
SENATE BILL 5490

State of Washington

56th Legislature

1999 Regular Session

By Senators Wojahn, Winsley, Kline, Fairley, B. Sheldon, McAuliffe, Thibaudeau and Snyder

Read first time 01/25/1999. Referred to Committee on Labor & Workforce Development.

1 AN ACT Relating to employment assessments for recipients of
2 temporary assistance for needy families; amending RCW 74.08A.260; and
3 creating a new section.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that studies show a
6 correlation between learning disabilities and the barriers to self-
7 sufficiency experienced by long-term welfare recipients. Learning
8 disabilities, such as dyslexia and attention deficit hyperactivity
9 disorder, may make it difficult for some of those on public assistance
10 to develop the skills needed to maintain and progress in employment.

11 The legislature also finds that recently, simpler and less costly
12 screening tools for learning disabilities have been identified. A
13 basic, initial, brief screening tool no longer requires a mental health
14 professional to administer it, and medical technology is rapidly
15 developing the technology to screen for attention deficit hyperactivity
16 disorder with computerized scanning devices.

17 The legislature finds that the early identification and appropriate
18 referral to treatment designed to help individuals cope with or

1 overcome learning disabilities, increases their chances of attaining
2 self-sufficiency.

3 The legislature intends that the department of social and health
4 services screen temporary assistance for needy families applicants for
5 learning disabilities, in order to customize and make meaningful their
6 individual responsibility plans, refer them to treatment as
7 appropriate, or exempt them from work activity requirements, benefit
8 time limits, or other requirements of Title 74 RCW, as directed by the
9 legislature.

10 **Sec. 2.** RCW 74.08A.260 and 1997 c 58 s 313 are each amended to
11 read as follows:

12 Recipients who have not obtained paid, unsubsidized employment by
13 the end of the job search component authorized in section 312 of this
14 act shall be referred to a work activity.

15 (1) Each recipient shall be assessed immediately upon completion of
16 the job search component. Assessments shall be based upon factors that
17 are critical to obtaining employment, including but not limited to
18 education, employment strengths, and employment history. Special
19 emphasis shall be placed on performing a basic assessment to screen for
20 learning disabilities, including dyslexia and attention deficit
21 hyperactivity disorder. Assessments, including screening for learning
22 disabilities, may be performed by the department or by a contracted
23 entity. The assessment shall be based on a uniform, consistent,
24 transferable format that will be accepted by all agencies and
25 organizations serving the recipient. Based on the assessment, an
26 individual responsibility plan shall be prepared that: (a) Sets forth
27 an employment goal and a plan for moving the recipient immediately into
28 employment; (b) contains the obligation of the recipient to become and
29 remain employed; (c) moves the recipient into whatever employment the
30 recipient is capable of handling as quickly as possible; and (d)
31 describes the services available to the recipient to enable the
32 recipient to obtain and keep employment.

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

36 (3) If a recipient refuses to engage in work and work activities
37 required by the department, the family's grant shall be reduced by the

1 recipient's share, and may, if the department determines it
2 appropriate, be terminated.

3 (4) The department may waive the penalties required under
4 subsection (3) of this section, subject to a finding that the recipient
5 refused to engage in work for good cause provided in RCW 74.08A.270.

6 (5) In implementing this section, the department shall assign the
7 highest priority to the most employable clients, including adults in
8 two-parent families and parents in single-parent families that include
9 older preschool or school-age children to be engaged in work
10 activities.

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

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