

CHAPTER 2024-89

Committee Substitute for Senate Bill No. 544

An act relating to the Swimming Lesson Voucher Program; creating s. 514.073, F.S.; creating the program within the Department of Health for a specified purpose; requiring the department to establish a network of swimming lesson vendors to participate in the program; authorizing the department to contract with certain nonprofit organizations to assist in establishing the network; requiring the department or a contracted nonprofit organization to attempt to secure a vendor in each county; requiring certain vendors to participate in the program if requested by the department; requiring the department to establish an application process; specifying eligibility criteria for the program; providing that the program is subject to specific appropriation; authorizing the department to seek grants or other public and private funding for the program; requiring the department to adopt rules; providing an appropriation; providing an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Section 514.073, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

514.073 Swimming Lesson Voucher Program.—

(1) There is created within the department the Swimming Lesson Voucher Program. The purpose of the program is to increase water safety in this state by offering vouchers for swimming lessons at no cost to families with an income of no more than 200 percent of the federal poverty level who have one or more children 4 years of age or younger.

(2) The department shall do all of the following to implement the program:

(a) Establish a network of swimming lesson vendors that will accept the vouchers offered by the program in exchange for providing swimming lessons. To establish the network, the department may contract directly with swimming lesson vendors or contract with one or more nonprofit organizations that promote swimming safety to subcontract with and manage swimming lesson vendors in one or more counties, or both. To ensure that swimming lessons are available throughout this state, the department, either directly or through a contracted nonprofit organization, must attempt to secure at least one such vendor in each county. Any swimming lesson vendor that offers swimming lessons at a public pool that is owned or maintained by a county or municipality must, if requested by the department or by a nonprofit organization contracted by the department, participate in the program.

(b) Establish a method for members of the public to apply for swimming lesson vouchers and for determining an applicant’s eligibility. The department shall establish eligibility criteria necessary for a family to receive one or more vouchers from the program, including, but not limited to, the following:

1. The age of each child for whom a voucher is being sought, who may be no more than 4 years of age.

2. The family income level, which may be up to 200 percent of the federal poverty level.

3. The family’s address of residency in this state.

(c) Subject to specific appropriation, issue vouchers to eligible applicants.

(3) The department may seek grants or other public or private funding for the program.

(4) The department shall adopt rules to implement the program.

Section 2. For the 2024-2025 fiscal year, the sum of \$500,000 in nonrecurring funds is appropriated from the General Revenue Fund to the Department of Health to fund the Swimming Lesson Voucher Program established by this act.

Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2024.

Approved by the Governor April 15, 2024.

Filed in Office Secretary of State April 15, 2024.