

STATE OF NEW YORK

10104

IN ASSEMBLY

April 29, 2022

Introduced by M. of A. DARLING -- read once and referred to the Committee on Children and Families

AN ACT to amend the social services law, in relation to the foster care block grant and salary enhancements for direct care workers; and making an appropriation therefor

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

1 Section 1. Legislative findings. The legislature finds that the
2 COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on the child welfare work-
3 force within the foster care system. Direct care workers have continued
4 to come to work every day throughout the pandemic, care for our most
5 vulnerable children, and are part of our essential workforce. While
6 other essential workers have been recognized or provided enhanced salary
7 payments, direct care workers in the child welfare system have not.
8 Moreover, the agencies that employ the child welfare workforce have been
9 historically underfunded and as a result the compensation provided to
10 workers does not provide a living wage.

11 Therefore, the legislature proposes salaries for direct care workers
12 be increased starting with the 2022-2023 rate year and continued for the
13 following two years. This investment will help stabilize the current
14 turnover and vacancy rates within the direct care workforce which will
15 have a positive and beneficial impact on children in the foster care
16 system.

17 § 2. Section 398-a of the social services law is amended by adding a
18 new subdivision 2-d to read as follows:

19 (2-d) Payments made directly by social services districts to voluntary
20 foster care agencies to increase the salaries during each of the two
21 thousand twenty-two--two thousand twenty-three, two thousand twenty-
22 three--two thousand twenty-four and two thousand twenty-four--two thou-
23 sand twenty-five rate years, shall be supported by increased funding
24 available through the foster care block grant.

25 § 3. The sum of seventeen million dollars (\$17,000,000), or so much
26 thereof as may be necessary, is hereby appropriated from any moneys in
27 the state treasury in the general fund to the credit of the state

EXPLANATION--Matter in italics (underscored) is new; matter in brackets
[-] is old law to be omitted.

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1 purposes account not otherwise appropriated to the state insurance fund
2 for reimbursements under the foster care block grant to support
3 increases in salaries for direct care staff, caseworkers and case plan-
4 ners, as well as the salaries of such workers' supervisors, working in
5 foster care programs.

6 § 4. This act shall take effect immediately.