Chapter 510

(Senate Bill 828)

AN ACT concerning

Family Investment Program – Eligibility, Work Experience, Community Service, and Reports – Alterations

FOR the purpose of altering the manner in which certain work activities may be reported for determining a certain work participation rate in the Family Investment Program; altering the manner in which the Department of Human Services may require an individual in the Program to verify the hours that the individual participated in certain work activities; establishing a limit on the number of hours the Department of Human Services may require an individual in the Family Investment Program to participate in certain work activities; establishing the manner in which an individual in the Program may participate in certain work experience or community service work activities; and generally relating to the Family Investment Program.

BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,
   Article – Human Services
   Section 5–101(a) and (c)
   Annotated Code of Maryland
   (2019 Replacement Volume and 2021 Supplement)

BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
   Article – Human Services
   Section 5–301, 5–308, and 5–322
   Annotated Code of Maryland
   (2019 Replacement Volume and 2021 Supplement)

BY adding to
   Article – Human Services
   Section 5–308.1 and 5–308.2
   Annotated Code of Maryland
   (2019 Replacement Volume and 2021 Supplement)

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

Article – Human Services

5–101.

(a) In this title the following words have the meanings indicated.

(c) “Department” means the Department of Human Services.
In this subtitle the following words have the meanings indicated.

(b) “COMMUNITY SERVICE” means a structured program with embedded activities in which individuals perform unpaid work:

(1) for the direct benefit of the community; and

(2) under the guidance and support of a public or nonprofit organization.

(C) “FIP” means the Family Investment Program.

[(c)] (D) “Nonprofit organization” means a religious, charitable, or volunteer organization that is exempt from taxation under § 501(c) of the Internal Revenue Code.

[(d)] (E) “Recipient” means each individual in a FIP case.

[(e)] (F) “Temporary cash assistance” means the cash assistance component of the FIP that is funded wholly or partly through Title IV, Part A, of the Social Security Act.

[(f)] (G) “Third party payee” means:

(1) an individual that the Department approves;

(2) a nonprofit organization;

(3) a for-profit organization; or

(4) a governmental unit, including a local department.

[(g)] (H) “Transitional assistance” means assistance provided to a recipient whose temporary cash assistance has been terminated for noncompliance with FIP requirements.

[(h)] (I) “Work activity” means:

(1) job search activity;

(2) subsidized employment in either the public or private sector;

(3) work experience;
(4) on-the-job training;

(5) community service;

(6) training directly related to employment; or

(7) education directly related to employment.

(J) “WORK EXPERIENCE” MEANS UNPAID WORK ACTIVITY, PERFORMED IN RETURN FOR TEMPORARY CASH ASSISTANCE, THAT PROVIDES AN INDIVIDUAL WITH AN OPPORTUNITY TO ACQUIRE THE GENERAL SKILLS, KNOWLEDGE, AND WORK HABITS NECESSARY TO OBTAIN EMPLOYMENT.

5–308.

(a) (1) (i) In this subsection the following words have the meanings indicated.

(ii) “Target work rate” means the rate established for the State by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services based on the State’s caseload reduction credit under the federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program, 42 U.S.C. 22–601 et seq.

(iii) “Work participation rate” means the federal work participation rate established by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services under the federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program, 42 U.S.C. 22–601 et seq.

(2) A family may be eligible for assistance under this subtitle only if the family includes:

(i) a minor child who resides with a custodial parent or other adult caretaker who is a relative of the child; or

(ii) a pregnant individual.

(3) Assistance shall be provided to an applicant or recipient under this subtitle only if the applicant or recipient:

(i) resides in the State at the time of application for assistance;

(ii) if applicable:

1. has applied for child support services with the appropriate local child support enforcement office at the time of application for assistance; and
2. complies with the requirements of the local child support enforcement office;

   (iii) has engaged in job search activities as requested by the Department;

   (iv) participates in work activity under this subtitle; and

   (v) meets all other FIP requirements that the Secretary establishes by regulation.

(4) Subject to paragraph (5) of this subsection, the Department shall allow an applicant or a recipient to meet the work activity requirement for a maximum of 24 months by engaging in:

   (i) a minimum of 20 hours per week of vocational education that leads to an associate degree, a diploma, or a certificate; or

   (ii) an average of at least 20 hours per week of education directly related to employment, which may include:

       1. an adult basic education program;

       2. an English as a second language program; or

       3. a GED program.

(5) (i) For purposes of reporting the work participation rate, the State shall report only the work activities in which an individual is engaged in work.

   An individual shall be considered engaged in work if the individual participates in any of the following work activities:

   A. satisfactory attendance at a secondary school or in a course of study leading to a high school equivalency credential;

   B. on-the-job training;

   C. subsidized employment in either the public or private sector; or

   D. unsubsidized employment.
3. The Department may not require an individual to verify the hours of participation in work activity that is not considered being engaged in work.

   (II) If the work participation rate does not exceed the target work rate by at least 10% in any month, the Department, after providing at least 30 days prior notice to the Senate Finance Committee and the House Appropriations Committee, may, until the work participation rate exceeds the target work rate by at least 10% for 3 consecutive months, suspend the application of:

   1. paragraph (4) of this subsection to new applicants {until the work participation rate exceeds the target work rate by 10% for 3 consecutive months} or

   2. subparagraph (i) of this paragraph.

   (III) 1. Subject to subsubparagraphs 2 and 3 of this subparagraph, to verify subsidized and unsubsidized employment and on-the-job training for purposes of the work participation rate, the Department shall verify an individual’s employment on commencement of the work activity and use the actual hours of employment participation to project the hours of employment participation for a maximum period of 6 months.

   2. Not later than at the end of a 6-month period or at the time the Department receives information that an individual’s actual hours of employment participation have changed, whichever is sooner, the Department shall verify the individual’s current, actual average hours of employment participation to project the hours of employment participation for up to an additional 6 months.

   3. The Department may not require an individual to verify actual hours of employment participation at a frequency other than that required under this subparagraph.

   (6) The Department may require a work-eligible individual to participate in work activity for a maximum of:

   (I) 30 hours per week for an individual with a child at least 6 years old;

   (II) 20 hours per week for a single parent or caretaker relative with a child under the age of 6 years;
(III) A combined average of 35 hours per week for a family with two work-eligible parents who do not receive federally funded child care assistance; or

(IV) A combined average of 55 hours per week for a family with two work-eligible parents who receive federally funded child care assistance, provided that an adult in the family does not have a disability or is not caring for a child with a disability.

(7) (i) A work-eligible individual may choose to participate in work activity for more than the required weekly hours under paragraph (6) of this subsection, up to a maximum of 40 hours per week, provided that working the additional hours does not violate the Federal Fair Labor Standards Act.

(ii) The Department may not reduce the temporary cash assistance of an individual, as provided in § 5–312(e)(1)(i) of this subtitle, if the individual is meeting the Department’s minimum work activity participation requirement and participating in work activity for less than 40 hours per week.

(8) The Department shall accept verification of an individual’s work activity participation through multiple methods, including electronic submission.

(b) (1) An individual may not be required to meet the work activity requirement under subsection [(a)(2)(iv)] (A)(3)(III) of this section if the individual is exempt under criteria the Secretary establishes.

(2) The criteria shall include exemptions for:

(i) Subject to paragraph (3) of this subsection, adults who are required to care for a child who is a recipient under the age of 1 year; [and]

(ii) Subject to paragraph [(3)] (4) of this subsection, adults and children who are recipients and who are severely disabled; AND

(III) Adults who have not received assistance for at least 42 6 months.

(3) An exemption based on an adult’s requirement to care for a child who is a recipient under the age of 1 year may not be restricted to a maximum number of months in the adult’s lifetime.
(4) An individual’s exemption because of severe disability is limited to 12 months unless:

   (i) the individual applies for Supplemental Security Income; and

   (ii) the application is approved, pending, or on appeal.

[(4) (5)] Assistance for an individual who qualifies for an exemption under this subsection but who voluntarily participates in a work activity may not be reduced or terminated as a result of the participation in the work activity.

(c) (1) Assistance for an individual may not be reduced or terminated for noncompliance with the work activity requirement if the individual has good cause under the criteria established by the Secretary.

   (2) The criteria shall provide that any of the following are sufficient to show good cause:

   (i) temporary illness or incapacity;

   (ii) court–required appearances or temporary incarceration;

   (iii) domestic violence;

   (iv) a family crisis that threatens normal family functioning, including:

   1. experiencing homelessness whereby a family:

      A. lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, or shares the housing of other persons due to the loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason;

      B. lives in a motel, hotel, trailer park, or camping ground due to a lack of alternative accommodations;

      C. lives in an emergency shelter or transitional housing;

      D. resides in a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings; or

      E. lives in a car park, public space, vacant or abandoned building, substandard housing, bus station, train station, or similar setting;
2. a housing crisis, including eviction, foreclosure, or other loss of housing; or
3. receiving a utility disconnection notice or having a utility disconnected;
   (v) a breakdown in transportation arrangements;
   (vi) a breakdown in child care arrangements or lack of child care for a child or children who are 12 years old or younger;
   (vii) for a single parent caring for a child younger than 6 years old who is unable to obtain child care:
       1. the unavailability of appropriate child care within a reasonable distance from the parent’s home or work site;
       2. the unavailability or unsuitability of informal child care by a relative or others; or
       3. the unavailability or unsuitability of appropriate and affordable child care arrangements;
   (viii) a lack of supportive services identified and agreed on by an individual and a local department; or
   (ix) the failure of a local department to offer or provide a reasonable accommodation to an individual with a disability.

(d) Subject to the State budget, a legal immigrant is entitled to assistance under this subtitle if the immigrant:
   (1) meets FIP eligibility requirements under this subtitle and any other requirements imposed by the State; and
   (2) (i) arrived in the United States before August 22, 1996; or
       (ii) arrived in the United States on or after August 22, 1996 and is not eligible for federally funded cash assistance.

5–308.1.

(A) The purpose of Work Experience is to improve the employability of individuals who cannot find unsubsidized full-time employment.
(B) The Department may refer an individual to work experience for work activity if:

(1) Private sector employment is not available;

(2) The maximum work experience placement for the individual does not exceed 90 days in a 3–year period;

(3) The Department offers the individual at least three work activity options that include:

   (I) Subject to Subsection (C) of this section, only one work experience option; and

   (II) at least one option that is work activity or a program funded by the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act;

(4) The individual chooses the work experience for work activity;

(5) The Department informs the individual that the individual may subsequently change to different work activity; and

(6) The work experience provides skills that match the individual’s personal, career, and family goals to support economic mobility; and

(7) The work site meets the requirements of Subsection (D) of this section.

(C) If the Department offers work experience as work activity, the Department may not offer community service as work activity.

(D) (1) For a work site to qualify as an appropriate placement for work experience under this section, the work site must:

   (I) be supervised by an employer, a work site sponsor, or any other responsible party on an ongoing basis at least once each day in which the individual is scheduled to participate in the work experience;
(II) Offer participants marketable skills necessary to obtain employment in local high-growth industries identified in the state; and

(III) be limited to not more than five work experience placements at any given time.

(2) Subject to subsection (e)(2) of this section, a work site shall be disqualified from having any individuals in work experience placements for a 5-year period if, in a 1-year period, the work site does not hire the greater of:

(I) if only one individual was placed in the work site for work experience, the individual; or

(II) 50% of individuals placed in the work site for work experience.

(e) (1) If at any time the requirements of subsection (b) of this section are not met, an individual placed in work experience may request a transfer to different work activity.

(2) An individual who transfers from the work site under paragraph (1) of this subsection may not be counted for purposes of the hiring requirement under subsection (d)(2) of this section.

5–308.2.

(A) The purpose of community service is to improve the employability of individuals who cannot find unsubsidized full-time employment.

(B) Community service shall:

(1) be limited to projects that service a useful community purpose in fields including health, social service, environmental protection, education, urban and rural development, welfare, recreation, public facilities, public safety, and child care; and

(2) be supervised on an ongoing basis at least once each day in which the individual is scheduled to participate in the community service.
(C) The Department may refer an individual to community service for work activity if:

1. Private sector employment is not available;
2. The maximum community service placement for the individual does not exceed 90 days in a 3-year period;
3. The Department offers to the individual at least three work activity options that shall include:
   (I) Subject to Subsection (D) of this section, only one community service option; and
   (II) At least one work activity option or a program funded by the Federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act;
4. The individual chooses the community service for work activity;
5. The Department informs the individual that the individual may subsequently change to different work activity;
6. The community service provides skills that match the individual’s personal, career, and family goals to support economic mobility; and
7. When making appropriate community service assignments, the Department has considered the individual’s prior training, experience, and skills.

(D) If the Department offers community service as work activity, the Department may not offer work experience as work activity.

(E) If at any time the requirements of Subsection (C) of this section are not met, an individual placed in community service may request a transfer to different work activity.

5–322.

(a) On or before October 1 each year, the Department shall report to the General Assembly, in accordance with § 2–1257 of the State Government Article, the following information:
(1) for the preceding year:

[(1)] (I) the number of recipients who engaged in vocational education or education directly related to employment;

[(2)] (II) the number of recipients who completed vocational education or education directly related to employment;

[(3)] (III) the number of recipients who obtained or maintained employment for 6 months, 12 months, 18 months, and 24 months after completing vocational education or education directly related to employment; and

[(4)] (IV) the average earnings of recipients who obtained or maintained employment for 6 months, 12 months, 18 months, and 24 months after completing vocational education or education directly related to employment; AND

(2) FOR THE PRECEDING FISCAL YEAR, THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION ON WORK EXPERIENCE AND COMMUNITY SERVICE WORK ACTIVITY PLACEMENTS:

(I) INFORMATION ON THE WORK SITES AND THE PUBLIC, PRIVATE, AND NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS THAT HAVE ENGAGED TEMPORARY CASH ASSISTANCE RECIPIENTS IN WORK EXPERIENCE AND COMMUNITY SERVICE, INCLUDING:

1. A LIST, ORGANIZED BY COUNTY, OF ALL WORK SITES IN THE STATE, INCLUDING UNITS OF STATE, FEDERAL, AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT THAT HAVE ENGAGED TEMPORARY CASH ASSISTANCE RECIPIENTS IN WORK EXPERIENCE;

2. FOR EACH WORK SITE:

A. THE TOTAL NUMBER OF WORK EXPERIENCE PLACEMENTS FOR THE YEAR;

B. THE POSITION, JOB DUTIES, NUMBER OF HOURS, AND MARKET SALARY RATE FOR THE JOB BEING PERFORMED BY THE TEMPORARY CASH ASSISTANCE RECIPIENTS ENGAGED IN WORK EXPERIENCE; AND

C. THE NUMBER OF TEMPORARY CASH ASSISTANCE RECIPIENTS ENGAGED IN WORK EXPERIENCE WHO WERE HIRED BY THE WORK SITE FOR UNSUBSIDIZED EMPLOYMENT; AND
3. Any work sites that were disqualified as an appropriate placement for work experience under §5–308.1(d)(2) of this subtitle; and

4. A list, organized by county, of all public and nonprofit organizations in the State that have engaged temporary cash assistance recipients in community service;

   (II) information, organized by the number, jurisdiction, race, ethnicity, age, and gender of individuals who participated in work experience and community service; and

   (III) information on the employment outcomes of individuals who participated in work experience, including the number of individuals in work experience who were provided direct entry into a full–time job with a wage that:

   1. equals or exceeds the State minimum wage;

   2. equals or exceeds 150% of the State minimum wage; and

   3. equals or exceeds 200% of the State minimum wage.

   (b) The information in the report required under subsection [(a)] (A)(1) of this section shall be broken down by the types of vocational education or education programs in which the recipients engaged, including:

   (1) associate degree programs;

   (2) vocational education programs that do not lead to an associate degree;

   (3) postsecondary education programs that are not included in items (1) or (2) of this subsection;

   (4) adult basic education programs;

   (5) English as a second language programs; and

   (6) GED programs.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect October 1, 2022.
Enacted under Article II, § 17(c) of the Maryland Constitution, May 29, 2022.