

CHAPTER 2026-147

Senate Bill No. 418

An act relating to law enforcement officer interactions with individuals with autism spectrum disorder; creating s. 320.021, F.S.; requiring the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles to establish a program to improve communication between individuals with autism spectrum disorder and law enforcement officers under certain circumstances; requiring the department to develop and make available to individuals with autism spectrum disorder a certain envelope and card by a specified date; providing requirements for the envelope and card; authorizing individuals with autism spectrum disorder to request the envelope and card from the department or a tax collector's office beginning on a specified date; amending s. 943.1727, F.S.; defining the terms "agency" and "autism spectrum disorder"; requiring the Criminal Justice Standards and Training Commission within the Department of Law Enforcement to establish an employment training component relating to individuals with autism spectrum disorder; providing requirements for training law enforcement officers on interacting with individuals with autism spectrum disorder; requiring the training component to be included in a specified course by a specified date; requiring specified law enforcement officers to complete the training component by a specified date; providing an effective date.

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

Section 1. Section 320.021, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

320.021 Blue envelope and blue card program.—

(1) The department shall establish a blue envelope and blue card program for the purpose of improving communication between individuals with autism spectrum disorder and law enforcement officers.

(2)(a) By January 1, 2027, the department shall develop and make available to individuals with autism spectrum disorder a blue envelope that is intended to hold a copy of an individual's driver license and his or her vehicle registration, proof of insurance, and emergency contact information, and a blue card, which envelope or card may be provided by an individual with autism spectrum disorder to a law enforcement officer during an interaction with the law enforcement officer.

(b) The exterior of the blue envelope must identify the individual as an individual with autism spectrum disorder and include communication guidelines intended to assist law enforcement officers during interactions with drivers with autism spectrum disorder.

(c) The blue card may be digital or a durable, wallet-sized card and must identify the individual as an individual with autism spectrum disorder and include communication guidelines intended to assist law enforcement officers during interactions with individuals with autism spectrum disorder.

(3) Beginning January 1, 2027, an individual with autism spectrum disorder may request a blue envelope, blue card, or both a blue envelope and blue card from the department or a tax collector's office.

Section 2. Section 943.1727, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

943.1727 ~~Continued Employment training relating to autism spectrum disorder.—~~

(1) As used in this section, the term:

(a) "Agency" means the ability to make independent decisions and act in one's own best interests.

(b) "Autism spectrum disorder" has the same meaning as in s. 627.6686(2).

~~(2) The commission department shall establish an a continued employment training component relating to individuals with autism spectrum disorder as defined in s. 627.6686. The training component shall include, but need not be limited to, instruction on the recognition of the symptoms and characteristics of an individual on the autism disorder spectrum and appropriate responses to an individual exhibiting such symptoms and characteristics. Completion of the training component counts may count toward the 40 hours of instruction for continued employment or appointment as a law enforcement officer required under s. 943.135.~~

(3) The employment training component for law enforcement officers which relates to interaction with individuals with autism spectrum disorder must include in-person instruction for initial certification and online instruction for continued employment training or education required under s. 943.135(1) in all of the following:

(a) The nature and manifestation of autism spectrum disorder.

(b) Techniques for interviewing or interrogating an individual with autism spectrum disorder, including techniques to ensure the legality of statements made by the individual and techniques used to protect the rights of the individual.

(c) Techniques for locating an individual with autism spectrum disorder who has run away and is in danger and for returning that individual while causing as little stress as possible to the individual.

(d) Techniques for recognizing the agency of an individual with autism spectrum disorder while identifying potential abusive or coercive situations.

(e) Techniques for de-escalating a potentially dangerous situation to maximize the safety of both the officer and the individual with autism spectrum disorder.

(f) Techniques for differentiating an individual with autism spectrum disorder from an individual who is belligerent, uncooperative, or otherwise displaying traits similar to the characteristics of an individual with autism spectrum disorder and for understanding the law as it relates to the use of the Baker Act on an individual with autism spectrum disorder.

(g) The impact of an interaction with officers on individuals with autism spectrum disorder.

(h) Information about the blue envelope and blue card program established under s. 320.021 and the “SAFE” designation included in the motor vehicle record pursuant to s. 320.02(15).

(4)(a) By July 1, 2028, each basic skills course required for law enforcement officers to obtain initial certification, as required under s. 943.13(9), must incorporate such training component. Such training component may be taught as part of other relevant components of the training.

(b) Each certified law enforcement officer must successfully complete such training component as part of the basic recruit training required under s. 943.13(9) or as part of continued training or education required under s. 943.135(1) by July 1, 2030.

Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2026.

Approved by the Governor June 16, 2026.

Filed in Office Secretary of State June 16, 2026.