
HOUSE BILL 1865

State of Washington

69th Legislature

2025 Regular Session

By Representatives Bergquist, Couture, Eslick, Reed, Nance, Salahuddin, Obras, Pollet, and Timmons; by request of Governor Ferguson

Read first time 02/06/25. Referred to Committee on Early Learning & Human Services.

1 AN ACT Relating to expanding access to child care benefits for
2 small business employees and adjusting implementation dates for
3 working connections child care; amending RCW 43.216.810; reenacting
4 and amending RCW 43.216.802; adding a new section to chapter 43.216
5 RCW; providing an effective date; and declaring an emergency.

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

7 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** A new section is added to chapter 43.216
8 RCW to read as follows:

9 (1) An applicant or consumer is eligible to receive working
10 connections child care benefits for the care of one or more eligible
11 children when:

12 (a) The applicant or household member is employed by a small
13 business;

14 (b) The applicant or consumer's household annual income adjusted
15 for family size does not exceed 75 percent of the state median income
16 at the time of application, or, beginning July 1, 2031, does not
17 exceed 85 percent of the state median income if funds are
18 appropriated for the purpose of RCW 43.216.802(4);

19 (c) The child receiving care is (i) less than 13 years of age, or
20 (ii) less than 19 years of age and either has a verified special need
21 according to department rule or is under court supervision; and

1 (d) The household meets all other program eligibility
2 requirements established in this chapter or in rule by the department
3 in accordance with RCW 43.216.055, 43.216.065, and 43.216.800.

4 (2) The department must adopt a copayment model for benefits
5 granted under this section, which must align with any copayment
6 identified or adopted for households with the same income level under
7 RCW 43.216.804.

8 (3) For the purposes of this section "small business" means any
9 business entity that is owned and operated independently from all
10 other businesses, and that has 50 or fewer employees.

11 **Sec. 2.** RCW 43.216.802 and 2024 c 225 s 1 and 2024 c 67 s 2 are
12 each reenacted and amended to read as follows:

13 (1) It is the intent of the legislature to increase working
14 families' access to affordable, high quality child care and to
15 support the expansion of the workforce to support businesses and the
16 statewide economy.

17 (2) A family is eligible for working connections child care when
18 the household's annual income is at or below 60 percent of the state
19 median income adjusted for family size and:

20 (a) The child receiving care is: (i) Less than 13 years of age;
21 or (ii) less than 19 years of age and has a verified special need
22 according to department rule or is under court supervision; and

23 (b) The household meets all other program eligibility
24 requirements established in this chapter or in rule by the department
25 as authorized by RCW 43.216.055 or 43.216.065 or any other authority
26 granted by this chapter.

27 (3) Beginning July 1, (~~2025~~) 2029, a family is eligible for
28 working connections child care when the household's annual income is
29 above 60 percent and at or below 75 percent of the state median
30 income adjusted for family size and:

31 (a) The child receiving care is: (i) Less than 13 years of age;
32 or (ii) less than 19 years of age and has a verified special need
33 according to department rule or is under court supervision; and

34 (b) The household meets all other program eligibility
35 requirements established in this chapter or in rule by the department
36 as authorized by RCW 43.216.055 or 43.216.065 or any other authority
37 granted by this chapter.

38 (4) Beginning July 1, (~~2027~~) 2031, and subject to the
39 availability of amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, a

1 family is eligible for working connections child care when the
2 household's annual income is above 75 percent of the state median
3 income and is at or below 85 percent of the state median income
4 adjusted for family size and:

5 (a) The child receiving care is: (i) Less than 13 years of age;
6 or (ii) less than 19 years of age and has a verified special need
7 according to department rule or is under court supervision; and

8 (b) The household meets all other program eligibility
9 requirements established in this chapter or in rule by the department
10 as authorized by RCW 43.216.055 or 43.216.065 or any other authority
11 granted by this chapter.

12 (5) Beginning November 1, 2024, when an applicant or consumer is
13 a member of an assistance unit that is eligible for or receiving
14 basic food benefits under the federal supplemental nutrition
15 assistance program or the state food assistance program the
16 department must determine that the household income eligibility
17 requirements in this section are met.

18 (6) The department must adopt rules to implement this section,
19 including an income phase-out eligibility period.

20 (7) The department may not consider the citizenship status of an
21 applicant or consumer's child when determining eligibility for
22 working connections child care benefits.

23 (8) The income eligibility requirements in subsections (2)
24 through (4) of this section do not apply to households eligible for
25 the working connections child care program under RCW 43.216.808,
26 43.216.810, 43.216.812, and 43.216.814.

27 **Sec. 3.** RCW 43.216.810 and 2024 c 67 s 6 are each amended to
28 read as follows:

29 (1) An applicant or consumer is eligible to receive working
30 connections child care benefits for the care of one or more eligible
31 children for the first 12 months of the applicant's or consumer's
32 enrollment in a state registered apprenticeship program under chapter
33 49.04 RCW when:

34 (a) The applicant or consumer's household annual income adjusted
35 for family size does not exceed 75 percent of the state median income
36 at the time of application, or, beginning July 1, (~~(2027)~~) 2031, does
37 not exceed 85 percent of the state median income if funds are
38 appropriated for the purpose of RCW 43.216.802(4);

1 (b) The child receiving care is: (i) Less than 13 years of age;
2 or (ii) less than 19 years of age and either has a verified special
3 need according to department rule or is under court supervision; and

4 (c) The household meets all other program eligibility
5 requirements established in this chapter or in rule by the department
6 in accordance with RCW 43.216.055, 43.216.065, and 43.216.800.

7 (2) The department must adopt a copayment model for benefits
8 granted under this (~~subsection~~[~~section~~]) section, which must align
9 with any copayment identified or adopted for households with the same
10 income level under RCW 43.216.804.

11 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** This act is necessary for the immediate
12 preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of
13 the state government and its existing public institutions, and takes
14 effect July 1, 2025.

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