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**HOUSE BILL 2479**

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**State of Washington 68th Legislature 2024 Regular Session**

**By** Representative Rule

AN ACT Relating to home visiting; and amending RCW 43.216.130, 43.216.157, and 43.216.159.

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

**Sec.**  RCW 43.216.130 and 2017 c 171 s 2 are each amended to read as follows:

(1)(a) The home visiting services account is created in the state treasury. Revenues to the account shall consist of appropriations by the legislature and all other sources deposited in the account. All federal funds received by the department for home visiting activities must be deposited into the account.

(b)(i) Expenditures from the account shall be used for state matching funds for the purposes of the program established in this section and federally funded activities for the home visiting program, including administrative expenses.

(ii) The department oversees the account and is the lead state agency for home visiting system development. The nongovernmental private-public partnership supports the home visiting service delivery system and provides support functions to funded programs.

(iii) ((~~It is the intent of the legislature that state funds invested in the account be matched by the private-public partnership each fiscal year.~~

~~(iv)~~)) Amounts used for program administration by the department may not exceed an average of ten percent in any two consecutive fiscal years.

((~~(v) Authorizations for expenditures may be given only after private funds are committed. The nongovernmental private-public partnership must report to the department quarterly to demonstrate investment of private match funds.~~))

(c) Expenditures from the account are subject to appropriation and the allotment provisions of chapter 43.88 RCW.

(2) The department must expend moneys from the account to provide state matching funds for partnership activities to implement home visiting services and administer the infrastructure necessary to develop, support, and evaluate evidence-based, research-based, and promising home visiting programs.

(3) Activities eligible for funding through the account include, but are not limited to:

(a) Home visiting services that achieve one or more of the following: (i) Enhancing child development and well-being by alleviating the effects on child development of poverty and other known risk factors; (ii) reducing the incidence of child abuse and neglect; or (iii) promoting school readiness for young children and their families; and

(b) Development and maintenance of the infrastructure for home visiting programs, including training, quality improvement, and evaluation.

(4) Beginning July 1, 2010, the department shall contract with the nongovernmental private-public partnership designated in RCW ((~~43.215.070~~)) 43.216.065 to support programs funded through the home visiting services account. The department shall monitor performance and provide periodic reports on the uses and outcomes of the home visiting services account.

(5) ((~~The~~)) Except for programs established under RCW 43.216.159, the department shall, in the administration of the programs:

(a) Fund programs through a competitive bid process or in compliance with the regulations of the funding source; and

(b) Convene an advisory committee of early learning and home visiting experts, including one representative from the department, to advise the partnership regarding research and the distribution of funds from the account to eligible programs.

**Sec.**  RCW 43.216.157 and 2011 1st sp.s. c 32 s 6 are each amended to read as follows:

The definitions in this section apply throughout this section and RCW ((~~43.215.145, 43.215.147, and 43.121.185~~)) 43.216.155 and 43.216.159 unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

(1) "Evidence-based" means a program or practice that has had multiple site random controlled trials across heterogeneous populations demonstrating that the program or practice is effective for the population.

(2) "Home ((~~visitation~~)) visiting" means providing services in the permanent or temporary residence, or in other familiar surroundings, of the family receiving such services.

(3) "Research-based" means a program or practice that has some research demonstrating effectiveness, but that does not yet meet the standard of evidence‑based practices.

**Sec.**  RCW 43.216.159 and 2011 1st sp.s. c 32 s 7 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) Within available funds, the department shall fund evidence‑based and research‑based home ((~~visitation~~)) visiting programs for improving parenting skills and outcomes for children. Home ((~~visitation~~)) visiting programs must be voluntary and must address the needs of families to alleviate the effect on child development of factors such as poverty, single parenthood, parental unemployment or underemployment, parental disability, or parental lack of high school diploma, which research shows are risk factors for child abuse and neglect and poor educational outcomes. In order to maximize opportunities to obtain matching funds from private entities, general funds intended to support home visiting funding shall be appropriated to the home visiting services account established in RCW ((~~43.215.130~~)) 43.216.130.

(2) The department shall work with the department of social and health services, the department of health, the private-public partnership created in RCW ((~~43.215.070~~)) 43.216.065, and key partners and stakeholders to develop a plan to coordinate or consolidate home ((~~visitation~~)) visiting services for children and families to the extent practicable.

(3)(a) In addition to the programs described in subsection (1) of this section, the department shall provide support for additional home visiting programs for families receiving child protective services as defined under RCW 26.44.020, families with a child who is a candidate for foster care as defined under RCW 26.44.020, or families receiving child welfare services as defined under RCW 74.13.020 by:

(i) Contracting with existing home visiting programs established under RCW 43.216.130 to provide additional, targeted home visiting programs in areas with the highest historical rates of child welfare screened-in intakes to serve up to 150 families following a competitive procurement process in accordance with chapter 39.26 RCW; and

(ii) Providing payment to each selected home visiting program using a rate established by the department.

(b) The additional, targeted home visiting programs created under this subsection must meet the following requirements:

(i) The contracted providers must be existing home visiting providers;

(ii) The areas served must have the highest historical rates of child welfare screened-in intakes; and

(iii) The contracted providers must make arrangements to serve families living in rural areas.

(c) Within amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, the department shall provide training to home visiting providers selected under this section specific to serving families impacted by substance use disorders.

(d) Home visiting providers who are provided a referral to work with a family through the process established in (e) of this subsection must make efforts to contact those families within seven days of receiving the referral.

(e) The department shall develop and implement a referral process to refer eligible families to the home visiting programs established under this subsection, which allows child welfare workers as defined under RCW 74.14B.010 and community organizations working with eligible families to make referrals.

(f) Priority for home visiting programs established under this section must be given to a family when:

(i) The department is investigating a report of alleged abuse or neglect under RCW 26.44.030 regarding that family;

(ii) Receiving a family assessment response under RCW 26.44.260; or

(iii) Receiving voluntary services from the department.

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