
Human Services & Early Learning Committee

HB 1141

Brief Description: Concerning child care supports for military families.

Sponsors: Representatives Reeves, Appleton and Stanford.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Allows an enlisted service member with an income at or below 85 percent of state median income to receive Working Connections Child Care.

Hearing Date: 1/29/19

Staff: Dawn Eychaner (786-7135).

Background:

Working Connections Child Care.

Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) is a federally and state-funded program that offers subsidies to childcare providers serving families with an income at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level (FPL). The state pays part of the cost of childcare when a parent is employed, self-employed, or meets the requirements for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families or WorkFirst programs.

The family is responsible for making a copayment to the childcare provider according to a copayment schedule. The copayment is \$15 per month, \$65 per month, or is calculated based on household income, depending on the income range of the consumer.

The average monthly caseload of the WCCC has historically been capped in the state operating budget at 33,000 households, with direction to prioritize certain groups for services. These groups have included families applying for or receiving TANF, families curing TANF sanction, foster children, children with special needs, minor parents attending high school full time,

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.

families receiving child welfare services, child protective services, or a family assessment response, and families who have received WCCC subsidy within the past 30 days and are reapplying for the program.

The Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) sets policy for the WCCC and the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) determines eligibility and issues subsidy payments to providers. Effective July 1, 2019, all duties and functions of the DSHS pertaining to WCCC are transferred to the DCYF.

Department of Defense Child Care Assistance.

The United States Department of Defense (DOD) offers child care benefits to eligible service members, surviving spouses, and DOD civilians. Child care benefits may include access to child care centers operated on military installations, certified family child care, school age care provided in facilities or in homes, and supplemental child care that includes fee assistance programs. Fee assistance may be provided if a service member is unable to access child care on-base at a military installation.

Summary of Bill:

Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, a service member enlisted in any branch of the United States Armed Forces may receive WCCC when the service member:

- has a household income that does not exceed 85 percent of the state median income at the time of application;
- is not a commissioned officer; and
- meets all other program eligibility requirements.

In the event of a waitlist, the DCYF must consider the length of the service member's military service and prioritize longer-serving service members. The DCYF may not require a copayment greater than \$65 per month.

Households determined eligible under the act are not considered part of the average monthly caseload limit for program enrollment if such a limit is identified in the omnibus operating appropriations act.

The WCCC funds authorized may not supplant federal child care subsidy funds available through the DOD Child Care Fee Assistance Program. With the exception of the consumer copay, WCCC funds may be used to pay the difference between the DOD subsidy and the cost of care if the federal funds are not sufficient to cover the entire cost.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 23, 2019.

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