

1 AN ACT concerning State government.

2 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,**
3 **represented in the General Assembly:**

4 Section 5. The Children and Family Services Act is amended
5 by changing Section 44 as follows:

6 (20 ILCS 505/44)

7 Sec. 44. Pat McGuire Child Welfare Education Fellowship
8 Pilot Program.

9 (a) The General Assembly makes all of the following
10 findings:

11 (1) The Department of Children and Family Services is
12 the sole State agency for the planning and coordination of
13 programs and services for the prevention of child abuse
14 and neglect. The Department also provides social services
15 to children and their families, operates children's
16 institutions, and provides certain other rehabilitative
17 and residential services. The Department contracts with
18 many purchase of service agencies for the administration
19 of these programs.

20 (2) Due to numerous factors, including the rate of
21 pay, purchase of service agencies have a high employee
22 turnover rate and struggle to maintain consistent
23 employment levels. This high turnover is disruptive to the

1 delivery of direct child welfare services to families and
2 youth in care.

3 (3) A number of public institutions of higher
4 education in this State offer child welfare social work
5 programs that are designed to train and prepare students
6 for employment in the child welfare social work field,
7 including, but not limited to, employment at purchase of
8 service agencies that provide direct child welfare
9 services to families and youth in care.

10 (4) The Department and public institutions of higher
11 education have a mutual interest in providing greater
12 access to child welfare social work education for a
13 professional workforce that is responsive to the work of
14 the Department through purchase of service agencies.

15 (b) As used in this Section:

16 "Department" means the Department of Children and Family
17 Services.

18 "Direct service" means a position in foster care services,
19 intact services, foster care licensing, adoption, or
20 permanency or a supervisory position in the practice area.

21 "Eligible applicant" means a student who is enrolled in a
22 social work program of study at a participating institution of
23 higher education and who meets all of the qualifications as
24 determined by the Department.

25 "Participating institution" means a public university in
26 this State that is a party to an intergovernmental agreement

1 entered into with the Department in order to participate in
2 the program established under this Section.

3 "Tuition, university fees, and books" includes the
4 customary charge for instruction and books or course material
5 and the additional fixed fees charged for specified purposes
6 that are required generally of students who are not program
7 applicants under this Section for each academic year for which
8 a program applicant under this Section actually enrolls, but
9 does not include room and board, transportation fees, fees
10 payable only once, breakage fees, and other contingent
11 deposits that are refundable in whole or in part. The
12 Department may adopt, by rule not inconsistent with this
13 Section, detailed provisions concerning the computation of
14 tuition, university fees, and books.

15 (c) Beginning with the 2021-2022 academic year and
16 continuing for a period of 6 academic years, the Department
17 shall establish and administer the Pat McGuire Child Welfare
18 Education Fellowship Pilot Program to provide financial
19 assistance to a diverse pool of eligible students who commit
20 to seek and maintain employment at a purchase of service
21 agency that contracts with the Department upon graduation from
22 a participating institution with a degree in social work. The
23 goal of the program is to develop and support an effective and
24 stable direct service child welfare workforce. Pursuant to the
25 Intergovernmental Cooperation Act, each participating
26 institution shall enter into and adhere to all of the

1 provisions of an intergovernmental agreement between the
2 Department and the participating institution. Subject to
3 appropriation, the stipend program shall be available to
4 eligible applicants in this State pursuing either a Bachelor
5 of Social Work or a Master of Social Work degree at a
6 participating institution. The Department may award a stipend
7 of up to \$10,000 each academic year for a maximum of 2 academic
8 years, up to a maximum total of \$20,000 in stipends for the 2
9 academic years combined, to a student under this Section if
10 the participating institution and the Department find that the
11 applicant meets all criteria established by the Department.

12 (d) Each participating institution and the Department
13 shall determine renewal criteria for assistance consistent
14 with the requirements of this Section.

15 (e) Each participating institution shall post on its
16 Internet website the criteria and eligibility requirements to
17 receive a stipend award of funds under this Section and must
18 identify that the stipend awards are up to a maximum of \$10,000
19 per student per academic year for a maximum of 2 academic
20 years, with the total amount of stipends awarded to an
21 eligible applicant or student not to exceed \$20,000 for the
22 duration of the eligible applicant's or student's
23 participation in the program. This information must also be
24 reported to the Department and the Board of Higher Education,
25 and the Department and the Board shall post the information on
26 their respective Internet websites.

1 (f) Prior to receiving a stipend for any academic year, an
2 eligible applicant under this Section shall be required by the
3 participating institution to sign an agreement with the
4 Department under which the stipend recipient pledges that,
5 within 6 months from the date of the stipend recipient's
6 graduation from the participating institution with a Bachelor
7 of Social Work or a Master of Social Work degree for which
8 stipend funds were paid by the Department, the stipend
9 recipient must search for, apply to, and accept full-time
10 employment in a direct service position at a Department
11 purchase of service agency located anywhere in this State. The
12 stipend recipient must remain as a full-time employee in a
13 direct service position at a Department purchase of service
14 agency located anywhere in this State for at least 18 months
15 for each academic year the stipend recipient received a
16 stipend from the Department under the program.

17 (g) If the recipient of a stipend award under this Section
18 fails to search for, apply to, and accept full-time employment
19 in a direct service position at a Department purchase of
20 service agency located anywhere in this State within 6 months
21 following the stipend recipient's graduation from a social
22 work program at a participating institution, the Department
23 shall require the stipend recipient to begin to repay the
24 total amount of the stipend received within 90 calendar days
25 after the end of the 6-month period or as agreed to by the
26 Department. The repayment amount shall be prorated according

1 to the fraction of the employment obligation not completed, at
2 a rate of interest equal to 5%, and, if applicable, reasonable
3 attorney's and collection fees. All repayments collected under
4 this Section shall be forwarded to the State Comptroller for
5 deposit into the fund from which the stipend awards were paid.

6 (h) A stipend recipient under this Section must
7 immediately notify the participating institution and the
8 Department of any changes to the stipend recipient's
9 enrollment status or if the stipend recipient withdraws from
10 the social work program for which the recipient was awarded a
11 stipend under the program.

12 (i) If a stipend recipient's qualified employment is
13 terminated for any reason other than for cause, a stipend
14 recipient must search for, apply to, and accept new,
15 qualified, full-time employment in a direct service position
16 at a Department purchase of service agency located anywhere in
17 this State within 90 calendar days from the stipend
18 recipient's termination of full-time employment, otherwise the
19 stipend recipient is subject to the repayment of stipend funds
20 to the Department.

21 (j) If a stipend recipient's qualified employment is
22 terminated for cause prior to the completion of the program's
23 employment requirement, the stipend recipient shall repay the
24 total amount of stipends received under the program within 90
25 calendar days from termination or as agreed to by the
26 Department. The amount of repayment owed by the recipient

1 shall be prorated based on the amount of the employment
2 requirement that has been satisfied.

3 (k) On or before October 1, 2023 and each October 1
4 thereafter during the Pat McGuire Child Welfare Education
5 Fellowship Pilot Program, the Department shall provide a
6 report and evaluation of the results of the program at each
7 participating institution to the General Assembly and the
8 Office of the Governor. Each participating institution shall
9 track a student's eligibility under the program, the
10 completion of educational requirements, the costs of each
11 student's tuition, university fees, and books, and the
12 application of the recipient's stipends during the recipient's
13 enrollment at the participating institution. The report shall
14 also include the location in this State where each stipend
15 recipient was hired and shall identify the purchase of service
16 agency, the duration of the recipient's employment, and the
17 termination date of the recipient's employment.

18 (l) The sharing and reporting of student data under
19 subsection (k) shall be in accordance with the federal Family
20 Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 and the Illinois
21 School Student Records Act. All parties under this Section
22 must preserve the confidentiality of information as required
23 by law. The names of stipend recipients under this Section are
24 not subject to disclosure under the Freedom of Information
25 Act.

26 (m) The Department is authorized to adopt rules to

1 implement and administer this Section.

2 (Source: P.A. 102-80, eff. 7-9-21.)