

Chapter 43.164 RCW
ECONOMIC SECURITY FOR ALL GRANT PROGRAM

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RCW 43.164.010 Definitions. The definitions in this section apply throughout this chapter unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

(1) "Business services" means services by local workforce development councils to increase employer engagement in an effort to support industry growth, increase quality employment opportunities for job seekers, and enable persons served by economic security for all grants to access careers with wages that allow them to achieve self-sufficiency.

(2) "Department" means the employment security department.

(3) "People experiencing poverty" means people with a household income that is at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level.

(4) "People who demonstrate financial need" means people with a household income that is above 200 percent of the federal poverty level but below self-sufficiency who need employment-related services to achieve self-sufficiency.

(5) "Rural counties" has the same meaning as provided in RCW 82.14.370.

(6) "Self-sufficiency" means a level of household income that is equal to or greater than the self-sufficiency standard for a household as determined by the University of Washington's self-sufficiency calculator.

(7) "Steering committee" means the poverty reduction work group steering committee created in response to a directive of the governor, dated November 6, 2017.

(8) "Workforce development council" means a local workforce development board as established in P.L. 113-128 Sec. 107. [2024 c 92 s 2.]

Findings—Intent—2024 c 92: See note following RCW 43.164.020.

RCW 43.164.020 Program created—Award of grants. (1) The economic security for all grant program is created in the department. The purpose of the program is to empower and incentivize communities to coordinate existing poverty reduction resources and benefits to make them easier to access, get them to the people who need them, and work as a coordinated system to help more people move out of poverty and be included in Washington's economic success.

(2) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, the department, in consultation with the department of social and health services, the department of commerce, the department of children, youth, and families, the health care

authority, the workforce training and education coordinating board, the steering committee, and other stakeholders as determined by the department, shall make and oversee the implementation of economic security for all grants. Grants awarded under this section must be made available to local communities to promote equity, economic inclusion, and a stable financial foundation for people experiencing poverty and people who demonstrate financial need, with a particular focus on people of color and people in rural counties including tribal nations, primarily through better coordination of existing programs, resources, and provision of business services.

(3) Economic security for all grants awarded under this section shall be made available in communities throughout all regions of the state, including rural counties and urban communities for the purposes described in this section, distributed utilizing a funding allocation model.

(4) Recipients of economic security for all grants shall:

(a) Coordinate with existing local providers to make benefits easier to access and work as a coordinated system to help more people move out of poverty and be included in Washington's economic success;

(b) Provide input to inform the work described in RCW 43.164.040, by identifying examples of federal regulations that prevent better local coordination and identifying other needs for additional state or federal funding for continuous improvement of the poverty reduction system in future years;

(c) Utilize the existing local workforce development councils to develop economic security for all grant partnerships that must include people experiencing poverty, people of color, homelessness programs, and representatives of the health care authority, community service offices, accountable communities of health, and associate development organizations, and may include other members;

(d) Coordinate leadership among the local workforce development council, associate development council, and other organizations, and utilize the local workforce development council as the fiscal agent;

(e) Work with people experiencing poverty and people who demonstrate financial need to ensure they have access to multiple benefits to help them meet their basic needs, in alignment with local care coordination efforts, and when ready, to develop individualized career plans that will lead to a self-sufficiency wage, which must be the level established by the University of Washington self-sufficiency standard;

(f) Provide streamlined access to local partners who can pay for education or training elements of a person experiencing poverty or person with financial need's individualized career plan using federal Pell grants, the Washington college grant, or other resources;

(g) Provide streamlined access to local partners who can make monthly payments to people experiencing poverty and people who demonstrate financial need while in training, using existing resources such as incentive payments, work-study payments, work experience payments, needs-related payments, or other financial aid or workforce development resources, as identified locally and in consultation with technical assistance provided by the department. Such payments must work to maximize the total benefits available to the individual;

(h) Through the local workforce development councils, develop an economic security for all grant coordination team that works to facilitate easier access to all state and local government services. The team may utilize and build upon, rather than duplicate, existing coordinators and navigators that are already in place in the

community. The team must provide convenient one-stop access to benefits available to people experiencing poverty and people who demonstrate financial need. At a minimum, the team must encourage people served by the economic security for all grants to apply for and, if eligible, receive supplemental nutritional assistance program benefits, temporary assistance for needy families benefits, medicaid benefits, workforce innovation and opportunity act supportive services, or other financial and health benefits, as appropriate for each person;

(i) Provide equitable access to state and local government services for people with disabilities, which may include equipment and technology purchases;

(j) Identify where federal barriers hinder efforts to coordinate benefits for customers and elevate those issues to the department;

(k) Provide options for career development, English language learning, and other services for both parents in two-parent families, including child care if desired by the family; and

(l) When available, use the local and state teams already in place for similar efforts, expanding the partners on those teams as needed to meet the requirements of this section. [2024 c 92 s 3.]

Findings—Intent—2024 c 92: "The legislature declares that economic inclusion shall be a top priority for Washington state. The legislature recognizes that for communities to thrive and remain vibrant, the state's economy needs to be inclusive of people who are furthest away from opportunity and disproportionately more likely to experience economic hardship. The legislature acknowledges that stand-alone human service programs meet a pressing need but can be difficult to access for those lacking the resources to do so. The legislature recognizes that barriers to access can delay reentry into the workforce and career development. The legislature finds that leveraging or supporting the integration of existing benefits and services whenever possible will help people access the benefits they need to help them move out of poverty, without creating another duplicative system. The legislature finds that incorporating people with lived experience deeply and meaningfully into systems development and program implementation can help improve meaningful access to state programs. The legislature, therefore, intends to help facilitate an inclusive economy by creating the economic security for all grant program to provide greater access to resources for those in need." [2024 c 92 s 1.]

RCW 43.164.030 Reimbursement of steering committee member expenses. Members of the steering committee must be reimbursed for travel expenses as provided in RCW 43.03.050 and 43.03.060, as well as child care and other expenses as needed for each day a steering committee member attends meetings to provide consultative assistance to the agencies managing the economic security for all grants as provided in RCW 43.164.020 and 43.164.040, for up to 12 meetings per calendar year. [2024 c 92 s 4.]

Findings—Intent—2024 c 92: See note following RCW 43.164.020.

RCW 43.164.040 Identification of federal reforms, waivers— Measurement of progress. (1) The department, in consultation with the department of social and health services, the department of commerce, the department of children, youth, and families, the health care authority, the workforce training and education coordinating board, the steering committee, and other stakeholders as identified by the department:

(a) Shall identify federal reforms that would help persons served by economic security for all grants access the federal benefits they need more efficiently, avoid sudden benefit cuts as their earned income increases, and move from poverty to self-sufficiency more effectively; and

(b) May apply for federal waivers and propose federal law changes to make the authorizing environment better support coordinated service delivery across programs.

(2) The department of social and health services, in consultation with the department, the department of commerce, the department of children, youth, and families, the health care authority, the workforce training and education coordinating board, the steering committee, the legislative-executive WorkFirst poverty reduction oversight task force, and other stakeholders as determined by the department, shall further develop measures and indicators of yearly progress toward poverty reduction, reducing income inequality, and achieving an equitable and inclusive economy, using the University of Washington self-sufficiency standard as a primary measure, as well as other measures already underway in the department of social and health services technical advisory group on inclusive economic recovery, and apply those measures as needed to help promote a statewide economy that is inclusive of rural areas, racially equitable, and fully inclusive of people experiencing poverty, people of color, people with disabilities, unhoused people, and other key demographics that have historically been left behind by the state economy. [2024 c 92 s 5.]

Findings—Intent—2024 c 92: See note following RCW 43.164.020.

RCW 43.164.050 Annual reports. By December 1, 2024, and annually thereafter, and in compliance with RCW 43.01.036, the department shall report to the governor, the appropriate committees of the legislature, the workforce training and education coordinating board, and the legislative-executive WorkFirst poverty reduction oversight task force on the economic security for all grant program. The annual report must include an analysis of the program, a detailed summary of the quarterly data collected, demographics and geography of people served, services delivered, average length of participation, number of persons served by the grants maintaining self-sufficiency in the years following program exit, and associated recommendations for program delivery. The report must include an analysis of customer feedback and actions taken to respond, based upon a standardized customer feedback mechanism. The report shall be publicized and easily accessible to the public. [2024 c 92 s 6.]

Findings—Intent—2024 c 92: See note following RCW 43.164.020.

RCW 43.164.060 Rule making. The department may adopt rules as necessary to implement this chapter. [2024 c 92 s 7.]

Findings—Intent—2024 c 92: See note following RCW 43.164.020.