

1 State of Arkansas
2 95th General Assembly
3 Regular Session, 2025

A Bill

HOUSE BILL 1543

4
5 By: Representative Underwood
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For An Act To Be Entitled

8
9 AN ACT TO AMEND THE LAW CONCERNING PUBLIC ASSISTANCE;
10 TO ESTABLISH THE WORKFORCE EXPERIENCE OPPORTUNITIES
11 ACT OF 2025; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.
12
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Subtitle

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15 TO ESTABLISH THE WORKFORCE EXPERIENCE
16 OPPORTUNITIES ACT OF 2025.
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18 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:
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21 SECTION 1. Arkansas Code Title 20, Chapter 76 is amended to add an
22 additional subchapter to read as follows:

23 Subchapter 9 - Workforce Experience Opportunities Act of 2025
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25 20-76-901. Title.

26 This subchapter shall be known and may be cited as the "Workforce
27 Experience Opportunities Act of 2025".
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29 20-76-902. Legislative purpose.

30 The purpose of this subchapter is to increase employment, income, and
31 self-sufficiency among families by giving recipients of Supplemental
32 Nutrition Assistance Program benefits more opportunities to comply with work
33 requirements by volunteering at any public entity that receives state
34 funding.
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36 20-76-903. Definitions.



1 As used in this subchapter:

2 (1) "Accept and accommodate" means allowing an individual to
3 physically enter and remain in the portion of a physical address open to the
4 public when an employee is present for no less than four (4) hours per day
5 and providing access to a bathroom;

6 (2) "State-funded entity" means:

7 (A) An agency, a sub-agency, a political subdivision of
8 the state, or an office of the state with a physical address at which
9 individuals are employed indoors at least part-time; or

10 (B) A municipal entity or office of a municipal entity
11 that accepts any amount of state funding in a given calendar year with a
12 physical address at which individuals are employed indoors at least part-
13 time; and

14 (3) "Work requirement volunteer" means a state resident who:

15 (A) Is required to comply with the employment and training
16 program requirement required in § 20-76-803 as a condition of eligibility for
17 the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program; and

18 (B) Does not qualify for an exemption under 7 U.S.C. §
19 2015(d)(2), as it existed on January 1, 2025.

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21 20-76-904. Requirements of state-funded entities.

22 (a) A state-funded entity shall accept and accommodate a work
23 requirement volunteer who presents documentation of his or her work
24 requirement and photographic identification.

25 (b) A state-funded entity that accepts a work requirement volunteer
26 shall:

27 (1) Provide timely documentation to the agency responsible for
28 monitoring the work requirement volunteer's compliance with a work
29 requirement that accurately certifies:

30 (A) The work requirement volunteer's physical presence;
31 and

32 (B) Any additional descriptions or information required by
33 the responsible agency; and

34 (2) Allow the work requirement volunteer to monitor the
35 operations of the state-funded entity to the extent the monitoring does not
36 interfere with:

1 (A) Essential functions: or

2 (B) The health and safety of employees or the public.

3 (c) In accepting and accommodating a work requirement volunteer, a
4 state-funded entity:

5 (1) May allow or require a work requirement volunteer to
6 participate in:

7 (A) An activity for which no experience or education is
8 required; or

9 (B) An activity for which a work requirement volunteer is
10 qualified, including without limitation an activity that occurs in a place
11 other than the state-funded entity's physical address;

12 (2) May prohibit a work requirement volunteer from engaging in
13 an activity on the premises of the state-funded entity other than providing
14 himself or herself basic human necessities of relief when the work
15 requirement volunteer is not otherwise engaged; and

16 (3) Shall not allow the acceptance and accommodation of a work
17 requirement volunteer to negatively interfere with essential operations of
18 the state-funded entity.

19 (d) A state-funded entity is exempt from this subchapter if the
20 presence of a work requirement volunteer anywhere on the premises will
21 inevitably or inherently interfere with the essential operations of the
22 state-funded entity or negatively impact the health and safety of the
23 community served by the state-funded entity.

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25 20-76-905. Liability.

26 (a) Except in a case of reckless conduct or intentional, willful, or
27 wanton misconduct, a state-funded entity or employee of a state-funded entity
28 is not liable for an injury, including without limitation economic and
29 noneconomic damages or death:

30 (1) Arising from the conduct of a work requirement volunteer; or

31 (2) Experienced by a work requirement volunteer either at a
32 physical location or during an activity associated with the state-funded
33 entity.

34 (b) A work requirement volunteer is not eligible for workers
35 compensation benefits under § 11-9-101 et seq.

36 (c)(1) A defense under this section is in addition to any other

1 defense, immunity, or limitation of liability provided by law.

2 (2) This section does not:

3 (A) Constitute a waiver of sovereign immunity of the state
4 or governmental immunity of any political subdivision; or

5 (B) Modify the defenses or duties of a work requirement
6 volunteer for conduct associated with his or her acceptance and accommodation
7 by a state-funded entity.

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9 SECTION 2. DO NOT CODIFY. Effective date.

10 This subchapter shall be effective on and after January 1, 2026.

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