
HOUSE BILL 1151

State of Washington

67th Legislature

2021 Regular Session

By Representatives Leavitt, Shewmake, Peterson, Bronoske, Entenman, Stonier, Bateman, Chopp, Frame, Hackney, Callan, Pollet, Gregerson, Senn, and J. Johnson

Read first time 01/12/21. Referred to Committee on Children, Youth & Families.

1 AN ACT Relating to bolstering economic recovery by providing
2 public assistance to households in need; amending RCW 74.04.660 and
3 74.04.770; adding a new section to chapter 74.04 RCW; creating a new
4 section; and providing an effective date.

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

6 **Sec. 1.** RCW 74.04.660 and 2008 c 181 s 301 are each amended to
7 read as follows:

8 The department shall establish a consolidated emergency
9 assistance program for families with children. Assistance may be
10 provided in accordance with this section.

11 (1) Benefits provided under this program shall be limited to one
12 period of time, as determined by the department, within any
13 consecutive twelve-month period.

14 (2) Benefits under this program shall be provided to alleviate
15 emergent conditions resulting from insufficient income and resources
16 to provide for: Food, shelter, clothing, medical care, or other
17 necessary items, as defined by the department. Benefits may also be
18 provided for family reconciliation services, family preservation
19 services, home-based services, short-term substitute care in a
20 licensed agency as defined in RCW 74.15.020, crisis nurseries,
21 therapeutic child care, or other necessary services as defined by the

1 department. Benefits shall be provided only in an amount sufficient
2 to cover the cost of the specific need, subject to the limitations
3 established in this section.

4 (3)(a) The department shall, by rule, establish assistance
5 standards and eligibility criteria for this program in accordance
6 with this section.

7 (b) Eligibility for benefits or services under this section does
8 not automatically entitle a recipient to medical assistance.

9 (4) The department shall seek federal emergency assistance funds
10 to supplement the state funds appropriated for the operation of this
11 program as long as other departmental programs are not adversely
12 affected by the receipt of federal funds.

13 (5) If state funds appropriated for the consolidated emergency
14 assistance program are exhausted, the department may discontinue the
15 program.

16 (6) During a state of emergency and pursuant to an order from the
17 governor under this subsection, benefits under this program may be
18 extended to individuals and families without children and may be
19 provided for more than one period of time within any consecutive 12-
20 month period, as established in an order from the governor.
21 Adjustments to the program under this subsection remain in effect
22 until either the state of emergency ceases, the order expires, or the
23 governor issues an order terminating these adjustments, whichever
24 occurs first.

25 NEW SECTION. Sec. 2. A new section is added to chapter 74.04
26 RCW to read as follows:

27 (1) To assist with family-related expenses, households with
28 children receiving food benefits under this title, who are not
29 simultaneously receiving temporary assistance for needy families, are
30 eligible to receive a one-time cash benefit in the final month of
31 eligibility when the household's food benefits terminate due to
32 exceeding the gross income limit or when the household requests
33 voluntary closure.

34 (2) For households receiving a cash benefit under subsection (1)
35 of this section, the department shall provide transitional food
36 assistance for a period of five months when eligibility for food
37 benefits ceases due to exceeding the gross income limit or when the
38 household requests voluntary closure.

1 (3) If necessary, the department shall extend the household's
2 food benefit certification until the end of the transition period.

3 (4) The amount of the cash benefit issued by the department under
4 subsection (1) of this section must be set in accordance with
5 available funds appropriated for this purpose.

6 **Sec. 3.** RCW 74.04.770 and 2011 1st sp.s. c 36 s 26 are each
7 amended to read as follows:

8 (1) The department shall establish consolidated standards of need
9 each fiscal year which may vary by geographical areas, program, and
10 family size, for temporary assistance for needy families, refugee
11 assistance, supplemental security income, and benefits under RCW
12 74.62.030.

13 (2)(a) Standards of need for temporary assistance for needy
14 families, refugee assistance, and benefits under RCW 74.62.030 shall
15 be based on studies of actual living costs and generally recognized
16 inflation indices and shall include reasonable allowances for basic
17 household needs including shelter, fuel, food, transportation,
18 clothing, household maintenance and operations, personal maintenance,
19 ~~((and))~~ necessary incidentals((-)), cell phone and internet, and out-
20 of-pocket costs for child care and health care.

21 (b) By July 1, 2022, to ensure the standards of need reflect the
22 current goods and services households need, the department must use
23 an existing, broadly used national standard that meets the
24 requirements of (a) of this subsection as the base for annual
25 updating in subsection (1) of this section.

26 (c) The standard of need may take into account the economies of
27 joint living arrangements, but unless explicitly required by federal
28 statute, there shall not be proration of any portion of assistance
29 grants unless the amount of the grant standard is equal to the
30 standard of need.

31 The department is authorized to establish rateable reductions and
32 grant maximums consistent with federal law.

33 (3) Payment level will be equal to need or a lesser amount if
34 rateable reductions or grant maximums are imposed. In no case shall a
35 recipient of supplemental security income receive a state supplement
36 less than the minimum required by federal law.

37 ~~((The department may establish a separate standard for shelter~~
38 ~~provided at no cost.))~~

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** If specific funding for the purposes of
2 section 2 of this act, referencing section 2 of this act by bill or
3 chapter number, is not provided by June 30, 2021, in the omnibus
4 appropriations act, section 2 of this act is null and void.

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** Section 2 of this act takes effect July 1,
6 2022.

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