
DIGEST

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SB 312 Engrossed

2024 Regular Session

Edmonds

Proposed law creates within the Dept. of Children and Family Services (DCFS) the Adoption Awareness program and states that the purpose of the program is to encourage two-parent families, provide awareness of current adoption options, and ensure access to correct information on adoption.

Proposed law defines "agency adoption", "birth parent", "expectant parent", "department", and "home study".

Proposed law directs DCFS to contract with an eligible vendor who will be responsible for providing supportive services.

Proposed law requires a contracted vendor to provide the following services:

- (1) Marketing of adoption information and resources.
- (2) Provide for a telephone hotline providing information about the adoption process including information on adoption process for expectant parents, a biological parents' rights and legal protections, and a list of adoption agencies in this state.
- (3) Education and training about adoption for healthcare professionals serving pregnant women.

Proposed law allows a contracted vendor to subcontract with another entity to provide services.

Proposed law provides that a nonprofit corporation or other entity is eligible to contract with DCFS to provide services if the vendor and any subcontractor meets all of the following requirements:

- (1) Is in good standing with the secretary of state and registered to do business in this state.
- (2) Is capable of providing services.
- (3) Is not an abortion provider or an entity that promotes, refers for, or assists women in obtaining an abortion.

Proposed law provides the eligibility requirements for participation in the Adoption Awareness Program. A participant must be any of the following:

- (1) A Louisiana resident who is the biological parent of an unborn child.
- (2) A parent of a child under two years of age.
- (3) A parent of a child in the custody of DCFS.
- (4) A parent of a minor who is the biological parent of an unborn child.

Proposed law requires the contracted vendor to submit a monthly report on the status and operation of the Adoption Awareness Program and provides requirements for the content of such reports.

Proposed law requires that DCFS finance the Adoption Awareness Program with funds obtained through the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant.

Proposed law allows the contracted vendor to use the available funds to provide required services, market the program with the state, and cover administrative and other associated costs if the administrative costs does not exceed 15%.

Proposed law provides protection of religious freedom, freedom of speech, and freedom of assembly protected by the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution and the La. Constitution to contracted vendors, subcontractors, and employees of contracted vendors or subcontractors.

Proposed law requires that nothing in proposed law is intended to alter the requirements for adoption in present law.

Proposed law requires the La. Dept. of Health and DCFS to include a link to the AdoptionOption.La.Gov website, or any successor state agency website that promotes adoption awareness and makes adoption resource information available to the public, in a prominent location on the departments' websites.

Proposed law provides that the provisions of proposed law shall not be implemented unless monies sufficient to fund proposed law are obtained from the TANF block grant.

Effective Jan. 1, 2025.

(Adds R.S. 46:1445.1-1445.14)

Summary of Amendments Adopted by Senate

Committee Amendments Proposed by Senate Committee on Health and Welfare to the original bill

1. Removes provisions relative to the creation and requirements of an adoption awareness program.
2. Adds requirements for the Louisiana Department of Health and the Department of Children and Family Services to make adoption information available on the departments' websites.

Summary of Amendments Adopted by House

The Committee Amendments Proposed by House Committee on Health and Welfare to the engrossed bill:

1. Create an adoption awareness program within the Dept. of Children and Family Services.
2. Direct the Dept. of Children and Family Services to contract with an eligible vendor who will be responsible for providing supportive services.
3. Require the contract vendor to provide information about the adoption process.
4. Establish eligibility requirements for contracted vendors.
5. Direct the Dept. of Children and Family services to seek funding for the program through the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant.
6. Protect contracted vendors' freedom of speech, freedom of religion, and freedom of assembly as provided for the U.S. Constitution and La. Constitution.
7. Provides that proposed law shall not be implemented unless monies sufficient to fund the provisions of proposed law are obtained from the TANF block grant.