
Early Learning & Human Services Committee

HB 1482

Brief Description: Establishing the legislative-executive WorkFirst poverty reduction oversight task force.

Sponsors: Representatives Sawyer, Kagi, Stambaugh, Caldier, Robinson, Springer, Hargrove, Tarleton, Ormsby, Doglio and Stanford.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Renames the Legislative-Executive WorkFirst Oversight Task Force as the Legislative-Executive WorkFirst Poverty Reduction Oversight Task Force (Task Force) and modifies Task Force membership.
- Establishes goals and reporting requirements for the Task Force.
- Creates the Intergenerational Poverty Advisory Committee to advise the Task Force.

Hearing Date: 2/3/17

Staff: Dawn Eychaner (786-7135).

Background:

WorkFirst Program.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) is a federal block grant that provides temporary cash assistance, subsidized childcare, and work programs for families. The Washington WorkFirst Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Act of 1997 created the WorkFirst program. With limited exceptions, adult TANF recipients must participate in one or more WorkFirst activities. These activities may include paid and unpaid employment based training programs; career development; community service; work skills assessment and job hunting training; and vocational training programs. WorkFirst participants may receive additional services such as child support collection, food assistance, and subsidized childcare.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) administers the WorkFirst program in partnership with the Department of Commerce (COM), the Department of Early Learning (DEL), the Employment Security Department (ESD), the Office of Financial Management (OFM), and the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC).

Legislative-Executive WorkFirst Oversight Task Force.

The Legislative-Executive WorkFirst Oversight Task Force (Task Force) was established in 2011 to oversee a redesign of the WorkFirst program and the operation of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program.

The Task Force is composed of four legislative members and six Governor-appointed agency representatives. Agencies represented include the DSHS, the COM, the DEL, the ESD, the OFM, and the SBCTC.

Intergenerational Poverty.

Intergenerational poverty refers to two or more consecutive generations of a family experiencing poverty. According to the United States Census Bureau, approximately 12 percent of Washington's population is living under the federal poverty level. The 2016 federal poverty guideline for a household of four is a monthly income of \$2,025.

Summary of Bill:

Legislative-Executive WorkFirst Poverty Reduction Oversight Task Force.

The Legislative-Executive WorkFirst Oversight Task Force is renamed as the Legislative-Executive WorkFirst Poverty Reduction Oversight Task Force (Task Force) and is tasked with the following goals of:

- reducing the overall percentage of people living below 200 percent of the federal poverty level by 50 percent by the year 2025; and
- preventing and addressing adverse childhood experiences and the trauma of children living in poverty.

The Task Force must review laws and budget appropriations for their impacts on Task Force goals and collaborate with the Intergenerational Poverty Advisory Committee (Committee), partner agencies, and stakeholders to share and analyze data and develop poverty reduction strategies.

Intergenerational Poverty Advisory Committee.

The Committee is created to advise the Task Force. Committee members are appointed by the Secretary of the DSHS. The Committee must choose co-chairs from among its membership.

Committee members must include representatives of advocacy groups, academic experts in childhood poverty or education, faith-based organizations, tribal governments, families impacted by poverty, local government, the business community, the Commission on African-American Affairs, the Commission on Hispanic Affairs, the Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs, and the Governor's Office of Indian Affairs.

Task Force Membership.

The OFM is removed as a Task Force member. Representatives from the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Department of Corrections, and the co-chairs of the Committee are added as voting members of the Task Force. The total number of voting members of the Task Force is increased from 10 to 13.

The Governor must direct representatives from the Department of Health, the Health Care Authority, and the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board to serve in an advisory capacity to the Task Force. The Governor must also request the participation of tribal governments.

Data and Reporting.

The DSHS may establish a data tracking system to track specified criteria related to poverty rates and trends. The data may be used to support recommendations made by the Committee and may be shared with the Task Force.

The Task Force must direct the DSHS to develop five and 10 year plans to address intergenerational poverty. Subject to approval by the Task Force, the DSHS must submit the plans to the Governor and the Legislature by December 1, 2018.

Beginning December 1, 2019 the Task Force must report annually to the Governor and the Legislature on progress towards meeting the goals of poverty reduction and the prevention of adverse childhood experiences and trauma for children living in poverty.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 23, 2017.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.