

WSR 21-10-055
PROPOSED RULES
DEPARTMENT OF
SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES
(Economic Services Administration)
[Filed April 29, 2021, 12:47 p.m.]

Original Notice.

Preproposal statement of inquiry was filed as WSR 20-22-079 and 21-03-009.

Title of Rule and Other Identifying Information: The department is proposing adoption of WAC 388-437-0015 Good cause extension of Social Security number (SSN) requirement for basic food applicants during COVID-19; and amendments to WAC 388-476-0005 Social Security number requirements.

Hearing Location(s): On June 8, 2021, at 10:00 a.m., at Office Building 2, Department of Social and Health (DSHS) Headquarters, 1115 Washington Street S.E., Olympia, WA 98504. Public parking at 11th and Jefferson. A map is available at <https://www.dshs.wa.gov/office-of-the-secretary/driving-directions-office-bldg-2>; or by Skype. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, hearing may be held via Skype, see DSHS website for most up-to-date information.

Date of Intended Adoption: Not earlier than June 9, 2021.

Submit Written Comments to: DSHS Rules Coordinator, P.O. Box 45850, Olympia, WA 98504, email DSHSRPAURulesCoordinator@dshs.wa.gov, fax 360-664-6185, by 5:00 p.m., June 8, 2021.

Assistance for Persons with Disabilities: Contact Jeff Kildahl, DSHS rules consultant, phone 360-664-6092, fax 360-664-6185, TTY 711 relay service, email Kildaja@dshs.wa.gov, by May 25, 2021.

Purpose of the Proposal and Its Anticipated Effects, Including Any Changes in Existing Rules: These proposed rule changes allow good cause for failure to provide an SSN to continue during the COVID[-19] emergency, contingent upon ongoing federal approval, and clarify time-frames for showing good cause in accordance with federal regulations.

Reasons Supporting Proposal: During the COVID[-19] public health crisis, DSHS has received waivers each month since March 2020 from the United States Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service, allowing the department to grant good cause to those unable to obtain an SSN. This proposal aligns rule language regarding good cause with the applicable section of the Code of Federal Regulations, 7 C.F.R. 273.6(d).

Statutory Authority for Adoption: RCW 74.04.050, 74.04.055, 74.04.057, 74.04.510, 74.08.090.

Rule is necessary because of federal law, 7 C.F.R. 273.6(d).

Name of Proponent: DSHS, governmental.

Name of Agency Personnel Responsible for Drafting, Implementation, and Enforcement: Carolyn Horlor, P.O. Box 45470, Olympia, WA 98504-5470, 360-764-0676.

A school district fiscal impact statement is not required under RCW 28A.305.135.

A cost-benefit analysis is not required under RCW 34.05.328. This amendment is exempt as allowed under RCW 34.05.328 (5)(b)(vii) which states in part, "[t]his section does not apply to ... rules of the department of social and health services relating only to client medical or financial eligibility and rules concerning liability for care of dependents."

This rule proposal, or portions of the proposal, is exempt from requirements of the Regulatory Fairness Act because the proposal:

Is exempt under RCW 34.05.328 (5)(b)(vii).

Explanation of exemptions: These amendments do not impact small businesses. They only affect DSHS clients.

April 28, 2021
Katherine I. Vasquez
Rules Coordinator

SHS-4820.3

NEW SECTION

WAC 388-437-0015 Good cause extension of Social Security number (SSN) requirement for basic food applicants during COVID-19. Applicants for food benefits must provide an SSN under WAC 388-476-0005(1) to qualify. For those who do not have an SSN, they must apply for one and provide it to DSHS when issued.

(1) For applicants with an initial application date of March 1, 2020, or later, who have established good cause for failure to provide an SSN, the good cause period is extended for three months, in addition to the application month and the next month under WAC 388-476-0005 (5)(a), for a total of up to five months.

(2) To continue receiving benefits beyond the five month good cause period, the applicant must show good cause for failure to apply for an SSN on a monthly basis in accordance with WAC 388-476-0005 (5)(b).

(3) Adjustments under subsection (1) of this section will continue each month until the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service no longer approves these adjustments.

[]

AMENDATORY SECTION (Amending WSR 13-18-005, filed 8/22/13, effective 10/1/13)

WAC 388-476-0005 Social Security number requirements. (1) With certain exceptions, each person who applies for or receives cash or food assistance benefits must provide to the department a Social Security number (SSN), or numbers if more than one has been issued. For SSN requirements for immigrants, see WAC 388-424-0009.

(2) If the person is unable to provide the SSN, either because it is not known or has not been issued, the person must:

- (a) Apply for the SSN;
- (b) Provide proof that the SSN has been applied for; and
- (c) Provide the SSN when it is received.

(3) Assistance will not be delayed, denied or terminated pending the issuance of an SSN by the Social Security Administration. However, a person who does not comply with these requirements is not eligible for assistance.

(4) For cash and food assistance benefits, a person cannot be disqualified from receiving benefits for refusing to apply for or supply an SSN based on religious grounds.

(5) For food assistance programs:

(a) A person can receive benefits for the month of application and the following month if the person attempted to apply for the SSN and made every effort to provide the needed information to the Social Security Administration.

(b) For a person to receive benefits after the time period provided in subsection (5)(a) of this section, good cause for failure to apply for the SSN must be shown monthly.

(c) If a person is unable to provide proof of application for a SSN for a newborn:

(i) The newborn can receive basic food with the household (~~while effort is being made~~) makes efforts to get the SSN.

(ii) For the newborn to continue receiving basic food benefits; the household must provide proof of application for SSN or the SSN for the newborn, at the next recertification, or within six months following the month the baby is born, whichever is later.

(6) (~~There is~~) No SSN ((requirement)) is required for the following programs:

(a) The consolidated emergency assistance program; and

(b) The refugee cash assistance program.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 74.04.050, 74.04.055, 74.04.057, 74.08.090, 74.04.510, and 2011 1st sp.s. c 15. WSR 13-18-005, § 388-476-0005, filed 8/22/13, effective 10/1/13. Statutory Authority: RCW 74.04.005, 74.04.050, 74.04.055, 74.04.057, 74.04.510, 74.08.090, 74.08A.100, 74.04.770, 74.04.0052, 74.04.655, 74.08.043, 74.08.335, and 2011 1st sp.s. c 36. WSR 12-10-042, § 388-476-0005, filed 4/27/12, effective 6/1/12. Statutory Authority: RCW 74.08.090, 74.04.050, 74.04.055, 74.04.057, 74.04.510, and Title 7, 273.6 C.F.R. WSR 10-17-101, § 388-476-0005, filed 8/17/10, effective 9/17/10. Statutory Authority: RCW 74.08.090. WSR 03-20-061, § 388-476-0005, filed 9/26/03, effective 10/27/03. Statutory Authority: RCW 74.08.090 and 74.04.510. WSR 99-17-025, § 388-476-0005, filed 8/10/99, effective 10/1/99. Statutory Authority: RCW 74.04.050, 74.04.055, 74.04.057 and 74.08.090. WSR 98-16-044, § 388-476-0005, filed 7/31/98, effective 9/1/98. Formerly WAC 388-505-0530.]