

FINAL BILL REPORT

SHB 2007

C 181 L 24
Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Expanding time limit exemptions applicable to cash assistance programs.

Sponsors: House Committee on Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Peterson, Gregerson, Alvarado, Berry, Senn, Morgan, Leavitt, Reed, Ormsby, Kloba, Macri, Doglio, Bergquist, Goodman, Ortiz-Self, Santos and Hackney).

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

Background:

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.

The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (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 these children. To be eligible for TANF benefits, a person must meet certain income and resource limits and meet citizenship criteria.

Time Limit Extensions.

Federal rules limit the length of time an adult may receive TANF benefits to a cumulative total of five years. Time limit extensions may be offered to families on the basis of hardship, as defined by the state, or in instances of family violence. States can extend federal TANF assistance beyond the five-year limit for up to 20 percent of the average monthly caseload.

There are certain circumstances in which a person is eligible for a time limit extension, by reason of hardship, including when the recipient is:

- age 55 or older and caring for a relative child when the recipient is not the parent;

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- a disabled adult;
- caring for a disabled adult;
- caring for a disabled child;
- required to apply for social security income or social security disability insurance;
- participating in a family violence service plan;
- involved in a first-time child welfare case;
- employed for 32 hours or more per week of unsubsidized employment;
- receiving benefits pending an administrative law judge decision;
- homeless;
- caring for a homeless child or youth; and
- receiving or was receiving TANF during a period of high unemployment (when the unemployment rate was at 7 percent or higher).

WorkFirst Exemptions.

The WorkFirst program provides a variety of services for families on the TANF program, including job training, education, English language training, substance abuse and mental health treatment, and domestic violence services. Families receiving TANF are required to participate in the WorkFirst program, unless they are exempt, as defined by DSHS in rule. TANF participants may be exempt from WorkFirst participation if they:

- are the parent or legal guardian of a child under the age of two;
- are a needy caregiver relative and aged 55 or older;
- have a severe and chronic medically verified condition (including individuals likely to be approved for Supplemental Security Income or other federal benefits);
- are in the home to care for a child with special needs; or
- are in the home to care for an adult relative with a severe and chronic medical condition.

Summary:

The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families time limit extension is expanded to include parents or legal guardians with a child under the age of two who lives in the same household and qualifies for an infant, toddler, or postpartum exemption from WorkFirst activities.

Votes on Final Passage:

House	85	11	
Senate	27	19	(Senate amended)
House	79	17	(House concurred)

Effective: July 1, 2024