



## 104TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

### State of Illinois

2025 and 2026

SB2971

Introduced 1/27/2026, by Sen. Cristina Castro

#### SYNOPSIS AS INTRODUCED:

20 ILCS 2405/3

from Ch. 23, par. 3434

Amends the Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities Act. Requires direct service workers employed by the Department of Human Services, or an agency contracted with the Department, to provide services under the Home Services Program to complete at least 2 hours of dementia training at the start of their employment and annually thereafter. Requires the training to cover subjects concerning Alzheimer's disease and dementia, safety risks, and communication and behavior. Requires the Department to provide contractors with dementia training curriculum on the required subjects. Provides that any other laws or rules that impose more rigorous dementia training for direct service workers under the Home Services Program shall apply. Exempts from the training requirements direct service workers who provide proof that they obtained equivalent dementia training in compliance with another law or rule. For personal assistants covered by a collective bargaining agreement, requires the Department to establish, in consultation with the joint training committee created under the collective bargaining agreement, different parameters and specific topics for curriculum covering dementia training.

LRB104 17614 KTG 31045 b

1 AN ACT concerning State government.

2 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,**  
3 **represented in the General Assembly:**

4 Section 5. The Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities  
5 Act is amended by changing Section 3 as follows:

6 (20 ILCS 2405/3) (from Ch. 23, par. 3434)

7 Sec. 3. Powers and duties. The Department shall have the  
8 powers and duties enumerated herein:

9 (a) To cooperate with the federal government in the  
10 administration of the provisions of the federal  
11 Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by the Workforce  
12 Innovation and Opportunity Act, and of the federal Social  
13 Security Act to the extent and in the manner provided in  
14 these Acts.

15 (b) To prescribe and supervise such courses of  
16 vocational training and provide such other services as may  
17 be necessary for the vocational rehabilitation of persons  
18 with one or more disabilities, including the  
19 administrative activities under subsection (e) of this  
20 Section; to cooperate with State and local school  
21 authorities and other recognized agencies engaged in  
22 vocational rehabilitation services; and to cooperate with  
23 the Department of Children and Family Services, the

1 Illinois State Board of Education, and others regarding  
2 the education of children with one or more disabilities.

3 (c) (Blank).

4 (d) To report in writing, to the Governor, annually on  
5 or before the first day of December, and at such other  
6 times and in such manner and upon such subjects as the  
7 Governor may require. The annual report shall contain (1)  
8 information on the programs and activities dedicated to  
9 vocational rehabilitation, independent living, and other  
10 community services and supports administered by the  
11 Director; (2) information on the development of vocational  
12 rehabilitation services, independent living services, and  
13 supporting services administered by the Director in the  
14 State; and (3) information detailing the amounts of money  
15 received from federal, State, and other sources, and of  
16 the objects and purposes to which the respective items of  
17 these several amounts have been devoted.

18 (e) (Blank).

19 (f) To establish a program of services to prevent the  
20 unnecessary institutionalization of persons in need of  
21 long term care and who meet the criteria for blindness or  
22 disability as defined by the Social Security Act, thereby  
23 enabling them to remain in their own homes. Such  
24 preventive services include any or all of the following:

25 (1) personal assistant services;

26 (2) homemaker services;

- 1 (3) home-delivered meals;
- 2 (4) adult day care services;
- 3 (5) respite care;
- 4 (6) home modification or assistive equipment;
- 5 (7) home health services;
- 6 (8) electronic home response;
- 7 (9) brain injury behavioral/cognitive services;
- 8 (10) brain injury habilitation;
- 9 (11) brain injury pre-vocational services; or
- 10 (12) brain injury supported employment.

11 The Department shall establish eligibility standards  
12 for such services taking into consideration the unique  
13 economic and social needs of the population for whom they  
14 are to be provided. Such eligibility standards may be  
15 based on the recipient's ability to pay for services;  
16 provided, however, that any portion of a person's income  
17 that is equal to or less than the "protected income" level  
18 shall not be considered by the Department in determining  
19 eligibility. The "protected income" level shall be  
20 determined by the Department, shall never be less than the  
21 federal poverty standard, and shall be adjusted each year  
22 to reflect changes in the Consumer Price Index For All  
23 Urban Consumers as determined by the United States  
24 Department of Labor. The standards must provide that a  
25 person may not have more than \$10,000 in assets to be  
26 eligible for the services, and the Department may increase

1 or decrease the asset limitation by rule. The Department  
2 may not decrease the asset level below \$10,000. Subject to  
3 federal approval, the Department shall allow a recipient's  
4 spouse, guardian, kin, or siblings to serve as his or her  
5 provider of personal care or similar services.

6 The services shall be provided, as established by the  
7 Department by rule, to eligible persons to prevent  
8 unnecessary or premature institutionalization, to the  
9 extent that the cost of the services, together with the  
10 other personal maintenance expenses of the persons, are  
11 reasonably related to the standards established for care  
12 in a group facility appropriate to their condition. These  
13 non-institutional services, pilot projects or experimental  
14 facilities may be provided as part of or in addition to  
15 those authorized by federal law or those funded and  
16 administered by the Illinois Department on Aging. The  
17 Department shall set rates and fees for services in a fair  
18 and equitable manner. Services identical to those offered  
19 by the Department on Aging shall be paid at the same rate.

20 Except as otherwise provided in this paragraph,  
21 personal assistants shall be paid at a rate negotiated  
22 between the State and an exclusive representative of  
23 personal assistants under a collective bargaining  
24 agreement. In no case shall the Department pay personal  
25 assistants an hourly wage that is less than the federal  
26 minimum wage. Within 30 days after July 6, 2017 (the

1 effective date of Public Act 100-23), the hourly wage paid  
2 to personal assistants and individual maintenance home  
3 health workers shall be increased by \$0.48 per hour. Wages  
4 and other benefits for personal assistants shall not count  
5 against benefits that guardians receive as outlined in  
6 Article XIa of the Probate Act of 1975.

7 Solely for the purposes of coverage under the Illinois  
8 Public Labor Relations Act, personal assistants providing  
9 services under the Department's Home Services Program  
10 shall be considered to be public employees and the State  
11 of Illinois shall be considered to be their employer as of  
12 July 16, 2003 (the effective date of Public Act 93-204),  
13 but not before. Solely for the purposes of coverage under  
14 the Illinois Public Labor Relations Act, home care and  
15 home health workers who function as personal assistants  
16 and individual maintenance home health workers and who  
17 also provide services under the Department's Home Services  
18 Program shall be considered to be public employees, no  
19 matter whether the State provides such services through  
20 direct fee-for-service arrangements, with the assistance  
21 of a managed care organization or other intermediary, or  
22 otherwise, and the State of Illinois shall be considered  
23 to be the employer of those persons as of January 29, 2013  
24 (the effective date of Public Act 97-1158), but not before  
25 except as otherwise provided under this subsection (f).  
26 The State shall engage in collective bargaining with an

1 exclusive representative of home care and home health  
2 workers who function as personal assistants and individual  
3 maintenance home health workers working under the Home  
4 Services Program concerning their terms and conditions of  
5 employment that are within the State's control. Nothing in  
6 this paragraph shall be understood to limit the right of  
7 the persons receiving services defined in this Section to  
8 hire and fire home care and home health workers who  
9 function as personal assistants and individual maintenance  
10 home health workers working under the Home Services  
11 Program or to supervise them within the limitations set by  
12 the Home Services Program. The State shall not be  
13 considered to be the employer of home care and home health  
14 workers who function as personal assistants and individual  
15 maintenance home health workers working under the Home  
16 Services Program for any purposes not specifically  
17 provided in Public Act 93-204 or Public Act 97-1158,  
18 including but not limited to, purposes of vicarious  
19 liability in tort and purposes of statutory retirement or  
20 health insurance benefits. Home care and home health  
21 workers who function as personal assistants and individual  
22 maintenance home health workers and who also provide  
23 services under the Department's Home Services Program  
24 shall not be covered by the State Employees Group  
25 Insurance Act of 1971.

26 The Department shall execute, relative to nursing home

1 prescreening, as authorized by Section 4.03 of the  
2 Illinois Act on the Aging, written inter-agency agreements  
3 with the Department on Aging and the Department of  
4 Healthcare and Family Services, to effect the intake  
5 procedures and eligibility criteria for those persons who  
6 may need long term care. On and after July 1, 1996, all  
7 nursing home prescreenings for individuals 18 through 59  
8 years of age shall be conducted by the Department, or a  
9 designee of the Department.

10 The Department is authorized to establish a system of  
11 recipient cost-sharing for services provided under this  
12 Section. The cost-sharing shall be based upon the  
13 recipient's ability to pay for services, but in no case  
14 shall the recipient's share exceed the actual cost of the  
15 services provided. Protected income shall not be  
16 considered by the Department in its determination of the  
17 recipient's ability to pay a share of the cost of  
18 services. The level of cost-sharing shall be adjusted each  
19 year to reflect changes in the "protected income" level.  
20 The Department shall deduct from the recipient's share of  
21 the cost of services any money expended by the recipient  
22 for disability-related expenses.

23 To the extent permitted under the federal Social  
24 Security Act, the Department, or the Department's  
25 authorized representative, may recover the amount of  
26 moneys expended for services provided to or in behalf of a

1 person under this Section by a claim against the person's  
2 estate or against the estate of the person's surviving  
3 spouse, but no recovery may be had until after the death of  
4 the surviving spouse, if any, and then only at such time  
5 when there is no surviving child who is under age 21 or  
6 blind or who has a permanent and total disability. This  
7 paragraph, however, shall not bar recovery, at the death  
8 of the person, of moneys for services provided to the  
9 person or in behalf of the person under this Section to  
10 which the person was not entitled; provided that such  
11 recovery shall not be enforced against any real estate  
12 while it is occupied as a homestead by the surviving  
13 spouse or other dependent, if no claims by other creditors  
14 have been filed against the estate, or, if such claims  
15 have been filed, they remain dormant for failure of  
16 prosecution or failure of the claimant to compel  
17 administration of the estate for the purpose of payment.  
18 This paragraph shall not bar recovery from the estate of a  
19 spouse, under Sections 1915 and 1924 of the Social  
20 Security Act and Section 5-4 of the Illinois Public Aid  
21 Code, who precedes a person receiving services under this  
22 Section in death. All moneys for services paid to or in  
23 behalf of the person under this Section shall be claimed  
24 for recovery from the deceased spouse's estate.  
25 "Homestead", as used in this paragraph, means the dwelling  
26 house and contiguous real estate occupied by a surviving

1 spouse or relative, as defined by the rules and  
2 regulations of the Department of Healthcare and Family  
3 Services, regardless of the value of the property.

4 This paragraph applies to direct service workers  
5 employed by the Department, or by an agency that is  
6 contracted with the Department, to provide services to  
7 individuals participating in the Home Services Program.  
8 Direct service workers employed by the Department or a  
9 contractor shall complete at least 2 hours of dementia  
10 training at the start of their employment. Direct service  
11 workers who are employees of the Department or a  
12 contractor on the effective date of this amendatory Act of  
13 the 104th General Assembly shall complete this training  
14 within 6 months after the effective date of this  
15 amendatory Act of the 104th General Assembly. The training  
16 shall cover the following subjects: (1) Alzheimer's  
17 disease and dementia; (2) safety risks; and (3)  
18 communication and behavior. Annual continuing education  
19 training shall include at least 2 hours of dementia  
20 training covering the subjects described in this  
21 paragraph. The Department shall provide contractors with  
22 dementia training curriculum on the subjects described in  
23 this paragraph. The purpose of this paragraph is to  
24 improve the quality of training for direct service workers  
25 under the Home Services Program. If laws or rules existing  
26 on the effective date of this amendatory Act of the 104th

1 General Assembly contain more rigorous dementia training  
2 requirements for Department employees or contractors  
3 providing direct services under the Home Services Program,  
4 then those laws or rules shall apply. An individual who is  
5 required to receive dementia training under any other law  
6 or rule may be considered exempt from the requirements of  
7 this paragraph, if the other law's or rule's training  
8 requirement includes a minimum 2 hours of dementia  
9 training. The individual shall be required to show proof  
10 that he or she received dementia training equivalent to  
11 the training required under this paragraph. For personal  
12 assistants covered by a collective bargaining agreement,  
13 the Department shall work with the joint training  
14 committee established by the collective bargaining  
15 agreement covering personal assistants to discuss  
16 parameters and specific topics for curriculum covering  
17 dementia training as part of the provided training for  
18 personal assistants.

19 (g) To establish such subdivisions of the Department  
20 as shall be desirable and assign to the various  
21 subdivisions the responsibilities and duties placed upon  
22 the Department by law.

23 (h) To cooperate and enter into any necessary  
24 agreements with the Department of Employment Security for  
25 the provision of job placement and job referral services  
26 to clients of the Department, including job service

1 registration of such clients with Illinois Employment  
2 Security offices and making job listings maintained by the  
3 Department of Employment Security available to such  
4 clients.

5 (i) To possess all powers reasonable and necessary for  
6 the exercise and administration of the powers, duties and  
7 responsibilities of the Department which are provided for  
8 by law.

9 (j) (Blank).

10 (k) (Blank).

11 (l) To establish, operate, and maintain a Statewide  
12 Housing Clearinghouse of information on available  
13 government subsidized housing accessible to persons with  
14 disabilities and available privately owned housing  
15 accessible to persons with disabilities. The information  
16 shall include, but not be limited to, the location, rental  
17 requirements, access features and proximity to public  
18 transportation of available housing. The Clearinghouse  
19 shall consist of at least a computerized database for the  
20 storage and retrieval of information and a separate or  
21 shared toll free telephone number for use by those seeking  
22 information from the Clearinghouse. Department offices and  
23 personnel throughout the State shall also assist in the  
24 operation of the Statewide Housing Clearinghouse.  
25 Cooperation with local, State, and federal housing  
26 managers shall be sought and extended in order to

1 frequently and promptly update the Clearinghouse's  
2 information.

3 (m) To assure that the names and case records of  
4 persons who received or are receiving services from the  
5 Department, including persons receiving vocational  
6 rehabilitation, home services, or other services, and  
7 those attending one of the Department's schools or other  
8 supervised facility shall be confidential and not be open  
9 to the general public. Those case records and reports or  
10 the information contained in those records and reports  
11 shall be disclosed by the Director only to proper law  
12 enforcement officials, individuals authorized by a court,  
13 the General Assembly or any committee or commission of the  
14 General Assembly, and other persons and for reasons as the  
15 Director designates by rule. Disclosure by the Director  
16 may be only in accordance with other applicable law.

17 (Source: P.A. 102-264, eff. 8-6-21; 102-826, eff. 5-13-22;  
18 103-479, eff. 1-1-24.)