
**Children & Family Services
Committee**

HB 1635

Brief Description: Revising reporting requirements for income and resources under the public assistance program.

Sponsors: Representatives Pettigrew, Boldt, Kagi, Edwards and Kenney; by request of Department of Social and Health Services.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Revises reporting requirements for income and resources for recipients of public assistance or food stamp benefits.

Hearing Date: 2/17/03

Staff: Cynthia Forland (786-7152).

Background:

If an individual receives public assistance or food stamp benefits for which he or she is not eligible, or in an amount greater than that for which he or she is eligible, the portion of the payment to which the individual is not entitled is a recoverable debt due the state. A recipient of public assistance or food stamp benefits is required to notify the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) within 20 days of the receipt or possession of all income or resources not previously declared to the DSHS. The DSHS is required to advise applicants for assistance that failure to report as required, failure to reveal resources or income, and false statements will result in recovery by the state of any overpayment and may result in criminal prosecution.

Under federal reauthorization of the food stamp program, enacted in 2002, states are granted greater flexibility with regard to income and resources limits and reporting requirements under the program. Changes to the program include the following:

- Providing states the option of excluding certain types of income and resources that are not counted under the state's Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) cash assistance or Medicaid programs;
- Allowing states to disregard reported changes in deductions during certification periods,

except for changes associated with a new residence or earned income, until the next recertification; and

- Providing states the option of extending semi-annual reporting of changes to all households not exempt from periodic reporting.

Summary of Bill:

The DSHS may by rule determine reporting requirements for recipients of public assistance or food stamp benefits to notify the DSHS of the receipt or possession of countable income or resources not previously declared to the DSHS. The rules must be consistent with federal law and regulations governing public assistance programs.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Preliminary fiscal note available.

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