.C. 5101.1411(A)(1) and (C); 42 U.S.C. 675(8)(B)(iv).



(1) Have adopted a person while the adopted person was 16 or 17 years old and the adopted person had been in the custody of a PCSA or the parent enters into an adoption assistance agreement under the federal Adoption and Guardianship Assistance Program;

(2) The adopted person reached age 18, but not yet reached age 21;

(3) The parent maintains parental responsibility to that adopted person;⁵

(4) The adopted person meets at least one of the following criteria:

(a) Is completing secondary education or a program leading to an equivalent credential;

(b) Is enrolled in an institution that provides post-secondary or vocational education;

(c) Is participating in a program or activity designed to promote, or remove barriers to, employment;

(d) Is employed for at least 80 hours per month; or

(e) Is incapable of doing any of the activities described in (a) to (d) above because of a medical condition, which incapacity is supported by regularly updated information in the case plan of the child.⁶

Application, termination, and resumption of payments

The bill provides that any person who qualifies may apply for foster care payments under the bill and may make the appropriate application at any time. An adoptive parent applying for adoption assistance payments may request an extension of adoption assistance payments at any time before the adopted person reaches age 21. Any person receiving foster care payments, or on whose behalf such foster care payments are received, or any adoptive parent receiving adoption assistance payments, under the bill may refuse them at any time, but must reapply if the person or adoptive parent seeks to receive the payments again at a later date. The bill also provides that if ODJFS terminates foster care and adoption assistance payments, that determination is subject to adjudication under the Administrative Procedure Act (R.C. Chapter 119.).⁷

⁵ R.C. 5101.1411(B)(1).

⁶ R.C. 5101.1411(C).

⁷ R.C. 5101.1411(A)(2), (B)(2), (D), and (F).

Other services

The bill provides that a person who is directly receiving foster care payments, or on whose behalf such foster care payments are received, or an adoptive parent receiving adoption assistance payments and the adopted person, as provided in the bill, are eligible for services set forth in the federal Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 (P.L. 110-351, 122 Stat. 3949).⁸

Additionally, the bill provides that a person who is receiving foster care payments, or on whose behalf such foster care payments are received, may be eligible to reside in a supervised independent living setting, including apartment living, room and board arrangements, college or university dormitories, host homes, and shared roommate settings.⁹

Voluntary participation agreements

The bill provides that a child who receives foster care payments, or on whose behalf payments are received, may enter into a voluntary participation agreement with ODJFS or its designee for the child's care and placement. A voluntary participation agreement expires after 180 days and may not be renewed without court approval. ODJFS or its designee must seek approval from the court to extend the care and placement with ODJFS or its designee prior to the agreement's expiration if the extension is in the child's best interest.¹⁰ The bill provides that the court retains jurisdiction over a person who is qualified for foster care payments and who is subject to a voluntary participation agreement that is in effect.¹¹

Rules

The bill requires ODJFS to adopt rules necessary to carry out the provisions of the bill, including rules that do the following:

- Allow a person who is directly receiving foster care payments, or on whose behalf such foster care payments are received, or a person whose adoptive parents are receiving adoption assistance payments, to maintain eligibility while transitioning between qualified employment or educational activities;

⁸ R.C. 5101.1411(E)(1).

⁹ R.C. 5101.1411(E)(2).

¹⁰ R.C. 5101.1412.

¹¹ R.C. 2151.353(F)(1).



- Require a 30-day notice to a person determined to be ineligible before termination of payments under the bill.¹²

Advisory council

In addition to the rules described above, the bill requires ODJFS to create an advisory council to evaluate and make recommendations for statewide implementation of the bill's provisions.¹³

Foster care worker and supervisor training and oversight

ODJFS rules must also establish the scope of practice and training necessary for foster care workers and their supervisors who care for persons receiving foster care payments, or on whose behalf such payments are received.¹⁴ The training required by rule must be provided by the Ohio Child Welfare Training Program.¹⁵

Oversight of ODJFS duties under amended state plan

The bill permits ODJFS to contract with another person to carry out the bill's new duties under the amended plan for foster care and adoption assistance, to the extent permitted by federal law.¹⁶

Appropriation

The bill contains an appropriation to implement the planning for, and the actual expansion of, services to age 21.¹⁷

Background

Generally, foster care maintenance and adoption assistance payments for a child terminate at age 18 because funding is unavailable after the end of the month of the child's 18th birthday. In Ohio, foster care and adoption assistance funding is a combination of state and federal funds. To be eligible for federal funds, Ohio must have a state plan in place that complies with the requirements and conditions of Title IV-E of

¹² R.C. 5101.1414(A) and (B).

¹³ R.C. 5101.1414(C).

¹⁴ R.C. 5101.1414(D).

¹⁵ R.C. 5103.30(F).

¹⁶ R.C. 5101.141(B)(2).

¹⁷ Sections 3 and 4.

the Social Security Act. One requirement is that any child under age 18 be eligible for foster care maintenance or adoption assistance payments.¹⁸

Federal Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act

While eligibility until age 18 continues to be a requirement under federal law, Congress enacted the federal Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 (P.L. 110-351, 122 Stat. 3949) which gives states the option to extend foster care maintenance and adoption assistance payment eligibility for a child who has not yet attained 19, 20, or 21 years of age and who meets the criteria described in (4)(a) to (e) above under "**Qualifications for foster care payments**" and "**Qualifications for adoption assistance payments.**"

HISTORY

ACTION	DATE
Introduced	11-10-15

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¹⁸ 42 U.S.C. 671, 672(a)(1)(B) and (a)(3), 673, and 674; 45 C.F.R. 233.90(b); R.C. 5101.141; and O.A.C. 5101:2-47-12(E), 5101:2-49-02, and 5101:2-49-04.

