

# FINAL BILL REPORT

## E2SHB 2075

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### FULL VETO

Synopsis as Enacted

**Brief Description:** Establishing service requirements for the department of social and health services.

**Sponsors:** House Committee on Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Peterson, Fitzgibbon, Simmons, Morgan, Chopp, Walen, Macri and Sutherland).

**House Committee on Housing, Human Services & Veterans**  
**House Committee on Appropriations**  
**Senate Committee on Human Services, Reentry & Rehabilitation**

#### **Background:**

The Department of Social and Health Services.

The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) consists of seven program area administrations including:

- the Aging and Long-Term Support Administration;
- the Behavioral Health Administration;
- the Children's Administration;
- the Developmental Disabilities Administration;
- the Economic Services Administration (ESA);
- the Financial Services Administration; and
- the Rehabilitation Administration.

The DSHS ESA administers a number of public assistance programs, including housing and essential needs services, medical care, cash grants, and food assistance. The DSHS ESA services are available in community services offices (CSO), online, and via telephone. There are 53 CSOs located throughout the state. Services offered in-person by CSOs were disrupted due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### **Summary:**

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

Minimum Service Requirements.

Minimum service expectations and requirements for the DSHS ESA's Community Services Division (CSD) are established. The CSD must ensure that clients may apply for and receive services in a reasonable and accessible manner that is suited to the clients' needs, including but not limited to, technology, language, and ability.

*Community Services Offices.*

The CSOs must be open for walk-in and in-person services during normal business hours. The CSD may not limit which clients are able to utilize walk-in and in-person services or limit which services may be accessed in CSOs. The DSHS retains the right to close an office for emergency, health, safety and welfare issues.

*Telephone Access to Services.*

The CSD must maintain telephonic access to services. The CSD must strive to ensure that clients do not experience total call wait time that exceed 30 minutes. The CSD must monitor the average wait time for client telephone calls per week, and include a measurement of all incoming calls, including dropped calls. Beginning November 1, 2022, the DSHS must report annually to the Legislature and the Governor, on the average wait time for client telephone calls per week, the measurement of all incoming calls, the number of dropped calls, and the methodology the DSHS utilizes to monitor calls for the purposes of their reporting.

By November 1, 2022, the DSHS must provide recommendations to the Legislature on achieving the goal of 30-minute call wait times, including recommendations on staffing, technology, and other infrastructure needed to efficiently serve clients.

Where a cash and food assistance applicant or recipient is negatively affected by excessive call wait times, dropped calls, or CSD office closures during normal business hours, the DSHS must prioritize the processing of their application and to the extent allowed under state and federal law, the applicant or recipient may not be terminated or sanctioned by the DSHS or have their application for assistance be denied because of their inability to contact the CSD.

**Votes on Final Passage:**

House	97	1	
Senate	48	0	(Senate amended)
House	96	1	(House concurred)