

STATE OF NEW YORK

5536

2025-2026 Regular Sessions

IN ASSEMBLY

February 14, 2025

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

AN ACT to amend the social services law, in relation to increasing salaries for foster care 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 foster care 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 2025-2026 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 service districts to voluntary
20 foster care agencies to increase employee salaries during each of the
21 two thousand twenty-five--two thousand twenty-six, two thousand twenty-
22 six--two thousand twenty-seven, and two thousand twenty-seven--two thou-
23 sand twenty-eight rate years shall be supported by increased funding
24 available through the foster care block grant. Such payments shall be

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

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1 used to increase the salaries of foster care agency employees, includ-
2 ing, but not limited to, direct care staff, caseworkers, and case plan-
3 ners, as well as the salaries of such workers' supervisors working in
4 such foster care agencies.

5 § 3. The sum of seventeen million dollars (\$17,000,000), or so much
6 thereof as may be necessary, is hereby appropriated to the state insur-
7 ance fund out of any moneys in the state treasury in the general fund to
8 the credit of the state purpose account, not otherwise appropriated, and
9 made immediately available for the purposes of increases in salaries of
10 foster care agency employees, including, but not limited to, direct care
11 staff, caseworkers, and case planners, as well as the salaries of such
12 workers' supervisors working in such foster care agencies. Such moneys
13 shall be payable on the audit and warrant of the comptroller on vouchers
14 certified or approved by the department of social services in the manner
15 prescribed by law.

16 § 4. This act shall take effect immediately.