

As Introduced

136th General Assembly

Regular Session

2025-2026

H. B. No. 216

Representatives Williams, Jarrells

**Cosponsors: Representatives Brennan, Brewer, Click, Daniels, Denson,
Isaacsohn, Miller, K., McNally, Mohamed, Piccolantonio, Russo, Sims, Thomas, C.,
Upchurch**

A BILL

To establish the 'A HAND UP' pilot program, to 1
designate this act as the Actionable Help And 2
New Dignity for Upward Progression (A HAND UP) 3
Act, and to make an appropriation. 4

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

Section 1. (A) (1) The Department of Job and Family 5
Services shall establish a three-year pilot program known as the 6
Actionable Help and New Dignity for Upward Progression (A HAND 7
UP) pilot program. Under the pilot program, the Department shall 8
assist program participants in transitioning into the workforce 9
as they become ineligible for public assistance benefits. 10

(2) The Department shall select four counties in which to 11
operate the pilot program. In selecting counties, the Department 12
shall select one metropolitan county; one midsize county; and 13
two rural counties, one of which is located in the Appalachian 14
region of the state. 15

(B) Not later than one hundred eighty days after the 16

effective date of this section, the Department shall have the 17
pilot program fully operational. The Department shall do all of 18
the following in setting up the pilot program: 19

(1) Establish eligibility criteria for individuals 20
participating in the pilot program; 21

(2) Establish conditions for continued participation in 22
the pilot program; 23

(3) Establish a competitive application process for 24
employers seeking to participate in the pilot program; 25

(4) Identify existing subsidized employment programs and 26
provide training to program operators seeking to participate in 27
the pilot program; 28

(5) Establish an assessment tool to determine the success 29
of employers participating in the pilot program; 30

(6) Establish a process by which pilot program 31
participants are connected with employers participating in the 32
program; 33

(7) Establish a mentorship program, including training for 34
mentors, that connects pilot program participants with program 35
mentors; 36

(8) Identify and establish a financial literacy program 37
for pilot program participants. 38

(C) Under the pilot program, the Department shall do both 39
of the following: 40

(1) Provide pilot program participants a stipend, on a 41
sliding scale as determined by the Department, that each 42
participant may use to pay for health care insurance premiums 43

and deductibles or for child care expenses; 44

(2) Provide employers that participate in the pilot 45
program with subsidies for employing pilot program participants. 46

(D) Not later than one hundred eighty days after the 47
effective date of this section, the Department shall adopt 48
rules, in accordance with Chapter 119. of the Revised Code, as 49
necessary to implement the pilot program. 50

(E) To assist with the administration and operation of the 51
pilot program, the Department shall establish a digital 52
application that does all of the following: 53

(1) Calculates a participant's income based on the 54
individual's benefits received and income earned; 55

(2) Connects participants with pilot program resources; 56

(3) Provides educational and motivational resources to 57
participants; 58

(4) Connects participants with mentors or pilot program 59
case workers. 60

In developing the digital application, the Department may 61
work in collaboration with the Office of InnovateOhio. 62

(F) If a county department of job and family services 63
representing a county selected to participate in the pilot 64
program has established an individual development account 65
program under section 329.12 of the Revised Code, the Department 66
of Job and Family Services shall request a waiver from the 67
United States Department of Health and Human Services to allow 68
pilot program participants in those counties to use individual 69
development account funds for purposes other than those 70
specified in 45 C.F.R. 263.22, such as rental assistance, moving 71

costs, utilities, and transportation costs. 72

(G) (1) As part of the pilot program, the Department of Job 73
and Family Services shall study participants once they have 74
completed participation in the program to determine all of the 75
following: 76

(a) Whether they are employed; 77

(b) The type of employment in which they are engaged; 78

(c) The amount of compensation they are receiving; 79

(d) Whether their employer provides health insurance; 80

(e) Whether and how often they have received public 81
assistance since completing participation in the program; 82

(f) Whether they are successfully self-sufficient. 83

(2) The Department shall include the results of this study 84
in the annual reports it submits to the General Assembly under 85
division (H) of this section. 86

(H) Beginning one year after the effective date of this 87
section, the Department shall submit a report to the General 88
Assembly. Thereafter, the Department shall submit an annual 89
report to the General Assembly at the end of each calendar year 90
in which the pilot program operates. The reports shall specify 91
the outcomes of the pilot program, including data indicating the 92
ways in which the pilot program is assisting participants in 93
transitioning from receiving public assistance benefits to the 94
workforce. The reports shall be submitted in accordance with 95
section 101.68 of the Revised Code. 96

Section 2. All items in this act are hereby appropriated 97
as designated out of any moneys in the state treasury to the 98

credit of the designated fund. For all operating appropriations 99
made in this act, those in the first column are for fiscal year 100
2026 and those in the second column are for fiscal year 2027. 101
The operating appropriations made in this act are in addition to 102
any other operating appropriations made for these fiscal years. 103

Section 3. 104
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	1	2	3	4	5
A	JFS DEPARTMENT OF JOB AND FAMILY SERVICES				
B	General Revenue Fund				
C	GRF	600551	Job and Family Services Program Support	\$10,000,000	\$10,000,000
D	TOTAL GRF General Revenue Fund			\$10,000,000	\$10,000,000
E	TOTAL ALL BUDGET FUND GROUPS			\$10,000,000	\$10,000,000

JOB AND FAMILY SERVICES PROGRAM SUPPORT 106

The foregoing appropriation item 600551, Job and Family 107
Services Program Support, shall be used to support the A Hand Up 108
pilot program in accordance with Section 1 of this act. 109

On July 1, 2026, or as soon as possible thereafter, the 110
Director of Job and Family Services shall certify to the 111
Director of Budget and Management the amount of the unexpended, 112
unencumbered balance of the foregoing appropriation item 600551, 113
Job and Family Services Program Support, relating to the A Hand 114
Up pilot program at the end of fiscal year 2026 to be 115
reappropriated to fiscal year 2027. The amount certified is 116

hereby reappropriated to the same appropriation item for the 117
same purpose in fiscal year 2027. 118

Section 4. Within the limits set forth in this act, the 119
Director of Budget and Management shall establish accounts 120
indicating the source and amount of funds for each appropriation 121
made in this act, and shall determine the manner in which 122
appropriation accounts shall be maintained. Expenditures from 123
operating appropriations contained in this act shall be 124
accounted for as though made in, and are subject to all 125
applicable provisions of, the main operating appropriations act 126
of the 136th General Assembly. 127

Section 5. This act shall be known as the Actionable Help 128
And New Dignity for Upward Progression (A HAND UP) Act. 129