

FINAL BILL REPORT

ESHB 1260

C 289 L 23
Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Accelerating stability for people with a work-limiting disability or incapacity.

Sponsors: House Committee on Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Alvarado, Leavitt, Taylor, Senn, Farivar, Simmons, Davis, Fitzgibbon, Callan, Reeves, Reed, Fey, Gregerson, Cortes, Macri, Fosse, Doglio and Pollet; by request of Department of Social and Health Services).

House Committee on Human Services, Youth, & Early Learning
House Committee on Appropriations
Senate Committee on Human Services
Senate Committee on Ways & Means

Background:

The Aged, Blind, or Disabled Cash Assistance Program.

The Aged, Blind, or Disabled (ABD) cash assistance program provides cash assistance, a referral to the Essential Needs and Housing (HEN) program, and help accessing federal disability benefits to eligible low-income adults who are age 65 or older, blind, or determined likely to meet federal Supplemental Security Income (SSI) criteria. Eligible individuals must have countable monthly income at or below \$428 for a married couple or at or below \$339 for a single individual, and meet certain resource limits. Additionally, to qualify for ABD benefits, persons must be ineligible to receive federal aid assistance other than basic food benefits and medical assistance.

Persons may receive ABD benefits while pending application for federal SSI benefits. The monetary value of any ABD benefit that is subsequently duplicated by the person's receipt of SSI benefits for the same period is considered a debt and is subject to recovery by the state.

The Pregnant Women Assistance Program.

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.

The Pregnant Women Assistance (PWA) program provides cash assistance and a referral to the HEN program to pregnant individuals who are not eligible to receive federal aid assistance other than basic food benefits or medical assistance, and are in need based on current income and resource standards for the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, but are ineligible for a reason other than a failure to cooperate with TANF program rules.

Essential Needs and Housing Program.

The HEN program provides funding to local governments and homeless service providers to help individuals referred to the program with time-limited rent assistance, services connected to housing stability, and limited essential needs items, such as personal hygiene and transportation. Persons are eligible for a referral to the program when they:

- have been determined to be eligible for the PWA program, the ABD program, or are incapacitated from gainful employment by reason of bodily or mental infirmity that will likely continue for a minimum of 90 days;
- are a citizen, lawful permanent resident, residing in the United States under color of law, or are a victim of human trafficking, and have furnished a Social Security number, with some exceptions;
- have countable monthly income at or below \$428 for a married couple or at or below \$339 for a single individual, and meet certain resource limits, or meet income standards for the PWA program; and
- are not eligible for federal aid assistance, other than basic food benefits and medical assistance.

Disqualification from Aged, Blind, or Disabled Cash Assistance; Pregnant Women Assistance; and Essential Needs and Housing Program Eligibility.

Certain persons are not eligible for ABD, PWA, and HEN program benefits, including those who refuse or fail without good cause to participate in substance use disorder (SUD) treatment when assessed as needing treatment by a SUD professional. Good cause includes when a person's physical or mental condition prevents participation in SUD treatment, when needed outpatient treatment is not available in the person's county, or when needed inpatient treatment is not available in a reasonably accessible location.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, State Family Assistance, and Refugee Cash Assistance.

The TANF program is a federally funded program that provides cash assistance to parents or caregivers with children and pregnant individuals to help meet foundational needs. Persons who are caring for a relative's child, are legal guardians, or who are acting in the place of a parent, are also able to apply for TANF benefits on behalf of the children in their care. Benefits under the TANF program are limited to 60 months, with some exceptions, and are available to people who meet certain income and resource limits and meet citizenship criteria. The State Family Assistance (SFA) program provides state-funded cash assistance for legal immigrant families, students ages 19 to 20, and pregnant individuals who are ineligible to receive TANF benefits. The Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) program

provides up to 12 months of cash assistance for newly arrived single and married adults who are ineligible for TANF.

Federal Poverty Level.

The United States Department of Health and Human Services establishes poverty guidelines that are used to determine financial eligibility for certain programs. Updated guidelines are available annually in mid-January. Currently, the federal poverty level for a single person is \$1,215 monthly, and for a two person household is \$1,643 monthly.

Summary:

Effective October 1, 2025, the requirement is eliminated for ABD program recipients to repay the state for benefits received for the same period as federal Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits were received. The monetary value of ABD benefits paid prior to October 1, 2025, that is duplicated by the person's receipt of SSI benefits for the same period remains a debt due to the state that is subject to recovery.

Income eligibility standards for the HEN and ABD programs are placed within rule, rather than statute. The eligibility standard may not exceed 100 percent of the federal poverty level. The provisions outlining eligibility for ABD benefits are modified to reflect that a person is eligible for ABD benefits when they are ineligible for SSI, RCA, TANF, or SFA benefits and meet other criteria, rather than when they are ineligible for federal aid assistance other than basic food and medical assistance. The provisions outlining eligibility for the PWA program are modified to reflect that a person is eligible when they are in need but ineligible for SFA benefits, in addition to TANF benefits, and meet other criteria, rather than when they are ineligible for most federal assistance programs. The Department of Social and Health Services must share client data for individuals eligible for the HEN program with the Department of Commerce and designated essential needs and housing support entities.

The list of good cause reasons for failing to participate in SUD treatment as a condition of ABD, PWA, or HEN program eligibility is expanded. Good cause exists when the person is a parent or other relative personally providing care for a minor child or an incapacitated individual living in the same home as the person, and childcare or day care that would be needed in order for the person to participate in treatment is not available.

Votes on Final Passage:

House	92	4	
Senate	44	5	(Senate amended)
House	93	4	(House concurred)

Effective: July 23, 2023