
SENATE BILL 5440

State of Washington

65th Legislature

2017 Regular Session

By Senators Zeiger, Darneille, O'Ban, Walsh, Miloscia, Hunt, Carlyle, and Warnick

Read first time 01/24/17. Referred to Committee on Human Services, Mental Health & Housing.

1 AN ACT Relating to establishing the legislative-executive
2 WorkFirst poverty reduction oversight task force; amending RCW
3 74.08A.260; adding new sections to chapter 74.08A RCW; and creating a
4 new section.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature finds that
7 intergenerational poverty, which passes from parents to children,
8 should be distinguished from situational poverty, which occurs after
9 an event like losing employment. Intergenerational poverty can affect
10 the lives of many future children and generations without the
11 development of specific strategies to stop this cycle.

12 (2) The legislature finds that it is necessary to bring together
13 state agencies and other stakeholders for the purposes of policy and
14 program development to address intergenerational poverty and to
15 develop specific strategies to provide families the support they need
16 to overcome a history of poverty.

17 (3) The legislature finds that the legislative-executive
18 WorkFirst oversight task force has recommended that its scope be
19 modified to include poverty reduction in order to provide a renewed
20 focus on the underlying causes of intergenerational poverty in
21 Washington. Therefore, the legislature intends to create a

1 legislative-executive WorkFirst poverty reduction oversight task
2 force and an intergenerational poverty advisory committee in order to
3 lay the groundwork in Washington for advancing intergenerational
4 prosperity and reducing poverty.

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 74.08A
6 RCW to read as follows:

7 The definitions in this section apply throughout RCW 74.08A.260
8 and sections 4 and 5 of this act unless the context clearly requires
9 otherwise.

10 (1) "Advisory committee" means the intergenerational poverty
11 advisory committee.

12 (2) "Cycle of poverty" or "poverty cycle" means the set of
13 factors or events by which the long-term poverty of a person is
14 likely to continue and be experienced by each child of the person
15 when the child becomes an adult unless there is outside intervention.

16 (3) "Intergenerational poverty" means poverty in which two or
17 more successive generations of a family continue in the cycle of
18 poverty and governmental dependence, and is not situational poverty.

19 (4) "Task force" means the legislative-executive WorkFirst
20 poverty reduction oversight task force.

21 **Sec. 3.** RCW 74.08A.260 and 2011 1st sp.s. c 42 s 2 are each
22 amended to read as follows:

23 (1) Each recipient shall be assessed after determination of
24 program eligibility and before referral to job search. Assessments
25 shall be based upon factors that are critical to obtaining
26 employment, including but not limited to education, availability of
27 child care, history of family violence, history of substance abuse,
28 and other factors that affect the ability to obtain employment.
29 Assessments may be performed by the department or by a contracted
30 entity. The assessment shall be based on a uniform, consistent,
31 transferable format that will be accepted by all agencies and
32 organizations serving the recipient.

33 (2) Based on the assessment, an individual responsibility plan
34 shall be prepared that: (a) Sets forth an employment goal and a plan
35 for maximizing the recipient's success at meeting the employment
36 goal; (b) considers WorkFirst educational and training programs from
37 which the recipient could benefit; (c) contains the obligation of the
38 recipient to participate in the program by complying with the plan;

1 (d) moves the recipient into full-time WorkFirst activities as
2 quickly as possible; and (e) describes the services available to the
3 recipient either during or after WorkFirst to enable the recipient to
4 obtain and keep employment and to advance in the workplace and
5 increase the recipient's wage earning potential over time.

6 (3) Recipients who are not engaged in work and work activities,
7 and do not qualify for a good cause exemption under RCW 74.08A.270,
8 shall engage in self-directed service as provided in RCW 74.08A.330.

9 (4) If a recipient refuses to engage in work and work activities
10 required by the department, the family's grant shall be reduced by
11 the recipient's share, and may, if the department determines it
12 appropriate, be terminated.

13 (5) The department may waive the penalties required under
14 subsection (4) of this section, subject to a finding that the
15 recipient refused to engage in work for good cause provided in RCW
16 74.08A.270.

17 (6) In consultation with the recipient, the department or
18 contractor shall place the recipient into a work activity that is
19 available in the local area where the recipient resides.

20 (7) Assessments conducted under this section shall include a
21 consideration of the potential benefit to the recipient of engaging
22 in financial literacy activities. The department shall consider the
23 options for financial literacy activities available in the community,
24 including information and resources available through the financial
25 education public-private partnership created under RCW 28A.300.450.
26 The department may authorize up to ten hours of financial literacy
27 activities as a core activity or an optional activity under
28 WorkFirst.

29 ~~(8)(a) ((From July 1, 2011, through June 30, 2012, subsections~~
30 ~~(2) through (6) of this section are suspended for a recipient who is~~
31 ~~a parent or other relative personally providing care for one child~~
32 ~~under the age of two years, or two or more children under the age of~~
33 ~~six years. This suspension applies to both one and two parent~~
34 ~~families. However, both parents in a two-parent family cannot use the~~
35 ~~suspension during the same month. Beginning July 1, 2012, the~~
36 ~~department shall phase in the work activity requirements that were~~
37 ~~suspended, beginning with those recipients closest to reaching the~~
38 ~~sixty-month limit of receiving temporary assistance for needy~~
39 ~~families under RCW 74.08A.010(1). The phase in shall be accomplished~~
40 ~~so that a fairly equal number of recipients required to participate~~

1 in work activities are returned to those activities each month until
2 the total number required to participate is participating by June 30,
3 2013. Nothing in this subsection shall prevent a recipient from
4 participating in the WorkFirst program on a voluntary basis.
5 Recipients who participate in the WorkFirst program on a voluntary
6 basis shall be provided an option to participate in the program on a
7 part-time basis, consisting of sixteen or fewer hours of activities
8 per week. Recipients also may participate voluntarily on a full-time
9 basis.

10 (b)(i) ~~The period of suspension of work activities under this~~
11 ~~subsection provides an opportunity for the legislative and executive~~
12 ~~branches to oversee redesign of the WorkFirst program. To realize~~
13 ~~this opportunity, both during the period of suspension and following~~
14 ~~reinstatement of work activity requirements as redesign is being~~
15 ~~implemented,)) A legislative-executive WorkFirst poverty reduction
16 oversight task force is established(, ~~with members as provided in~~
17 ~~this subsection (8)(b)).~~~~

18 ((+ii)) (b) The primary goals of the task force are to:

19 (i) Reduce the overall percentage of people living below two
20 hundred percent of the federal poverty level by fifty percent by the
21 year 2025. The task force must work toward this goal in a manner that
22 seeks to eliminate disparities including, but not limited to,
23 disparities by race, ethnicity, sex, gender, zip code, immigration
24 status, age, household type, and disability status; and

25 (ii) Prevent and address adverse childhood experiences and the
26 trauma of children who are living in poverty through the provision of
27 effective services.

28 (c) The task force shall include diverse, statewide
29 representation and its membership shall reflect regional, racial, and
30 cultural diversity to adequately represent the needs of all children
31 and families in the state. The task force shall consist of the
32 following members:

33 (i) The president of the senate shall appoint two members from
34 each of the two largest caucuses of the senate.

35 ((+iii)) (ii) The speaker of the house of representatives shall
36 appoint two members from each of the two largest caucuses of the
37 house of representatives.

38 ((+iv)) (iii) The governor shall appoint members representing
39 the department of social and health services, the department of early
40 learning, the department of commerce, the employment security

1 department, (~~the office of financial management~~) the office of the
2 superintendent of public instruction, the department of corrections,
3 and the state board for community and technical colleges. The
4 governor shall direct representatives from the department of health,
5 the health care authority, and the workforce training and education
6 coordinating board to serve in an advisory capacity to the task
7 force.

8 (iv) The governor shall request participation by representatives
9 of tribal governments.

10 (v) The cochairs of the intergenerational poverty advisory
11 committee created in section 4 of this act shall serve as voting
12 members of the task force.

13 ~~((v))~~ (d) The task force shall choose cochairs, one from among
14 the legislative members and one from among the executive branch
15 members. The legislative members shall convene the initial meeting of
16 the task force.

17 ~~((e))~~ (e) The task force shall:

18 (i) Oversee the partner agencies' (~~implementation of the~~
19 redesign)) operation of the WorkFirst program and operation of the
20 temporary assistance for needy families program to ensure that the
21 programs are achieving desired outcomes for their clients;

22 (ii) Determine evidence-based outcome measures for the WorkFirst
23 program, including measures related to equitably serving the needs of
24 historically underrepresented populations, such as English language
25 learners, immigrants, refugees, and other diverse communities;

26 (iii) Develop accountability measures for WorkFirst recipients
27 and the state agencies responsible for their progress toward self-
28 sufficiency;

29 (iv) Review existing statutes, administrative codes, and budget
30 appropriations for their impact on advancing the goal of fifty
31 percent poverty reduction by 2025;

32 (v) Collaborate with the advisory committee created in section 4
33 of this act to develop strategies to reduce poverty and prevent
34 adverse childhood experiences, and monitor the impact of these
35 strategies;

36 (vi) Seek input on best practices from service providers,
37 community-based organizations, legislators, state agencies,
38 stakeholders, the business community, and subject matter experts;

39 (vii) Collaborate with partner agencies and the advisory
40 committee to share and analyze data and information collected under

1 section 5 of this act and from other sources regarding
2 intergenerational poverty in the state, with a primary focus on data
3 and information regarding children who are at risk of continuing the
4 cycle of poverty and welfare dependency unless outside intervention
5 is made;

6 (viii) Make recommendations to the governor and the legislature
7 regarding:

8 (A) Policies to improve the effectiveness of the WorkFirst
9 program over time;

10 (B) Early identification of those recipients most likely to
11 experience long stays on the program and strategies to improve their
12 ability to achieve progress toward self-sufficiency; and

13 (C) Necessary changes to the program, including taking into
14 account federal changes to the temporary assistance for needy
15 families program(~~(-)~~);

16 ~~((d))~~ (ix) Direct the department of social and health services
17 to develop a five-year and ten-year plan to address intergenerational
18 poverty, subject to oversight and approval by the task force. Upon
19 approval by the task force, the department must submit these plans to
20 the governor and the appropriate committees of the legislature by
21 December 1, 2018; and

22 (x) Beginning December 1, 2019, and each December 1st thereafter
23 and in collaboration with the advisory committee, provide an annual
24 report to the governor and the appropriate committees of the
25 legislature on the progress being made towards the goals identified
26 in this section.

27 (f) The partner agencies must provide the task force with regular
28 reports on:

29 (i) The partner agencies' progress toward meeting the outcome and
30 performance measures established under ~~((e))~~ (e) of this
31 subsection;

32 (ii) Caseload trends and program expenditures, and the impact of
33 those trends and expenditures on client services, including services
34 to historically underrepresented populations; and

35 (iii) The characteristics of families who have been unsuccessful
36 on the program and have lost their benefits either through sanction
37 or the sixty-month time limit.

38 ~~((e))~~ (g) Staff support for the task force must be provided by
39 senate committee services, the house of representatives office of
40 program research, and the state agency members of the task force.

1 (~~(f)~~) (h) The task force shall meet on a quarterly basis
2 (~~(beginning September 2011)~~), or as determined necessary by the task
3 force cochair.

4 (~~(g)~~) (i) Legislative members of the task force are reimbursed
5 for travel expenses in accordance with RCW 44.04.120. Nonlegislative
6 members are not entitled to be reimbursed for travel expenses if they
7 are elected officials or are participating on behalf of an employer,
8 governmental entity, or other organization. Any reimbursement for
9 other nonlegislative members is subject to chapter 43.03 RCW.

10 (j) The expenses of the task force must be paid jointly by the
11 senate and the house of representatives. Task force expenditures are
12 subject to approval by the senate facilities and operations committee
13 and the house of representatives executive rules committee, or their
14 successor committees.

15 (k) During its tenure, the state agency members of the task force
16 shall respond in a timely manner to data requests from the cochair.

17 NEW SECTION. Sec. 4. A new section is added to chapter 74.08A
18 RCW to read as follows:

19 (1) To assist the task force established in RCW 74.08A.260, there
20 is created the intergenerational poverty advisory committee.

21 (2) The advisory committee must include diverse, statewide
22 representation from public, nonprofit, and for-profit entities. The
23 committee membership must reflect regional, racial, and cultural
24 diversity to adequately represent the needs of all children and
25 families in the state.

26 (3) Members of the advisory committee are appointed by the
27 secretary, with the approval of the task force.

28 (4) The advisory committee must include representatives from:

29 (a) Advocacy groups that focus on childhood poverty issues;

30 (b) Advocacy groups that focus on education issues;

31 (c) Academic experts in childhood poverty or education issues;

32 (d) Faith-based organizations that address childhood poverty or
33 education issues;

34 (e) Tribal governments;

35 (f) Families impacted by poverty;

36 (g) Local government representatives that address childhood
37 poverty or education issues;

38 (h) The business community; and

1 (i) The commission on African-American affairs, the state
2 commission on Hispanic affairs, the state commission on Asian Pacific
3 American affairs, and the governor's office of Indian affairs.

4 (5) Subject to subsection (6) of this section, each member of the
5 advisory committee is appointed for a four-year term unless a member
6 is appointed to complete an unexpired term.

7 (6) The secretary may adjust the length of term at the time of
8 appointment or reappointment so that approximately one-half of the
9 advisory committee is appointed every two years.

10 (7) The secretary may remove an advisory committee member:

11 (a) If the member is unable or unwilling to carry out the
12 member's assigned responsibilities; or

13 (b) For good cause.

14 (8) If a vacancy occurs in the advisory committee membership for
15 any reason, a replacement may be appointed for the unexpired term.

16 (9) The advisory committee shall choose cochairs from among its
17 membership. The secretary shall convene the initial meeting of the
18 advisory committee.

19 (10) A majority of the advisory committee constitutes a quorum of
20 the advisory committee at any meeting and the action of the majority
21 of members present is the action of the advisory committee.

22 (11) The advisory committee shall:

23 (a) Meet quarterly at the request of the task force cochairs or
24 the cochairs of the advisory committee;

25 (b) Make recommendations to the task force on how the task force
26 and the state can effectively address the needs of children affected
27 by intergenerational poverty and achieve the purposes and duties of
28 the task force as described in RCW 74.08A.260;

29 (c) Ensure that the advisory committee's recommendations to the
30 task force are supported by verifiable data, including data gathered
31 under section 5 of this act; and

32 (d) Gather input from diverse communities about the impact of
33 intergenerational poverty on outcomes such as education, health care,
34 employment, involvement in the child welfare system, and other
35 related areas.

36 (12) The department shall provide staff support to the advisory
37 committee.

38 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** A new section is added to chapter 74.08A
39 RCW to read as follows:

1 (1) The department may establish and maintain a system to track
2 intergenerational poverty which has the ability to:

3 (a) Identify groups that have a high risk of experiencing
4 intergenerational poverty;

5 (b) Identify incidents, patterns, and trends that explain or
6 contribute to intergenerational poverty;

7 (c) Assist case workers, social scientists, and government
8 officials in the study and development of effective and efficient
9 plans and programs to help individuals and families in the state to
10 break the cycle of poverty; and

11 (d) Gather and track available local, state, and national data
12 on:

13 (i) Official poverty rates;

14 (ii) Child poverty rates;

15 (iii) Years spent by individuals in childhood poverty;

16 (iv) Years spent by individuals in adult poverty; and

17 (v) Related poverty information.

18 (2) In implementing the intergenerational poverty tracking
19 system, the department is encouraged to:

20 (a) Use available data in the tracking system, including public
21 assistance data, census data, and other data made available to the
22 department;

23 (b) Develop and implement methods to integrate, compare, analyze,
24 and validate the data for the purposes described in subsection (1) of
25 this section; and

26 (c) Include in the annual written report described in RCW
27 74.08A.260, a report on the data, findings, and potential uses of the
28 tracking system.

29 (3) The tracking system must protect the privacy of individuals
30 living in poverty by using and distributing data within the tracking
31 system in compliance with RCW 74.04.060, and other applicable state
32 and federal laws.

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