GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
1989 SESSION

CHAPTER 448
HOUSE BILL 141

AN ACT TO REQUIRE THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES TO DEVELOP A SOCIAL SERVICES PLAN TO ENSURE THE UNIFORM AVAILABILITY OF CORE SOCIAL SERVICES AND PUBLIC ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS TO THE CITIZENS OF NORTH CAROLINA.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

Section 1. It is the policy of the State of North Carolina to provide a statewide system of social services and public assistance programs to meet the basic needs of citizens who cannot meet those needs themselves. The goals and purposes of that system include:

(1) To ensure that children and adults are protected from abuse, neglect, and exploitation;
(2) To enable citizens to maintain or achieve maximum self-sufficiency and personal independence through employment, if possible;
(3) To strengthen family life in order to nurture our children so that they may become productive, healthy, responsible adults;
(4) To assist disabled and dependent adults, while ensuring that they live in the most independent setting feasible with the least possible intrusion from public agencies;
(5) To ensure that every family and individual has sufficient economic resources to obtain the basic necessities of life.

It is the policy of this State to operate its social services system through a cooperative partnership between the State and the counties, primarily through programs that are administered by the counties and supervised by the State, and with both State and county financial participation.

Sec. 2. In order to promote a quality core of social services to be available to citizens of the State who need them, it is the policy of the State to define a minimum core of social services and to provide from federal funds and State revenues available for those purposes the expenses of providing those core services across the State.

Sec. 3. The Department of Human Resources, in consultation and cooperation with other appropriate agencies and groups, shall develop a Social Services Plan consistent with the policies stated in Sections 1 and 2 of this act. Sections 1 and 2 of this act are only for the purpose of providing policy guidance to the Department of Human Resources for the development of the Plan. The Plan shall include at least the following:

(1) A definition of a core of social services that shall be provided in every county;
(2) Cost estimates and a plan and timetable for assuring the availability of the core of services in each county;
(3) Minimum standards for the provision of core services and public assistance programs, including staffing standards, caseload standards, training standards, and facilities standards;
(4) State and county responsibilities for the financing of social services not included in Section 2 of this act, public assistance benefits, program administration costs, physical facilities, and staff training; and
(5) Strengthened mechanisms for State supervision and enforcement of program standards.

Sec. 4. The Department of Human Resources shall present a Plan for ensuring that the State Public Assistance Equalization Program is presented annually to the Social Services Commission for review. The Department shall provide current data and information to assist the Commission to make such amendments to the formula for distribution of the funds as will ensure the equalization of the burden of taxation in the counties as required in G.S. 108A-92.

Sec. 5. In carrying out its responsibilities under this act, the Department of Human Resources shall consult, on a systematic basis through a process designed by the Department, with local and State governmental agencies and boards and with public and private agencies and organizations.

Sec. 6. The Department of Human Resources shall report periodically on the Plan required by Section 3 of this act to the Social Services Study Commission, if that Commission is reauthorized. The Department shall submit the final Plan to the General Assembly by the convening of the 1990 Regular Session of the General Assembly.

Sec. 7. This act is effective upon ratification.

In the General Assembly read three times and ratified this the 26th day of June, 1989.