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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2025

A N A C T

RELATING TO STATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT -- DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

Introduced By: Senators Britto, McKenney, Raptakis, Appollonio, Vargas, and Tikoian

Date Introduced: March 21, 2025

Referred To: Senate Finance

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 42-12-1 of the General Laws in Chapter 42-12 entitled "Department
2 of Human Services" is hereby amended to read as follows:

3 **42-12-1. Department of human services.**

4 (1) There is hereby established within the executive branch of state government a
5 department which shall be known as the department of human services. The department shall be
6 headed by a director of human services who shall be appointed by the governor with the advice and
7 consent of the senate and who shall serve at the pleasure of the governor.

8 (2) The director shall carry out all of the provisions of all of the general and public laws
9 heretofore carried out by the department of education and the director of social welfare with relation
10 to:

- 11 (a) Vocational rehabilitation;
12 (b) Division of correctional services; and
13 (c) Division of community services, whose several functions are by this chapter transferred
14 to the department of human services.

15 (3) The director shall carry out all department recruitment efforts and job training to attract
16 qualified candidates eligible for the following positions:

- 17 (a) Eligibility technician;
18 (b) Child service enforcement agent;

- 1 (c) Social case worker I & II;
- 2 (d) Employment career advisor;
- 3 (e) The director shall promulgate rules concerning the eligibility of persons for the job
- 4 training program; the granting of a three thousand dollar (\$3,000) stipend from available funds, for
- 5 eligible applicants who have successfully completed the job training program and the department's
- 6 probationary period.

7 SECTION 2. Section 42-72-4 of the General Laws in Chapter 42-72 entitled "Department
8 of Children, Youth and Families" is hereby amended to read as follows:

9 **42-72-4. Qualifications and duties of director.**

10 (a) The director shall meet the following minimum qualifications:

- 11 (1) Hold a master's degree in social work or a closely related field, and have demonstrated
- 12 experience in child welfare and/or children's mental health, and/or juvenile justice; and
- 13 (2) Have at least five (5) years of increasing responsibility in administering programs for
- 14 children.

15 (b) The director's duties include, but are not limited to:

- 16 (1) Administration and direction of the operation of the department;
- 17 (2) Examination of programs, services, and plans for children for the purpose of identifying
- 18 duplications, inefficiencies, effectiveness of programs, resources and unmet needs;
- 19 (3) Securing and analysis of departmental plans and budget requests affecting children's
- 20 programs and services;
- 21 (4) Review of federal funds utilized and available to the state for children's programs and
- 22 services;
- 23 (5) Collation of items in the governor's budget related to programs and services for children
- 24 and issuance of impact statements;
- 25 (6) Formulation of recommendations to the governor and other appropriate department
- 26 heads on planning and expenditures for children's programs and services;
- 27 (7) Liaison with community child advocacy groups, including parents, to receive advice on
- 28 resources, needs, and priorities in the different localities;
- 29 (8) Provide effective public information on children's services in Rhode Island;
- 30 (9) Advise the legislature on the needs of children and their families;
- 31 (10) Establish a central registry for the purpose of reporting, collating, receiving, and
- 32 administering reports involving children;
- 33 (11) Liaison with other state departments, agencies, local governments, and private
- 34 providers of services to coordinate services and maximize resources in developing programs;

1 (12) Formulation of rules and regulations necessary to carry out the provisions of this
2 chapter;

3 (13) Preparation of an annual report and state plan to be sent to the governor and the general
4 assembly;

5 (14) Provision or arrangement for the provision of suitable treatment, rehabilitation, and
6 care for each child under the director's supervision by pursuing the least restrictive placement and,
7 wherever feasible, by effectuating community placements in Rhode Island;

8 (15) The director shall provide for a case management information system that includes
9 data regarding, but not limited to, client entry, screening, client's needs assessment, development
10 of a client service plan, services provision, evaluation, review and monitoring of client progress,
11 and client exit from the system. In addition, the director shall establish a centralized case
12 management unit to receive all service plans and using any additional expertise as may be required,
13 will review, monitor, evaluate, endorse, and/or modify as may be appropriate, each client service
14 plan;

15 (16) Administer in a coordinated and integrated manner all institutions and facilities that
16 are or may come under the jurisdiction of the department; and

17 (17) Develop a comprehensive program for the prevention of problems of children and
18 provide a flexible, innovative, and effective program for the placement, care, and treatment of
19 children committed by any court to the department, transferred to the department by other
20 departments, or voluntarily admitted to the department.

21 (18) The director shall carry out all department recruitment efforts and job training to attract
22 qualified candidates eligible for the following positions:

23 (i) Social case worker I;

24 (ii) Child protective investigator;

25 (iii) The director shall promulgate rules concerning the eligibility of persons for the job
26 training program; the granting of a three thousand dollar (\$3,000) stipend from available funds, for
27 eligible applicants who have successfully completed the job training program and the department's
28 probationary period.

29 SECTION 3. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
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SERVICES

1 This act would provide a three thousand dollar (\$3,000) stipend to a qualified applicant
2 who successfully completes the job training program of the department of human services or
3 department of children, youth and families.

4 This act would take effect upon passage.

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