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**SENATE BILL 6502**

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**State of Washington 65th Legislature 2018 Regular Session**

**By** Senators Dhingra, Darneille, Kuderer, and Saldaña

AN ACT Relating to improving housing stability for people with disabilities and seniors by amending eligibility for the essential needs and housing support and the aged, blind, or disabled assistance programs; and amending RCW 74.04.805, 74.62.030, and 43.185C.230.

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

**Sec.**  RCW 74.04.805 and 2013 2nd sp.s. c 10 s 3 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) The department is responsible for determining eligibility for referral for essential needs and housing support under RCW 43.185C.220. Persons eligible are persons who:

(a) Are incapacitated from gainful employment by reason of bodily or mental infirmity that will likely continue for a minimum of ninety days. The standard for incapacity in this subsection, as evidenced by the ninety-day duration standard, is not intended to be as stringent as federal supplemental security income disability standards;

(b) Are citizens or aliens lawfully admitted for permanent residence or otherwise residing in the United States under color of law;

(c) Have furnished the department their social security number. If the social security number cannot be furnished because it has not been issued or is not known, an application for a number must be made prior to authorization of benefits, and the social security number must be provided to the department upon receipt;

(d) Have countable income as described in RCW 74.04.005 at or below four hundred twenty-eight dollars for a married couple or at or below three hundred thirty-nine dollars for a single individual;

(e) Do not have countable resources in excess of those described in RCW 74.04.005; and

(f) Are not eligible for:

(i) ((~~The aged, blind, or disabled assistance program;~~

~~(ii)~~)) The pregnant women assistance program; or

((~~(iii)~~)) (ii) Federal aid assistance, other than basic food benefits transferred electronically and medical assistance.

(2) Recipients of aged, blind, or disabled assistance program benefits who are either: (a) Homeless; or (b) at substantial risk of losing stable housing or housing support services as described in RCW 43.185C.220 and meet other eligibility requirements in this section are eligible for a referral for essential needs and housing support.

(3) The following persons are not eligible for a referral for essential needs and housing support:

(a) ((~~Persons who are unemployable due primarily to alcohol or drug addiction, except as provided in subsection (3) of this subsection. These persons must be referred to appropriate assessment, treatment, shelter, or supplemental security income referral services as authorized under chapter 74.50 RCW. Referrals must be made at the time of application or at the time of eligibility review. This subsection may not be construed to prohibit the department from making a referral for essential needs and housing report for persons who have a substance abuse addiction who are incapacitated due to other physical or mental conditions that meet the eligibility criteria for a referral for essential needs and housing support;~~

~~(b)~~)) Persons who refuse or fail to cooperate in obtaining federal aid assistance, without good cause;

((~~(c)~~)) (b) Persons who refuse or fail without good cause to participate in drug or alcohol treatment if an assessment by a certified chemical dependency counselor indicates a need for such treatment. Good cause must be found to exist when a person's physical or mental condition, as determined by the department, prevents the person from participating in drug or alcohol dependency treatment, when needed outpatient drug or alcohol treatment is not available to the person in the county of his or her residence or when needed inpatient treatment is not available in a location that is reasonably accessible for the person; and

((~~(d)~~)) (c) Persons who are fleeing to avoid prosecution of, or to avoid custody or confinement for conviction of, a felony, or an attempt to commit a felony, under the laws of the state of Washington or the place from which the person flees; or who are violating a condition of probation, community supervision, or parole imposed under federal or state law for a felony or gross misdemeanor conviction.

((~~(3)~~)) (4) For purposes of determining whether a person is incapacitated from gainful employment under subsection (1) of this section:

(a) The department shall adopt by rule medical criteria for incapacity determinations to ensure that eligibility decisions are consistent with statutory requirements and are based on clear, objective medical information; and

(b) The process implementing the medical criteria must involve consideration of opinions of the treating or consulting physicians or health care professionals regarding incapacity, and any eligibility decision which rejects uncontroverted medical opinion must set forth clear and convincing reasons for doing so.

((~~(4)~~)) (5) For purposes of reviewing a person's continuing eligibility and in order to remain eligible for the program, persons who have been found to have an incapacity from gainful employment must demonstrate that there has been no material improvement in their medical or mental health condition. The department may discontinue benefits when there was specific error in the prior determination that found the person eligible by reason of incapacitation.

((~~(5)~~)) (6) The department must review the cases of all persons who have received benefits under the essential needs and housing support program for twelve consecutive months, and at least annually after the first review, to determine whether they are eligible for the aged, blind, or disabled assistance program.

**Sec.**  RCW 74.62.030 and 2013 2nd sp.s. c 10 s 2 are each amended to read as follows:

(1)(a) ((~~Effective November 1, 2011,~~)) The aged, blind, or disabled assistance program shall provide financial grants to persons in need who:

(i) Are not eligible to receive federal aid assistance, other than basic food benefits transferred electronically and medical assistance;

(ii) Meet the eligibility requirements of subsection (3) of this section; and

(iii) Are aged, blind, or disabled. For purposes of determining eligibility for assistance for the aged, blind, or disabled assistance program, the following definitions apply:

(A) "Aged" means age sixty-five or older.

(B) "Blind" means statutorily blind as defined for the purpose of determining eligibility for the federal supplemental security income program.

(C) "Disabled" means likely to meet the federal supplemental security income disability standard. In making this determination, the department should give full consideration to the cumulative impact of an applicant's multiple impairments, an applicant's age, and vocational and educational history.

In determining whether a person is disabled, the department may rely on, but is not limited to, the following:

(I) A previous disability determination by the social security administration or the disability determination service entity within the department; or

(II) A determination that an individual is eligible to receive optional categorically needy medicaid as a disabled person under the federal regulations at 42 C.F.R. Parts 435, Secs. 201(a)(3) and 210.

(b) The following persons are not eligible for the aged, blind, or disabled assistance program:

(i) Persons who are not able to engage in gainful employment due primarily to alcohol or drug addiction. These persons shall be referred to appropriate assessment, treatment, shelter, or supplemental security income referral services as authorized under chapter 74.50 RCW. Referrals shall be made at the time of application or at the time of eligibility review. This subsection may not be construed to prohibit the department from granting aged, blind, or disabled assistance benefits to alcoholics and drug addicts who are incapacitated due to other physical or mental conditions that meet the eligibility criteria for the aged, blind, or disabled assistance program; or

(ii) Persons for whom there has been a final determination of ineligibility for federal supplemental security income benefits.

(c) Persons may receive aged, blind, or disabled assistance benefits and essential needs and housing program support under RCW 43.185C.220 concurrently while pending application for federal supplemental security income benefits. The monetary value of any aged, blind, or disabled assistance benefit that is subsequently duplicated by the person's receipt of supplemental security income for the same period shall be considered a debt due the state and shall by operation of law be subject to recovery through all available legal remedies.

(2) ((~~Effective November 1, 2011,~~)) The pregnant women assistance program shall provide financial grants to persons who:

(a) Are not eligible to receive federal aid assistance other than basic food benefits or medical assistance; and

(b) Are pregnant and in need, based upon the current income and resource standards of the federal temporary assistance for needy families program, but are ineligible for federal temporary assistance for needy families benefits for a reason other than failure to cooperate in program requirements; and

(c) Meet the eligibility requirements of subsection (3) of this section.

(3) To be eligible for the aged, blind, or disabled assistance program under subsection (1) of this section or the pregnant women assistance program under subsection (2) of this section, a person must:

(a) Be a citizen or alien lawfully admitted for permanent residence or otherwise residing in the United States under color of law;

(b) Meet the income and resource standards described in RCW 74.04.805(1) (d) and (e);

(c) Have furnished the department his or her social security number. If the social security number cannot be furnished because it has not been issued or is not known, an application for a number shall be made prior to authorization of benefits, and the social security number shall be provided to the department upon receipt;

(d) Not have refused or failed without good cause to participate in drug or alcohol treatment if an assessment by a certified chemical dependency counselor indicates a need for such treatment. Good cause must be found to exist when a person's physical or mental condition, as determined by the department, prevents the person from participating in drug or alcohol dependency treatment, when needed outpatient drug or alcohol treatment is not available to the person in the county of his or her residence or when needed inpatient treatment is not available in a location that is reasonably accessible for the person; and

(e) Not have refused or failed to cooperate in obtaining federal aid assistance, without good cause.

(4) ((~~Effective November 1, 2011,~~)) Referrals for essential needs and housing support under RCW 43.185C.220 shall be provided to persons found eligible under RCW 74.04.805.

(5) No person may be considered an eligible individual for benefits under this section with respect to any month if during that month the person:

(a) Is fleeing to avoid prosecution of, or to avoid custody or confinement for conviction of, a felony, or an attempt to commit a felony, under the laws of the state of Washington or the place from which the person flees; or

(b) Is violating a condition of probation, community supervision, or parole imposed under federal or state law for a felony or gross misdemeanor conviction.

(6) The department must share client data for individuals eligible for essential needs and housing support with the department of commerce and designated essential needs and housing support entities as required under RCW 43.185C.230.

**Sec.**  RCW 43.185C.230 and 2013 2nd sp.s. c 10 s 5 are each amended to read as follows:

The department, in collaboration with the department of social and health services, shall:

(1) Develop a mechanism through which the department and local governments or community-based organizations can verify a person has been determined eligible by the department of social and health services and remains eligible for the essential needs and housing support program; and

(2) Provide a secure and current list of individuals eligible for the essential needs and housing support program to designated entities within each county. The list must be updated at least monthly and include, as available and applicable, the eligible individual's:

(a) Name;

(b) Address;

(c) Phone number;

(d) Shelter location; and

(e) Case manager contact information.

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