

CHILD HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION

2017 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

Chief Sponsor: Robert M. Spendlove

Senate Sponsor: Evan J. Vickers

Cosponsors:	Sandra Hollins	Christine F. Watkins
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LONG TITLE

General Description:

This bill modifies provisions of the Utah Workforce Services Code.

Highlighted Provisions:

This bill:

- provides that an additional purpose of the cash assistance available under the Family Employment Program is to prevent families with children from becoming homeless;

and

- provides additional duties of the Utah Intergenerational Welfare Reform Commission related to reducing and preventing homelessness for children.

Money Appropriated in this Bill:

None

Other Special Clauses:

None

Utah Code Sections Affected:

AMENDS:

35A-3-301, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2015, Chapter 221

35A-9-303, as enacted by Laws of Utah 2013, Chapter 59

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the state of Utah:

Section 1. Section **35A-3-301** is amended to read:

35A-3-301. Purpose -- Legislative findings.

(1) The Legislature finds that:

(a) employment improves the quality of life for parents, children, and individuals by increasing family income, developing job skills, and improving self-esteem; and

(b) the purpose of the cash assistance provided under this part is to assist a parent recipient to obtain employment that is sufficient to sustain a family, to ensure the dignity of those receiving assistance, [and] to prevent families with children from becoming homeless, and to strengthen families.

(2) The Legislature recognizes that even with assistance, some recipients may be unable to attain complete self-sufficiency.

Section 2. Section **35A-9-303** is amended to read:

35A-9-303. Purpose and duties of commission.

(1) The commission's purpose is to:

(a) collaborate in sharing and analyzing data and information regarding intergenerational poverty in the state with a primary focus on data and information regarding children who are at risk of continuing the cycle of poverty and welfare dependency unless outside intervention is made;

(b) examine and analyze shared data and information regarding intergenerational poverty, including the data provided by the intergenerational poverty report described in Section **35A-9-201**, to identify and develop effective and efficient plans, programs, and recommendations to help at-risk children in the state escape the cycle of poverty and welfare dependency[;], which may include avoiding homelessness among children at risk of remaining in poverty;

(c) implement data-driven policies and programs addressing poverty, public assistance, education, and other areas as needed to measurably reduce the incidence of children in the state

who remain in the cycle of poverty and welfare dependency as they become adults;

(d) establish and facilitate improved cooperation between state agencies down to the case worker level in rescuing children from intergenerational poverty and welfare dependency; and

(e) encourage participation and input from the Intergenerational Poverty Advisory Committee established in Section 35A-9-304 and other community resources, including academic experts, advocacy groups, nonprofit corporations, local governments, and religious institutions in exploring strategies and solutions to help children in the state who are victims of intergenerational poverty escape the cycle of poverty and welfare dependency.

(2) The commission shall:

(a) fulfill the commission's purposes as listed in Subsection (1);

(b) study, evaluate, and report on the status and effectiveness of policies, procedures, and programs that provide services to children in the state affected by intergenerational poverty and welfare dependency;

(c) study and evaluate the policies, procedures, and programs implemented by other states and nongovernmental entities that address the needs of children affected by intergenerational poverty and welfare dependency;

(d) (i) identify policies, procedures, and programs, including any lack of interagency data sharing, lack of policy coordination, or current federal requirements, that are impeding efforts to help children in the state affected by intergenerational poverty escape the poverty cycle and welfare dependency; and

(ii) implement and recommend changes to those policies and procedures;

(e) create an ongoing five- and ten-year plan, which is updated annually, containing:

(i) measurable goals and benchmarks, including future action needed to attain those goals and benchmarks, for:

(A) decreasing the incidence of intergenerational poverty among the state's children, including reducing the incidence of homelessness among children affected by intergenerational poverty; and

84 (B) increasing the number of the state's children who escape the poverty cycle and
85 welfare dependency;

86 (ii) implement policy, procedure, and program changes to address the needs of children
87 affected by intergenerational poverty and help those children escape the poverty cycle and
88 welfare dependency, including, as available over time, data to track the effectiveness of each
89 change; and

90 (iii) recommend policy, procedure, and program changes to address the needs of
91 children affected by intergeneration poverty and to help those children escape the poverty cycle
92 and welfare dependency, including the steps that will be required to make the recommended
93 changes and whether further action is required by the Legislature or the federal government;

94 (f) ensure that each change and recommended change to a policy, procedure, or
95 program, which is made by the commission, is supported by verifiable data;

96 (g) protect the privacy of individuals living in poverty by using and distributing the
97 data it collects or examines in compliance with:

98 (i) federal requirements; and

99 (ii) the provisions of Title 63G, Chapter 2, Government Records Access and
100 Management Act; and

101 (h) provide a forum for public comment and participation in efforts to help children in
102 the state escape the cycle of poverty and welfare dependency.

103 (3) To accomplish its duties, the commission may:

104 (a) request and receive from any state or local governmental agency or institution,
105 information relating to poverty in the state, including:

106 (i) reports;

107 (ii) audits;

108 (iii) data;

109 (iv) projections; and

110 (v) statistics; and

111 (b) appoint special committees, in addition to the advisory committee described in

112 Section 35A-9-304, to advise and assist the commission.

113 (4) (a) Members of a special committee described in Subsection (3)(b):

114 (i) shall be appointed by the commission;

115 (ii) may be:

116 (A) members of the commission; or

117 (B) individuals from the private or public sector; and

118 (iii) notwithstanding Section 35A-9-305, may not receive reimbursement or pay for

119 work done in relation to the special committee.

120 (b) A special committee described in Subsection (3)(b) shall report to the commission

121 on the progress of the special committee.