2014 Special Session I

Budget Bill - HB5004 (Introduced)

Item 344

A. In the operation of any program of public assistance, including benefit and service programs in any locality, for which program appropriations are made to the Department of Social Services, it is provided that if a payment or overpayment is made to an individual who is ineligible therefor under federal and/or state statutes and regulations, the amount of such payment or overpayment shall be returned to the Department of Social Services by the locality.

B. However, no such repayments may be required of the locality if the department determines that such overpayment or payments to ineligibles resulted from the promulgation of vague or conflicting regulations by the department or from the failure of the department to make timely distribution to the localities of the statutes, rules, regulations, and policy decisions, causing the overpayment or payment to ineligible(s) to be made by the locality or from situations where a locality exercised due diligence, yet received incomplete or incorrect information from the client which caused the overpayment or payment to ineligibles. If a locality fails to effect the return, the Department of Social Services shall withhold an equal amount from the next disbursement made by the department to the locality for the same program.

C. The Department of Social Services shall implement the guidance issued by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services concerning the obligation of recipients of federal financial assistance to comply with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 by ensuring that meaningful access to federally-funded programs, activities and services administered by the department is provided to limited English proficient (LEP) persons, 63 Fed. Reg. 47,311-47,323 (August 8, 2003). At a minimum, the department shall (i) identify the need for language assistance by analyzing the following factors: (1) the number or proportion of LEP persons in the eligible service population, (2) the frequency of contact with such persons, (3) the nature and importance of the program, activity or service, and (4) the costs of providing language assistance and resources available; (ii) translate vital documents into the language of each frequently encountered LEP group eligible to be served; (iii) provide accurate and timely oral interpreter services; and (iv) develop an effective implementation plan to address the identified needs of the LEP populations served.