

## LEGISLATIVE BILL 455

Approved by the Governor June 13, 1995

Introduced by Bohlke, 33, Bromm, 23, Day, 19, Matzke, 47, McKenzie, 34,  
Wesely, 26, at the request of the Governor

AN ACT relating to public assistance; to amend sections 43-504, 68-104, 68-131, and 68-1020, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, and sections 43-512, 68-1702, 68-1708, 68-1711, 68-1713, 68-1715, 68-1716, 68-1717, 68-1721, 68-1724, and 68-1730, Revised Statutes Supplement, 1994; to change provisions relating to aid to dependent children, medicaid, self-sufficiency contracts, reports, implementation of waivers, cash assistance, and eligibility for county assistance programs; to require reports, recommendations, and studies; to provide for an advisory committee and a task force; to provide for a plan for health care access; to provide for adjustment of payments and reimbursements; to eliminate provisions relating to an assessment tool, a report, the Nebraska Training Partnership, and a committee; to harmonize provisions; to provide operative dates; to repeal the original sections; to outright repeal sections 68-1710, 68-1712, 68-1714, and 68-1735, Revised Statutes Supplement, 1994; and to declare an emergency.

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

Section 1. Section 43-504, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, is amended to read:

43-504. (1) The term dependent child shall mean a child under the age of eighteen years, or under the age of nineteen if he or she is a full-time student in a secondary school or in the equivalent level of vocational or technical training, and if, before he or she attains age nineteen, he or she may reasonably be expected to complete the program of such secondary school or such training, who has been deprived of parental support or care by reason of the death, continued absence from the home, or physical or mental incapacity of a parent, or partial or total unemployment of the supporting parent, and who is living with his or her father, mother, grandfather, grandmother, brother, sister, stepfather, stepmother, stepbrother, stepsister, uncle, aunt, first cousin, nephew, or niece, in a place of residence maintained by one or more of such relatives as his, her, or their own home, or who has been removed from the home of such relative as a result of judicial determination to the effect that continuation therein would be contrary to the welfare of such child with placement of such child in a foster family home or child care institution as a result of such determination when the state, any court having jurisdiction of such child, or the county social services agency is responsible for the care and placement of such child and one of the following conditions exists: (a) Such child received aid from the state in or for the month in which court proceedings leading to such determination were initiated; (b) such child would have received assistance in or for such month if application had been made therefor; or (c) such child had been living with such a relative specified in this subsection at any time within six months prior to the month in which such proceedings were initiated and would have received such aid in or for the month that such proceedings were initiated if in such month the child had been living with, and removed from the home of, such a relative and application had been made therefor.

(2) ~~Except as provided in subdivision (2)(b) of section 68-1724,~~ in awarding aid to dependent children payments, the term dependent child shall include an unborn child but only during the last three months of pregnancy. children: ~~As soon as it is medically determined that pregnancy exists, application may be made for initial eligibility or for an increase in an existing unit budget. Payments which do not meet applicable criteria established by federal law for pregnant women and unborn children shall be made from state funds. Only for the purpose of meeting federal requirements, a pregnant woman may be eligible but only (a) if it has been medically verified that the child is expected to be born in the month such payments are made or expected to be born within the three-month period following such month of payment and (b) if such child had been born and was living with her in the month of payment, she would be eligible for aid to families with dependent children. As soon as it is medically determined that pregnancy exists, a pregnant woman who meets the other requirements for aid to dependent children shall be eligible for medical assistance.~~

(3) A physically or medically handicapped child shall mean a child

who, by reason of a physical defect or infirmity, whether congenital or acquired by accident, injury, or disease, is or may be expected to be totally or partially incapacitated for education or for remunerative occupation.

~~(4) Notwithstanding subsection (2) of this section, commencing December 1, 1992, through June 30, 1995, in awarding aid to dependent children payments, the term dependent child shall include an unborn child, but only during the last three months of pregnancy.~~

Sec. 2. Section 43-512, Revised Statutes Supplement, 1994, is amended to read:

43-512. (1) Any dependent child as defined in section 43-504 or any relative of such a dependent child may file with the Department of Social Services a written application for financial assistance for such child on forms furnished by the department.

(2) The department, through its agents and employees, shall make such investigation pursuant to the application as it deems necessary or as may be required by the county attorney or authorized attorney. If the investigation or the application for financial assistance discloses that such child has a parent or stepparent who is able to contribute to the support of such child and has failed to do so, a copy of the finding of such investigation and a copy of the application shall immediately be filed with the county attorney or authorized attorney.

(3) The department shall make a finding as to whether the application referred to in subsection (1) of this section should be allowed or denied. If the department finds that the application should be allowed, the department shall further find the amount of monthly assistance which should be paid with reference to such dependent child. Except as may be otherwise provided, payments shall be made by state warrant, and the amount of payments shall not exceed three hundred dollars per month when there is but one dependent child and one eligible caretaker relative in any home, plus an additional seventy-five dollars per month on behalf of each additional eligible person. No payments shall be made for amounts totaling less than ten dollars per month except in the recovery of overpayments.

(4) The amount which shall be paid as assistance with respect to a dependent child shall be based in each case upon the conditions disclosed by the investigation made by the department. An appeal shall lie from the finding made in each case to the Director of Social Services. Such appeal may be taken by any taxpayer or by any relative of such child. Proceedings for and upon appeal shall be conducted in the same manner as provided for in section 68-1016.

(5)(a) For the purpose of preventing dependency, the director shall adopt and promulgate rules and regulations providing for services to former and potential recipients of aid to dependent children and medical assistance benefits. The director shall adopt and promulgate rules and regulations establishing programs and cooperating with programs of work incentive, work experience, job training, and education. The provisions of this section with regard to determination of need, amount of payment, maximum payment, and method of payment shall not be applicable to families or children included in such programs.

(b) If a recipient of aid to dependent children becomes ineligible for aid to dependent children as a result of increased hours of employment or increased income from employment after having participated in any of the programs established pursuant to subdivision (a) of this subsection, the recipient may be eligible for the following benefits, as provided in rules and regulations of the department in accordance with sections 402, 417, and 1925 of the Social Security Act, as amended, Public Law 100-485, in order to help the family during the transition from public assistance to independence:

(i) An additional aid to dependent children payment in the amount of one-half of the previous month's aid to dependent children grant;

(ii) Child care Except as provided in subdivision (1)(c) of section 68-1724, child care for up to twelve months following the month in which the recipient begins employment if such child care services are needed to assist in employment retention, subject to a sliding fee schedule if one is adopted by the department; and

(iii) Medical Except as may be provided in accordance with subsection (2) of section 68-1713 and subdivision (1)(c) of section 68-1724, medical assistance for up to twelve months after the month the recipient becomes employed and is no longer eligible for aid to dependent children.

(6) For purposes of sections 43-512 to 43-512.10 and 43-512.12 to 43-512.18:

(a) Authorized attorney shall mean an attorney, employed by the county subject to the approval of the county board, employed by the department, or appointed by the court, who is authorized to investigate and

prosecute child, spousal, and medical support cases. An authorized attorney shall represent the state as provided in section 43-512.03;

(b) Medical support shall include all expenses associated with the birth of a child and, if required pursuant to section 42-369 or 43-290, medical and hospital insurance coverage or membership in a health maintenance organization or preferred provider organization; and

(c) Spousal support shall be defined as provided in section 42-347.

Sec. 3. Section 68-104, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, is amended to read:

68-104. The Department of Social Services shall be the overseer of the poor and shall be vested with the entire and exclusive superintendence of the poor in this state, except that, subject to the limitations of section 68-1022, the county board of each county shall furnish such medical service as may be required for the poor of the county who are not eligible for other medical assistance programs and general assistance for the poor of the county. Any person who is or becomes ineligible for other medical assistance programs due to his or her own actions or inactions shall also be ineligible for medical services from the county.

The county board of each county shall administer such the medical assistance provided pursuant to this section. A county board may enter into an agreement with the Department of Social Services which allows the department to aid in the administration of such medical assistance program. In providing medical and hospital care for the poor, the county board shall make use of any existing facilities, including tax-supported hospitals and charitable clinics so far as the same may be available, and shall use the financial eligibility criteria established for the standard of need developed by the county pursuant to section 68-126.

Sec. 4. Section 68-131, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, is amended to read:

68-131. When any poor person ~~shall~~ does not have a spouse, parent, or stepparent supporting him or her or is not eligible for other general assistance programs, then the poor person shall receive such relief, referred to as general assistance for purposes of sections 68-131 to 68-148, out of the treasury of the county in which he or she has legal settlement at the time of applying for assistance, in the manner provided in sections 68-131 to 68-148. Any person who is or becomes ineligible for other general assistance programs due to his or her own actions or inactions shall also be ineligible for general assistance from the county.

Sec. 5. The Legislature finds that it is in the best interests of the State of Nebraska to have health care services available to as many Nebraskans as possible. The Legislature further finds that the medical assistance program established in sections 68-1018 to 68-1025, also known as medicaid, should be utilized to the extent possible under federal law in order to provide health care for low-income children and families in Nebraska. The Legislature further finds this goal can be met in part by providing prenatal care to pregnant women and care to infants at the maximum level allowed by federal law. Such persons qualify for care if the family income is less than or equal to one hundred fifty percent of the federal Office of Management and Budget income poverty guidelines. It is the intent of this section and section 68-1020 to provide such health care services.

Sec. 6. Section 68-1020, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, is amended to read:

68-1020. (1) Medical assistance shall be paid on behalf of dependent children, aged persons, blind individuals, and disabled individuals, as defined in sections 43-504 and 68-1002 to 68-1005, and on behalf of all individuals less than twenty-one years of age who are eligible under section 1905(a) of the Social Security Act, as amended.

(2) The Director of Social Services shall ~~provide~~, through rule and regulation, adopt and promulgate rules and regulations governing provision of such medical assistance benefits to qualified individuals:

(a) Who are presumptively eligible as allowed under section 9407, ~~Public Law 99-509, 100th Congress, 1986 42 U.S.C. 1396a, as amended;~~ or

(b) Who have income at or below one hundred fifty percent of the Office of Management and Budget ~~Budget's~~ income poverty guidelines, without regard to resources, including children up to such age as allowed under section 9407, ~~Public Law 99-509, 100th Congress, 1986 42 U.S.C. 1396a, as amended.~~

Sec. 7. Section 68-1702, Revised Statutes Supplement, 1994, is amended to read:

68-1702. The Governor's Roundtable established under section 68-1701 shall supervise the conduct of and review and make recommendations regarding the results of the studies required by sections 68-1703 to 68-1705

and 68-1712 pertaining to job creation, tax incentives, unemployment compensation, and education and training programs that assist low-income Nebraskans to attain and maintain economic self-sufficiency. Such recommendations, including any necessary legislation, shall be presented to the Governor and the Legislature not later than October 15, 1994.

Sec. 8. Section 68-1708, Revised Statutes Supplement, 1994, is amended to read:

68-1708. Sections 68-1701 to 68-1735 ~~68-1734~~ shall be known and may be cited as the Welfare Reform Act.

Sec. 9. Section 68-1711, Revised Statutes Supplement, 1994, is amended to read:

68-1711. State agencies, including the Department of Social Services and the Department of Labor, which assess training options, job readiness, adult basic skills, aptitudes, interests, workplace maturity, and career development of applicants for services shall utilize the a common, comprehensive assessment tool, developed pursuant to section 68-1710.

Sec. 10. Section 68-1713, Revised Statutes Supplement, 1994, is amended to read:

68-1713. (1) The Department of Social Services shall submit a waiver request or requests to the United States Department of Health and Human Services and the United States Department of Agriculture as necessary for federal authorization to implement the provisions of the Welfare Reform Act. The Department of Social Services may include the provisions of sections 68-1718 to 68-1726 in its waiver requests and shall may designate a county or counties for implementation on or after July 1, 1995, of such sections for recipient families in the aid to dependent children program. It is the intent of the Legislature that such designated counties include at least one county with a population of not more than thirty-five thousand inhabitants and one county with a population of at least one hundred fifty thousand inhabitants but not more than three hundred thousand inhabitants. The department shall not implement any waiver approved under this section until the provisions of the waiver as approved by the United States Department of Health and Human Services or the United States Department of Agriculture have been presented to and approved by the legislature.

The Department of Social Services shall implement the waivers approved by the United States Department of Health and Human Services or the United States Department of Agriculture, which waivers are entitled:

- (a) Permit Work Experience in Private for Profit Enterprises;
- (b) Permit Job Search to Extend Beyond Eight Weeks Each Year;
- (c) Permit Employment to be Considered a JOBS Program Component;
- (d) Make Sanctions More Stringent to Emphasize Participant

Obligations:

- (e) Alternative Hearing Process;
- (f) Permit Adults in Two-Parent Households to Participate in JOBS

Activities Based on Their Self-Sufficiency Needs;

(g) Eliminate Exemptions for Individuals with Children Between the Ages of 12 Weeks and Age Six;

(h) Providing Poor Working Families with Transitional Child Care to Ease the Transition from Welfare to Self-Sufficiency;

(i) Require Adults in the Recipient Family to Complete and Comply with Self-Sufficiency Contracts Even Where They Do Not Have Parental Responsibility and File Only for the Children;

(j) Provide Transitional Health Care for 24 Months After Termination of ADC;

(k) Cap Family Benefits Based on the Number of Children in the Unit at the Time of Initial Eligibility;

(l) Require Adults to Ensure that Children in the Family Unit Attend School;

- (m) Encourage Minor Parents to Live with Their Parents;
- (n) Establish a Resource Limit of \$5,000 for ADC Entitlement;
- (o) Exclude the Value of One Vehicle Per Family When Determining ADC

Eligibility:

(p) Exclude the Cash Value of Life Insurance Policies in Calculating Resources for ADC;

(q) Permit the Self-Sufficiency Contract Assessment to Substitute for the Six-Month ADC Redetermination Process;

(r) Establish Food Stamps as a Continuous Benefit with Eligibility Reevaluated with Yearly Redeterminations;

(s) Permit Nebraska to Establish Lower Payment Levels than the Payment Levels in Effect on May 1, 1988, for Those Families Which Elect to Receive Benefits under the Time-Limited ADC, High Disregards Program;

- (t) Permit ADC Parents to Keep More of Their Earnings Before Their

Welfare Grants are Reduced, except that under the high disregard program the department shall disregard one hundred dollars plus sixty percent of the remaining monthly earned income;

(u) Disregard Financial Assistance Received Intended for Books, Tuition, or Other Self-Sufficiency Related Use;

(v) Culture: Eliminate the 100-Hour Rule, The Quarter of Work Requirement, and The 30-Day Unemployed/Underemployed Period for ADC-UP Eligibility;

(w) Make ADC a Time-Limited Program;

(x) Eliminate Self-Initiated Training as a JOBS Option; and

(y) Other Waivers: Statewide Operation of the Demonstration Project.

Before the approved waiver is submitted to the legislature for approval, the department shall also submit to the legislature specific and detailed guidelines and standards which it will utilize to carry out the purposes of the act concerning the following areas:

(a) What items will comprise the self-sufficiency contract for purposes of section 68-1719;

(b) What standards will be used to determine whether the recipient is complying with the terms of the self-sufficiency contract for purposes of subdivision (3)(b) of section 68-1723;

(c) A definition of self-sufficiency;

(d) The definition of job for purposes of subdivision (1)(e) of section 68-1724;

(e) What will be considered extreme hardship for purposes of subdivision (1)(e) of section 68-1724;

(f) What will be considered the state not carrying out its responsibility under the self-sufficiency contract for purposes of subdivision (1)(a) of section 68-1724;

(g) Analysis of mediation or contract dispute resolution; including an independent process that could be utilized by the department; who will provide such services; and what standards will be utilized for mediation or contract dispute resolution;

(h) The elements which will be used in the assessment under section 68-1718;

(i) What benchmarks and standards will be used to analyze family outcomes related to economic self-sufficiency as required by section 68-1716;

(j) What elements will be considered in determining whether an adult fails to cooperate in carrying out the terms of the contract for purposes of subsection (2) of section 68-1723;

(k) Jobs availability information reflecting the report from the Governor's Roundtable. Such information shall include the location of available jobs, the type of jobs available; and the levels of pay and benefits;

(l) What transitional health coverage shall consist of, whom it will include; and what the sliding-fee schedule shall consist of; and

(m) A description of the child-care subsidy sliding-fee scale.

At the end of the first year of implementation, the department shall identify any adjustments or adaptations that may be needed before the waivers are implemented in other areas of the state. Such review shall include an evaluation of the impact of subdivisions (2)(b) and (c) of section 68-1724. The department shall implement the approved waivers in additional counties as necessary to complete statewide implementation. If federal waiver approval of one or more provisions of the act is granted, the department may implement the provision or provisions; in accordance with federal approval:

(2) The Department of Social Services shall (a) apply for a waiver to allow for a sliding-fee schedule for the population served by the caretaker relative program or (b) pursue other public or private mechanisms, to provide for transitional health care benefits to individuals and families who do not qualify for cash assistance. It is the intent of the Legislature that transitional health care coverage be made available on a sliding-scale basis to individuals and families with incomes up to one hundred eighty-five percent of the federal poverty level if other health care coverage is not available.

For purposes of this section, approved by the Legislature shall mean the introduction, consideration, and enactment of legislation.

Sec. 11. Section 68-1715, Revised Statutes Supplement, 1994, is amended to read:

68-1715. If any provision of the Welfare Reform Act is in conflict with any of the statutes of Nebraska, the Department of Social Services shall prepare a report of such statutes to be considered for change or amendment by the legislature. The Department of Social Services shall adopt and promulgate rules and regulations to carry out the Welfare Reform Act.

Sec. 12. Section 68-1716, Revised Statutes Supplement, 1994, is

amended to read:

68-1716. (1) The Department of Social Services shall evaluate the impact of the Welfare Reform Act, including, but not limited to, analysis of family outcomes related to attaining or regaining and maintaining economic self-sufficiency. The evaluation shall include opportunities for meaningful recipient input. The evaluation shall begin on the date of implementation of any approved waivers, and the results shall be reported to the Governor and the Legislature annually, not later than October 1, 1996, and each October 1 thereafter through October 1, 2000.

(2) At the end of each year, the department shall also report to the Legislature the number of adults declared ineligible for cash assistance under section 68-1723 because of a parent's failure to cooperate in carrying out the terms of a self-sufficiency contract.

Sec. 13. Section 68-1717, Revised Statutes Supplement, 1994, is amended to read:

68-1717. After implementation of approved waivers as provided in section 68-1713, the Department of Social Services shall submit a waiver request or requests to the United States Department of Health and Human Services and the United States Department of Agriculture as necessary for federal authorization to eliminate the welfare programs entitled state supplemental assistance to the aged, blind, and disabled, aid to dependent children, food stamps, and low-income energy assistance and to create a single simplified assistance system. The if federal waiver approval is granted, the various eligibility rules and processes connected to each of these current the public assistance programs listed in this section shall be replaced by a single, simplified set of eligibility rules and regulations adopted and promulgated by the department. Eligibility criteria for services under this section shall be the same for one-parent and for two-parent families. The department shall not implement any waiver or waivers approved under this section unless the provisions of the waiver or waivers as approved by the federal agency or agencies have been presented to and approved by the Legislature.

For purposes of this section, approved by the Legislature shall mean the introduction, consideration, and enactment of legislation.

Sec. 14. Section 68-1721, Revised Statutes Supplement, 1994, is amended to read:

68-1721. (1) Under the self-sufficiency contract developed under section 68-1719, the principal wage earner and other nonexempt members of the applicant family shall be required to participate in one or more of the following: Education, job skills training, work experience, job search, or employment.

(2) Education shall consist of the general education development program, high school, Adult Basic Education, English as a Second Language, postsecondary education, or other education programs approved in the contract.

(3) Job skills training shall include vocational training in technical job skills and equivalent knowledge. Activities shall consist of formalized, technical job skills training, apprenticeships, on-the-job training, or training in the operation of a microbusiness enterprise. The types of training, apprenticeships, or training positions may include, but need not be limited to, the ability to provide services such as home repairs, automobile repairs, respite care, foster care, personal care, and child care. Job skills training shall be prioritized and approved for occupations that facilitate economic self-sufficiency.

(4) The purpose of work experience shall be to improve the employability of applicants by providing work experience and training to assist them to move promptly into regular public or private employment. Work experience shall mean unpaid work in a public, private, for-profit, or nonprofit business or organization. Work experience placements shall take into account the individual's prior training, skills, and experience. A placement shall not exceed three months.

(5) Job search shall assist adult members of recipient families in finding their own jobs. The emphasis shall be placed on teaching the individual to take responsibility for his or her own job development and placement. If an intensive job search does not result in employment within three months, the comprehensive assets assessment and the self-sufficiency contract shall be reassessed.

(6) Employment shall consist of work for pay. The employment may be full-time or part-time but shall be adequate to help the recipient family reach economic self-sufficiency.

Sec. 15. Section 68-1724, Revised Statutes Supplement, 1994, is amended to read:

68-1724. (1) Cash assistance shall be provided for a period or

periods of time not to exceed a total of two years for recipient families with children subject to the following:

(a) If the state fails to meet the specific terms of the self-sufficiency contract developed under section 68-1719, the two-year time limit established in this section shall be extended for an additional period of not more than two years;

(b) The two-year time period for cash assistance shall begin when the self-sufficiency contract is signed or when any children born into the recipient family prior to the initial ten months of assistance reach the age of six months, whichever is later;

(c) When no longer eligible to receive cash assistance, assistance shall be available to reimburse work-related child care expenses even if the recipient family has not achieved economic self-sufficiency. The amount of such assistance shall be based on a cost-shared plan between the recipient family and the state which shall provide assistance up to one hundred eighty-five percent of the federal poverty level for up to twenty-four months. A recipient family may be required to contribute up to twenty percent of such family's gross income for child care. It is the intent of the Legislature that transitional health care coverage be made available on a sliding-scale basis to individuals and families with incomes up to one hundred eighty-five percent of the federal poverty level if other health care coverage is not available;

(d) After receiving cash assistance under this section for two years at a monthly payment level not exceeding that provided in section 43-512, families shall receive no further cash assistance pursuant to this section for at least two years after the assistance period ends; and

(e) The self-sufficiency contract shall be revised and the two-year time period for cash assistance extended when there is no job available for adult members of the recipient family. It is the intent of the Legislature that available job shall mean a job which results in an income of at least equal to the amount of cash assistance that would have been available if receiving assistance minus unearned income available to the recipient family.

The department shall develop policy guidelines to allow for cash assistance to persons who have received the maximum cash assistance provided by this section and who face extreme hardship without additional assistance. For purposes of this section, extreme hardship means a recipient family does not have adequate cash resources to meet the costs of the basic needs of food, clothing, and housing without continuing assistance or the child or children are at risk of losing care by and residence with their parent or parents.

(2) Cash assistance conditions under the Welfare Reform Act shall be as follows:

(a) Adults in recipient families shall mean individuals at least nineteen years of age living with and related to a child eighteen years of age or younger and shall include parents, siblings, uncles, aunts, cousins, or grandparents, whether the relationship is biological, adoptive, or step;

(b) The payment standard shall be based upon family size. Any child born into the recipient family after the initial ten months of participation in the program shall not increase the cash assistance payment, except that child support or other income received on behalf of such child or children shall not be considered as countable income to the recipient family in determining the amount of their cash assistance payment;

(c) The adults in the recipient family shall ensure that the minor children regularly attend school. Education is a valuable personal resource. The cash assistance provided to the recipient family may be reduced when the parent or parents have failed to take reasonable action to encourage the minor children of the recipient family ages sixteen and under to regularly attend school. No reduction of assistance shall be such as may result in extreme hardship. It is the intent of the Legislature that a process be developed to insure communication between the case manager, the parent or parents, and the school to address issues relating to school attendance;

(d) Two-parent families which would otherwise be eligible under section 43-504 or a federally approved waiver shall receive cash assistance under this section;

(e) For minor parents, the assistance payment shall be based on the minor parent's income. If the minor parent lives with at least one parent, the family's income shall be considered in determining eligibility and cash assistance payment levels for the minor parent. If the minor parent lives independently, support shall be pursued from the parents of the minor parent. If the absent parent of the minor's child is a minor, support from his or her parents shall be pursued. Support from parents as allowed under this subdivision shall not be pursued when the family income is less than three hundred percent of the federal poverty guidelines; and

(f) For adults who are not biological or adoptive parents or stepparents of the child or children in the family, if assistance is requested for the entire family, including the adults, a self-sufficiency contract shall be entered into as provided in section 68-1719. If assistance is requested for only the child or children in such a family, such children shall be eligible after consideration of the family's income and if (i) the family cooperates in pursuing child support and (ii) the minor children of the family regularly attend school.

Sec. 16. Section 68-1730, Revised Statutes Supplement, 1994, is amended to read:

68-1730. (1) The study required by section 68-1729 shall develop a plan for the implementation of common human services region boundaries in Nebraska and for location together and integration of programs and services as appropriate to meet the needs of the population of Nebraska. A report shall be provided to the Governor and the Legislature describing these boundaries by October 15, 1994 1995.

(2) The study and report shall address the following: (a) Identification of economic centers; (b) identification of current and projected locations of major highways; (c) location of health centers; (d) location of population centers; (e) demographics; (f) cultural issues; (g) socioeconomic concerns; and (h) the advantages or disadvantages of relocating the disability determinations section from the State Department of Education to the Department of Social Services.

(3) The report shall include the following specific recommendations: (a) Human services region boundaries that are uniform and consistent; (b) a plan for implementation of the proposed human services region boundaries; (c) identification of costs or savings associated with implementation of the report recommendations; and (d) necessary legislation to implement the report recommendations.

Sec. 17. The Department of Social Services shall establish an advisory committee comprised of representatives of nonprofit agencies who provide services to low-income citizens of Nebraska. The advisory group may also include interested members of the public. The advisory committee shall exist for three years after the operative date of this section.

Sec. 18. It is the intent of the Legislature that by July 1, 1999, health care through insurance or other methods should be available to all citizens of Nebraska. The Governor together with the Legislature shall develop a plan to accomplish this goal. The plan should have as an initial priority health care access for children and youth through insurance or other methods. A report shall be made annually to the Legislature on or before January 1 of each year as to the progress that has been made in achieving the goal. While it is the intent of the Legislature that all Nebraskans have access to affordable health care through insurance or other methods, the plan should be developed to provide for health care through insurance or other methods for as many Nebraskans as possible.

Sec. 19. The standard of need for aid to dependent children payments shall be adjusted on July 1 of every second year beginning July 1, 1997. The adjustment shall be made on the basis of the rate of growth of the Consumer Price Index as determined by the United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, for the two previous calendar years. The aid to dependent children payment made shall not be greater than the amount specified by section 43-512.

Sec. 20. In determining the rate of reimbursement for child care, the Department of Social Services shall conduct a market rate survey of the child care providers in the state. The department shall adjust the reimbursement rate for child care every second year beginning July 1, 1997, at a rate not less than the sixtieth percentile and not to exceed the seventy-fifth percentile of the current market rate survey.

Sec. 21. The Legislature finds that welfare reform and the prevention of poverty are the responsibility of both the public and the private sectors and that low-income Nebraskans will best attain and maintain economic self-sufficiency through the job market. The Governor shall establish the Governor's Roundtable composed of current and former welfare recipients and leaders from business, industry, labor, and government. The Governor's Roundtable and the community colleges, state colleges, University of Nebraska, Department of Economic Development, State Department of Education, Department of Labor, Department of Revenue, and Department of Social Services shall analyze the job needs and training needs of business, industry, and labor in Nebraska. On the basis of this analysis, the Governor's Roundtable shall recommend processes, strategies, and resources for linking the unemployed and underemployed with training or jobs that pay a living wage. The Governor's Roundtable shall also make recommendations



pertaining to job creation, tax incentives, unemployment compensation, education and training programs, child care, and health care to assist low-income Nebraskans to attain and maintain economic self-sufficiency. Such recommendations, including any necessary legislation, shall be presented to the Governor and the Legislature not later than December 1, 1997.

Sec. 22. The Department of Labor shall (1) study and make recommendations on adjusting the minimum wage in Nebraska to account for increases in the cost of living, (2) catalog all existing job training resources and programs in Nebraska, and (3) study the availability of jobs in each area of the state, identify the number of jobs available, the type of jobs available, and the pay and benefits associated with the available jobs. These studies and recommendations shall be presented to the Governor's Roundtable and the Clerk of the Legislature not later than December 1, 1996.

Sec. 23. (1) The Legislature finds that (a) technology in delivering government assistance is rapidly changing, (b) such technology includes electronic benefit transfer systems, (c) major improvements have been made to electronic benefit transfer systems to lower costs and increase accountability, (d) such systems are being developed on the federal and nationwide levels, and (e) Nebraska should study and consider being a part of a national electronic benefit transfer system.

(2) The Governor shall appoint a task force consisting of one representative each of the Office of the Governor, the Department of Banking and Finance, the Department of Social Services, and the banking industry, two representatives of the electronic transfer system industry, three representatives of the retail grocery industry, and two persons currently receiving public assistance benefits. The chairpersons of the Banking, Commerce and Insurance Committee and the Health and Human Services Committee of the Legislature shall also be members of the task force. The task force shall study and make recommendations for an electronic benefit transfer system to deliver the most economic method for distribution of public assistance benefits. The study and recommendations shall be presented to the Legislature on or before December 1, 1995.

Sec. 24. Sections 1, 5, 6, 25, and 28 of this act become operative July 1, 1995. The other sections of this act become operative on their effective date.

Sec. 25. Original sections 43-504 and 68-1020, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, are repealed.

Sec. 26. Original sections 68-104, and 68-131, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, and sections 43-512, 68-1702, 68-1708, 68-1711, 68-1713, 68-1715, 68-1716, 68-1717, 68-1721, 68-1724, and 68-1730, Revised Statutes Supplement, 1994, are repealed.

Sec. 27. The following sections are outright repealed: Sections 68-1712, 68-1714, and 68-1735, Revised Statutes Supplement, 1994.

Sec. 28. The following section is outright repealed: Section 68-1710, Revised Statutes Supplement, 1994.

Sec. 29. Since an emergency exists, this act takes effect when passed and approved according to law.