

LEGISLATURE OF NEBRASKA  
ONE HUNDRED FIFTH LEGISLATURE  
FIRST SESSION

**LEGISLATIVE BILL 358**

Introduced by McCollister, 20; Crawford, 45; Howard, 9; Morfeld, 46;  
Pansing Brooks, 28; Walz, 15.

Read first time January 13, 2017

Committee: Health and Human Services

1 A BILL FOR AN ACT relating to public assistance; to amend section  
2 68-1017.02, Revised Statutes Cumulative Supplement, 2016; to change  
3 provisions relating to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance  
4 Program; to harmonize provisions; and to repeal the original  
5 section.

6 Be it enacted by the people of the State of Nebraska,

1           Section 1. Section 68-1017.02, Revised Statutes Cumulative  
2 Supplement, 2016, is amended to read:

3           68-1017.02 (1)(a) The Department of Health and Human Services shall  
4 apply for and utilize to the maximum extent possible, within limits  
5 established by the Legislature, any and all appropriate options available  
6 to the state under the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program  
7 and regulations adopted under such program to maximize the number of  
8 Nebraska residents being served under such program within such limits.  
9 The department shall seek to maximize federal funding for such program  
10 and minimize the utilization of General Funds for such program and shall  
11 employ the personnel necessary to determine the options available to the  
12 state and issue the report to the Legislature required by subdivision (b)  
13 of this subsection.

14           (b) The department shall submit electronically an annual report to  
15 the Health and Human Services Committee of the Legislature by December 1  
16 on efforts by the department to carry out the provisions of this  
17 subsection. Such report shall provide the committee with all necessary  
18 and appropriate information to enable the committee to conduct a  
19 meaningful evaluation of such efforts. Such information shall include,  
20 but not be limited to, a clear description of various options available  
21 to the state under the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program,  
22 the department's evaluation of and any action taken by the department  
23 with respect to such options, the number of persons being served under  
24 such program, and any and all costs and expenditures associated with such  
25 program.

26           (c) The Health and Human Services Committee of the Legislature,  
27 after receipt and evaluation of the report required in subdivision (b) of  
28 this subsection, shall issue recommendations to the department on any  
29 further action necessary by the department to meet the requirements of  
30 this section.

31           (2)(a) The department shall develop a state outreach plan to promote

1 access by eligible persons to benefits of the Supplemental Nutrition  
2 Assistance Program. The plan shall meet the criteria established by the  
3 Food and Nutrition Service of the United States Department of Agriculture  
4 for approval of state outreach plans. The Department of Health and Human  
5 Services may apply for and accept gifts, grants, and donations to develop  
6 and implement the state outreach plan.

7 (b) For purposes of developing and implementing the state outreach  
8 plan, the department shall partner with one or more counties or nonprofit  
9 organizations. If the department enters into a contract with a nonprofit  
10 organization relating to the state outreach plan, the contract may  
11 specify that the nonprofit organization is responsible for seeking  
12 sufficient gifts, grants, or donations necessary for the development and  
13 implementation of the state outreach plan and may additionally specify  
14 that any costs to the department associated with the award and management  
15 of the contract or the implementation or administration of the state  
16 outreach plan shall be paid out of private or federal funds received for  
17 development and implementation of the state outreach plan.

18 (c) The department shall submit the state outreach plan to the Food  
19 and Nutrition Service of the United States Department of Agriculture for  
20 approval on or before August 1, 2011, and shall request any federal  
21 matching funds that may be available upon approval of the state outreach  
22 plan. It is the intent of the Legislature that the State of Nebraska and  
23 the Department of Health and Human Services use any additional public or  
24 private funds to offset costs associated with increased caseload  
25 resulting from the implementation of the state outreach plan.

26 (d) The department shall be exempt from implementing or  
27 administering a state outreach plan under this subsection, but not from  
28 developing such a plan, if it does not receive private or federal funds  
29 sufficient to cover the department's costs associated with the  
30 implementation and administration of the plan, including any costs  
31 associated with increased caseload resulting from the implementation of

1 the plan.

2 (3)(a)(i) On or before October 1, 2017 ~~2011~~, the department shall  
3 create a TANF-funded program or policy that, in compliance with federal  
4 law, establishes categorical eligibility for federal food assistance  
5 benefits pursuant to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program to  
6 maximize the number of Nebraska residents being served under such program  
7 ~~in a manner that does not increase the current gross income eligibility~~  
8 ~~limit.~~

9 (ii) Such TANF-funded program or policy shall eliminate all asset  
10 limits for eligibility for federal food assistance benefits, except that  
11 the total of liquid assets which includes cash on hand and funds in  
12 personal checking and savings accounts, money market accounts, and share  
13 accounts shall not exceed twenty-five thousand dollars pursuant to the  
14 Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, as allowed under federal law  
15 and under 7 C.F.R. 273.2(j)(2).

16 (iii) Such TANF-funded program or policy shall increase the gross  
17 income eligibility limit to one hundred fifty-eight percent of the  
18 federal Office of Management and Budget income poverty guideline as  
19 allowed under federal law and under 7 C.F.R. 273.2(j)(2) for fiscal year  
20 2017-18 and to one hundred eighty-five percent of the federal Office of  
21 Management and Budget income poverty guideline as allowed under federal  
22 law and under 7 C.F.R.273.2(j)(2) for fiscal year 2018-19 and each fiscal  
23 year thereafter but shall not increase the net income eligibility limit.

24 (iv) ~~(iii)~~ This subsection becomes effective only if the department  
25 receives funds pursuant to federal participation that may be used to  
26 implement this subsection.

27 (b) For purposes of this subsection:

28 (i) Federal law means the federal Food and Nutrition Act of 2008, 7  
29 U.S.C. 2011 et seq., and regulations adopted under the act; and

30 (ii) TANF means the federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families  
31 program established in 42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.

1           (4)(a) Within the limits specified in this subsection, the State of  
2 Nebraska opts out of the provision of the federal Personal Responsibility  
3 and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, as such act existed on  
4 January 1, 2009, that eliminates eligibility for the Supplemental  
5 Nutrition Assistance Program for any person convicted of a felony  
6 involving the possession, use, or distribution of a controlled substance.

7           (b) A person shall be ineligible for Supplemental Nutrition  
8 Assistance Program benefits under this subsection if he or she (i) has  
9 had three or more felony convictions for the possession or use of a  
10 controlled substance or (ii) has been convicted of a felony involving the  
11 sale or distribution of a controlled substance or the intent to sell or  
12 distribute a controlled substance. A person with one or two felony  
13 convictions for the possession or use of a controlled substance shall  
14 only be eligible to receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program  
15 benefits under this subsection if he or she is participating in or has  
16 completed a state-licensed or nationally accredited substance abuse  
17 treatment program since the date of conviction. The determination of such  
18 participation or completion shall be made by the treatment provider  
19 administering the program.

20           Sec. 2. Original section 68-1017.02, Revised Statutes Cumulative  
21 Supplement, 2016, is repealed.