

Stricken language would be deleted from and underlined language would be added to present law.

State of Arkansas
95th General Assembly
Regular Session, 2025

As Engrossed: S4/3/25

A Bill

HOUSE BILL 1543

By: Representative Underwood

By: Senator Irvin

For An Act To Be Entitled

AN ACT TO AMEND THE LAW CONCERNING PUBLIC ASSISTANCE;
TO ESTABLISH THE WORKFORCE EXPERIENCE OPPORTUNITIES
ACT OF 2025; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Subtitle

TO ESTABLISH THE WORKFORCE EXPERIENCE
OPPORTUNITIES ACT OF 2025.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

SECTION 1. Arkansas Code Title 20, Chapter 76 is amended to add an additional subchapter to read as follows:

Subchapter 9 - Workforce Experience Opportunities Act of 2025

20-76-901. Title.

This subchapter shall be known and may be cited as the "Workforce Experience Opportunities Act of 2025".

20-76-902. Legislative purpose.

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

20-76-903. Definitions.



As used in this subchapter:

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

(2) "State-funded entity" means:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(A) Essential functions: or

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

20-76-905. Liability.

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

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

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

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

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

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

(2) This section does not:

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

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

SECTION 2. DO NOT CODIFY. Effective date.

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

/s/Underwood