

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

**Article 88A - Department of Human Resources**

47.

(a) In providing assistance under this subtitle, the Department may contract with charitable organizations, private organizations, religious organizations, and institutions of higher education.

(b) Except as provided in subsection (c) of this section, a religious organization may participate in the Family Investment Program on the same basis as any other nongovernmental entity.

(c) An individual may not be required to accept assistance from a religious organization if acceptance would violate the individual's bona fide religious beliefs and practices.

(d) (1) The Maryland Higher Education Commission, in cooperation with the Department, shall:

(i) Identify and promote at institutions of higher education efforts to provide assistance to FIP recipients; and

(ii) Coordinate efforts among institutions of higher education to encourage and identify student volunteers to help provide to FIP recipients educational and employment-related services, such as literacy training, resume writing, and job interviewing skills.

(2) An institution of higher education shall:

(i) Meet with the local department about developing services for FIP recipients in the jurisdiction in which the institution is located;

(ii) Advise the local department of the services available for FIP recipients; and

(iii) By September 15 of each year, provide to the Maryland Higher Education Commission, a report on efforts to encourage and identify student volunteers and identify services provided under the provisions of this subsection.

(3) By December 1 of each year, the Maryland Higher Education Commission shall submit a report, subject to § 2-1246 of the State Government Article, to the Joint Committee on Welfare Reform regarding the services provided under the provisions of this subsection.

(e) An organization funded under the Family Investment Program may not discriminate on the basis of religion, religious belief, or refusal to participate in a religious practice with respect to any individual's receipt of service under the Program.