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 12/5/2024 House Referred to Committee on **Education and Public Works**

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**VERSIONS OF THIS BILL**

[12/05/2024](https://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess126_2025-2026/prever/3225_20241205.docx)

[02/05/2025](https://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess126_2025-2026/prever/3225_20250205.docx)

DRAFT PREPARED BY LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

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A bill

TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY ADDING ARTICLE 9 TO CHAPTER 1, TITLE 59, SO AS TO ESTABLISH THE “SOUTH CAROLINA SERVICE YEAR PROGRAM” IN THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, TO PROVIDE FOR THE PURPOSES AND FUNCTIONS OF THE PROGRAM, TO ESTABLISH THE OFFICE OF SERVICE AND CIVIC INNOVATION IN THE OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR AND TO PROVIDE THE PURPOSES AND FUNCTIONS OF THE OFFICE, TO ESTABLISH THE “SOUTH CAROLINA SERVICE YEAR PROGRAM FUND” AND TO PROVIDE THE PURPOSES OF THE FUND, TO PROVIDE DEFINITIONS, AND TO PROVIDE CERTAIN PRIVACY AND RELATED MEASURES.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina:

SECTION 1. Article 9, Chapter 1, Title 59 of the S.C. Code is amended by adding:

 Article 9

 South Carolina Service Year Program

 Section 59‑1‑910. This article establishes the South Carolina Service Year Program to provide individuals with job training and work experience while engaging them in local service projects that fill critical needs in this State.

 Section 59‑1‑920.

 (1) There is a South Carolina Service Year Program (SCSYP) in the State hereby established to be administered and managed by the State Department of Education.

 (2) The purpose of the program is to:

 (a) provide meaningful, impactful service opportunities to SCSYP participants to improve lives in this State including, but not limited to:

 (i) public sector jobs including uniformed and civilian roles at the state, county, and municipal level with the department working to incorporate service year opportunities with existing collective bargaining, civil service, and other legal limits on such roles to the extent necessary;

 (ii) public and community health;

 (iii) clean and renewable energy;

 (iv) early childhood education;

 (v) arts and humanities; and

 (vi) other areas that fill critical community needs as identified by the department in collaboration with the Department of Employment and Workforce;

 (b) equip SCSYP participants with professional development, mentoring, job training, financial literacy skills, and other supports while working in high‑impact service placements;

 (c) equip SCSYP participants with the skills that will enable them to successfully make the transition to an institution of higher education or to the workforce;

 (d) strengthen the pipeline of talent into state and local governments to fill present and future staffing needs; and

 (e) provide program completion awards to SCSYP participants who have completed the program.

 (3) In administering the program, the department shall:

 (a) seek community service opportunities and opportunities for program expansion, including in state and local government agencies and nonprofit organizations;

 (b) develop processes to facilitate awarding SCSYP participants with:

 (i) academic credit for their participation in the program; or

 (ii) credit for their participation and prior learning experience toward professional credentials, trade or vocational certifications, and apprenticeship programs;

 (c) seek gifts or grants and other financial resources, including through public‑private partnerships, for the benefit of the program;

 (d) apply for, receive, and spend grants‑in‑aid by the federal government or any of its agencies or any other federal funds and funds from nongovernmental entities and private partners made available to the department for use in administering the program;

 (e) maintain relationships with current and former SCSYP participants including to provide mentorship or other supports to current participants as appropriate;

 (f) provide oversight of the design, development, implementation, operation, and expansion of the program; and

 (g) participate in program‑sponsored events.

 (4) The department is responsible for expanding service opportunities in the State through the program with the following goals:

 (a) recruiting SCSYP participants and creating a strong annual cohort for SCSYP participants from urban, rural, and suburban areas of the State;

 (b) ensuring all individuals have equitable access to participate in the program regardless of gender, race, religion, age, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, geography, native language, or protected veteran status;

 (c) recruiting and prioritizing for participation in the program state and local government agencies and nonprofit organizations.

 (5) The department shall adopt regulations to accomplish the above and the goals of this article including, but not limited to:

 (a) eligibility requirements for participating organizations, classified by the department based on the number of service placements the organization’s grant will support, as:

 (i) community employers; or

 (ii) large‑scale employers;

 (b) a centralized process to facilitate efficient screening and placement of SCSYP participants into the appropriate service placement as well as effective measurement and evaluation of the SCSYP participant’s service experience;

 (c) reasonable workplace accommodations for SCSYP participants with disabilities;

 (d) compensation for SCSYP participants, including:

 (i) monetary payment at least equivalent to the job level for a permanent path role at the employer;

 (ii) health insurance benefits and the potential for wraparound services; and

 (iii) requirements for large‑scale employers to provide matching funds to receive SCSYP placements as appropriate; and

 (e) a program completion award. Upon completing the program as defined by the department, SCSYP participants who remain in the State for a majority of the following ten years become eligible for a program completion award with value of at least $10,000 at maturity ten years after completion of their service year.

 (i) The State Treasurer, in coordination with the department, shall establish within the Service Year Program Fund established in Section 59‑1‑940 an account for each eligible individual identified under this section. Each individual account shall be identified to its account holder by means of a unique personal identifier and shall remain in the fund. The State Treasurer shall credit to each individual account sufficient funds annually to ensure that the account contains $10,000 at the tenth year from the date of program completion, $25,000 at the twentieth year from the date of program completion, and $40,000 at the thirtieth year from the date of program completion, with the account holder entitled to the funds in the account at any time after ten years from program completion if they have been residents of the State for a majority of the intervening years.

 (ii) In the case of a deceased account holder of an individual account which has an account balance greater than zero, upon receipt of notification of such individual’s death, the account rights shall transfer pursuant to the inheritance laws of this State. Unclaimed funds shall be handled via the Uniform Unclaimed Property Act, with any unclaimed funds returning to the State after a time to be set by the department in accordance with state law;

 (f) workforce development training provided to SCSYP participants by participating organizations or state agencies;

 (g) ongoing evaluation of opportunities to expand service in the State to address the state’s workforce development needs, including opportunities within State agencies for the creation and expansion of service opportunities within the agencies; and

 (h) ongoing evaluation of the program to ensure access and effectiveness, including:

 (i) demographics of SCSYP participants, including race, ethnicity, age, sex, gender, education, and geography;

 (ii) post‑program trajectories of SCSYP participants; and

 (iii) evaluation of the needs served in the community by the program.

 (6) A SCSYP participant who received a service placement shall:

 (a) participate in all trainings related to the service placement;

 (b) work at least thirty hours per week;

 (c) perform the duties of the service placement to the satisfaction of the participating organization and the department;

 (d) participate in program‑wide events;

 (e) upon completion of the program, be notified of available postprogram opportunities, including registered apprenticeships, known to the department.

 Section 59‑1‑930. (A) There is established the Office of Service and Civic Innovation in the Office of the Governor. The office must be headed by a director who is appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate and the House of Representatives.

 (B) The director shall:

 (1) advise the Governor on all matters to the office and is responsible for carrying out the Governor’s policies on matters concerning the office;

 (2) promote service and volunteerism in the state by partnering with the federal government, local governments, and nongovernmental entities, to fulfill the purposes of this title;

 (3) identify, develop, and implement initiatives, including community service opportunities, to increase service and volunteerism in the State to create opportunities, expand programs, and strengthen communities;

 (4) be responsible for:

 (a) the operation of the office and shall establish guidelines and procedures to promote the orderly and efficient administration of the office;

 (b) the budget of the office of the secretary and the budget of any departments or divisions in the office;

 (c) the coordination and direction of all planning that the office of the Governor initiates;

 (5) employ staff, appoint a deputy secretary and other professional staff, and contract with consultants as authorized representatives in accordance with the state budget;

 (6) apply for, receive, and spend grants‑in‑aid by the federal government or any of its agencies or any other federal funds made available to the department for use in carrying out the powers and duties of the office.

 (C) The office shall:

 (1) promote the use of SCSYP participants and volunteers in state and local government, employers, and nonprofit organizations;

 (2) coordinate and oversee the activities of the South Carolina Service Year Program and other service and volunteerism programs and initiatives by the State;

 (3) develop and implement model programs for a statewide clearinghouse, skill bank, or information centers for volunteers and projects in the State;

 (4) develop and implement volunteer recognition events for volunteers in state programs and provide technical assistance and support for recognition events in nonpublic programs to increase the visibility and status of volunteers and their accomplishments;

 (e) administer the Service Year Program;

 (5) liaise with national, state, and local volunteerism groups to obtain information on federal, state, local, and private resources that may enhance volunteer projects within the State; and

 (6) conduct studies and make recommendations to improve volunteer recruitment and training, volunteer retention, and accountability of volunteer programs.

 Section 59‑1‑940. (A) The South Carolina Service Year Program Fund is separate from the general fund. The fund consists of:

 (1) money appropriated to the fund under the program in the state budget;

 (2) funding received by the program from federal funding opportunities;

 (3) gifts or grants received by the program for the fund;

 (4) investment earnings of the fund; and

 (5) any other money from any other source accepted for the benefit of the fund.

 (B) The purpose of the fund is to:

 (1) provide compensation and stipends to SCSYP participants with a service placement under this section;

 (2) pay the costs to administer and promote the program; and

 (3) assist in the creation of additional SCSYP programs.

 (C) The program shall administer the fund. Any investment earnings of the fund shall be credited to the fund.

 (D) The office:

 (1) may accept any gifts or grants from any person for the fund;

 (2) shall use any gift or grant that it received for the purposes provided in this article.

 (E) Beginning with the 2026‑2027 Fiscal Year, the department shall prepare an annual report of the fund that includes:

 (1) an accounting of all financial receipts and expenditures to and from the fund;

 (2) the total number of SCSYP participants disaggregated by demographic categories;

 (3) the total annual cost of the program disaggregated by the source of the funds;

 (4) SCSYP participant transition after program completion into higher education, postsecondary education, full‑time employment, registered apprenticeships, and other postprogram opportunities;

 (5) the number of SCSYP participants employed by state or local government agencies after completion of the program; and

 (6) to the extent practicable, what former SCSYP participants are doing one year, two years, and five years after completing the program.

 Section 59‑1‑950. For purposes of this article, “wraparound services” includes:

 (1) childcare;

 (2) transportation;

 (3) housing;

 (4) behavioral health;

 (5) crisis intervention;

 (6) substance abuse prevention or treatment;

 (7) legal aid;

 (8) financial literacy programming;

 (9) job search and application support; and

 (10) college application support.

 Section 59‑1‑960. This State has a compelling interest in protecting privacy and the protection of personal information. In administering this article state and local agencies, businesses, and any other entity, shall only request data necessary to administer this article and retain it only as required to administer and achieve the purposes of the article. Any personal information or data collected or obtained in the course of administering this article shall be shared only in a manner that has been deidentified and aggregated to the greatest extent allowable while still in compliance with federal eligibility requirements and every allowable effort shall be made to revoke access to such data should programs be eliminated or should there be an ineligibility determination. Personal information or data collected or obtained in the course of administering this article shall not be otherwise disclosed without the informed consent of the individual, a warrant signed by a circuit court judge or federal judge, lawful court order administered within this State or a lawful federal court order, or subpoena administered within this State or federal subpoena, or unless otherwise required by federal or state statute. Personal information or data may be considered deidentified if it cannot reasonably be used to infer information about, or otherwise be linked to, a particular individual or household.

SECTION 2. If any section, subsection, paragraph, subparagraph, sentence, clause, phrase, or word of this act is for any reason held to be unconstitutional or invalid, such holding shall not affect the constitutionality or validity of the remaining portions of this act, the General Assembly hereby declaring that it would have passed this act, and each and every section, subsection, paragraph, subparagraph, sentence, clause, phrase, and word thereof, irrespective of the fact that any one or more other sections, subsections, paragraphs, subparagraphs, sentences, clauses, phrases, or words hereof may be declared to be unconstitutional, invalid, or otherwise ineffective.

SECTION 3. This act takes effect upon approval by the Governor.

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