

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2026 REGULAR SESSION

Enrolled

Senate Bill 228

BY SENATORS DEEDS, PHILLIPS, WOELFEL, OLIVERIO,

AND BARNHART

[Passed March 14, 2026; in effect 90 days from
passage (June 12, 2026)]

1 AN ACT to amend the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, by adding two new sections,
2 designated §49-2-815 and §49-2-131, relating to requiring the Department of Human
3 Services to establish a pilot program in one or more districts comprised of no more than
4 three counties in the aggregate to provide for supplemental caseworker aide services for
5 the Bureau for Social Services; and requiring the Department of Human Services to
6 implement a pilot project in two counties that requires the use of mobile devices to access
7 the department's case management system.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

ARTICLE 2. STATE RESPONSIBILITIES FOR CHILDREN.

*PART I – GENERAL AUTHORITY AND DUTIES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN
SERVICES.*

§49-2-131. Caseworker services pilot program.

1 (a) (1) The Department of Human Services shall, within 90 days of the effective date of
2 this section, establish a pilot program through which it shall enter into a contract with one or more
3 qualified private entities to provide caseworker aide services to supplement existing departmental
4 staff within the Bureau for Social Services with administrative support services using a human
5 services technology platform to allow departmental staff more time for personal interactions with
6 children and families served by the department.

7 (2) Caseworker aides retained under the contract shall meet substantially equivalent
8 education, experience, training, and background check requirements as departmental
9 caseworkers and caseworker aides.

10 (3) The department shall maintain supervisory and decision-making authority over all
11 cases, and contracted caseworker aide personnel shall operate under departmental policies and
12 oversight.

13 (b) The department shall deploy contracted caseworker aide services in one or more
14 districts comprised of no more than three counties in the aggregate meeting criteria established
15 by rule or policy, including, but not limited to:

16 (1) Average caseloads exceeding state or federal guidelines;

17 (2) Persistent vacancy rates among child welfare positions; or

18 (3) A disproportionate percentage of children from that county placed in out-of-state foster
19 care or residential facilities.

20 (c) (1) The pilot program shall operate for 15 months following the execution of the contract
21 allowing for a three-month onboarding process to establish departmental priorities and workflow
22 processes and a one-year operational period.

23 (2) Prior to the conclusion of the pilot program, the department shall submit a written report
24 to the Joint Committee on Health detailing the pilot's implementation, performance outcomes,
25 costs, and recommendations for continuation or expansion.

26 (3) The department may, at its discretion, continue or expand the pilot program statewide
27 if the evaluation demonstrates improved case management capacity or outcomes.

28 *PART VIII – REPORTS OF CHILDREN SUSPECTED OF ABUSE.*

§49-2-815. Pilot program for the use of technology in child abuse and neglect investigations.

1 (a) Beginning October 1, 2027, the department shall implement a pilot project in two
2 counties that requires the use of mobile devices, including, but not limited to, computers or tablets,
3 to access the department's case management system. The purpose of the project is to assist
4 Child Protective Services workers and the department in conducting child abuse and neglect
5 investigations by using advanced technology to enhance and expedite real-time fact gathering
6 and data management during investigations.

7 (b) The department shall determine which counties shall participate in the pilot program.

8 (c) The department shall develop policies to implement the pilot program which shall
9 include, at a minimum, the following:

10 (1) The mobile device shall have an operating system that is customized for child welfare
11 casework;

12 (2) The operating system on the mobile device shall allow a Child Protective Services
13 worker to create a contemporaneous, digital record of all components of the investigation;

14 (3) The mobile device shall automatically and securely upload to the department's server
15 on a daily basis;

16 (4) The operating system used in the mobile device shall be interoperable with existing
17 department programs to allow relevant quality metrics to be extracted from the operating system
18 into standard reports to be analyzed for systemic improvement; and

19 (5) The mobile device shall be used on at least 70 percent of the cases in the pilot counties
20 during the time period being studied.

21 (d) The quality metrics shall be extracted on a monthly basis and analyzed by the secretary
22 and members of his or her staff charged with systemic improvement of the child welfare system.

23 (e) The pilot program shall terminate five years from the time the department fully
24 implements the pilot program in two counties.

25 (f) The department shall file annual reports beginning July 1, 2028, and July 1 annually
26 thereafter, with the Legislative Oversight Commission on Health and Human Resources
27 Accountability to provide a program update on the status of the pilot program, including metrics
28 on the use of the technology.

The Clerk of the Senate and the Clerk of the House of Delegates hereby certify that the foregoing bill is correctly enrolled.

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Clerk of the Senate

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Clerk of the House of Delegates

Originated in the Senate.

In effect 90 days from passage.

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President of the Senate

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Speaker of the House of Delegates

The within is this the.....
Day of, 2026.

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Governor