

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2983

*As Reported By House Committee on:
Appropriations*

Title: An act relating to job training or work experience for public assistance recipients.

Brief Description: Providing job training or work experience for public assistance recipients.

Sponsor(s): Representatives Locke, H. Sommers and D. Sommers.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Appropriations, March 2, 1992, DPS.

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
APPROPRIATIONS**

Majority Report: *The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass.* Signed by 28 members: Representatives Locke, Chair; Inslee, Vice Chair; Spanel, Vice Chair; Silver, Ranking Minority Member; Morton, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Appelwick; Belcher; Bowman; Braddock; Brekke; Carlson; Dorn; Ebersole; Ferguson; Fuhrman; Hine; Lisk; May; Nealey; Peery; Pruitt; Rust; H. Sommers; Sprenkle; Valle; Vance; Wang; and Wineberry.

Staff: Wayne Kawakami (786-7384).

Background:

General Assistance - Unemployable Program

The General Assistance - Unemployable Program provides grant payments and medical assistance for those who are financially needy and incapable of gainful employment due to a mental or physical condition. Recipients continue to receive their benefits unless there is a clear showing of material improvement in their medical or mental condition. If the recipient's condition is expected to persist for longer than 12 months, he or she may receive GA-U benefits until eligible for the federal Supplemental Security Income Program (SSI).

Job Opportunities and Basic Skills (JOBS) Requirements

The JOBS program is the employment and training services provided to AFDC recipients that was implemented in Washington in 1990. The current JOBS program is voluntary for AFDC participants as long as federal participation rate standards are achieved. The department is currently exceeding the federal standards by accepting participants strictly on a voluntary basis.

The JOBS program is affected by two participation rates: the basic AFDC rate and the AFDC-E (two-parent household) rate. The participation rate is the ratio of nonexempt AFDC recipients participating in JOBS to the number of all nonexempt recipients.

The primary conditions for participation exemptions are:

- o If the individual is a parent or other relative personally providing care for a child under age two years, or the parent is participating 20 hours per week and has a child under five years of age;
- o If the parent has an illness or injury that temporarily prevents him or her from training or employment; and
- o If the family lives more than two hours from the educational training site or job market.

There are two federal participation rate standards, the basic AFDC rate (single-parent families) and AFDC-E (two-parent families). To receive enhanced federal funding (55 percent federal match instead of a 50 percent federal match) the state must meet the following participation rate standards:

Federal Participation Rate Standards:

FY 92: Basic rate 11 percent, AFDC-E rate 0 percent;
FY 93: Basic rate 11 percent, AFDC-E rate 0 percent;
FY 94: Basic rate 15 percent, AFDC-E rate 40 percent;
FY 95: Basic rate 20 percent, AFDC-E rate 50 percent;
FY 96: Basic rate 0 percent, AFDC-E rate 60 percent;
FY 97: Basic rate 0 percent, AFDC-E rate 75 percent.

The state's September 1991 basic participation rate was 14.6 percent. There is no current information on the AFDC-E participation rate.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

The bill incorporates work and training participation requirements for GA-U recipients and certain populations of AFDC recipients.

GA-U Community Work Program

The bill establishes a GA-U pilot Community Work Program and authorizes the department to sanction GA-U participants who are determined capable to participate in the work program and fail to comply. The Community Work Program will be established for GA-U recipients who are not expected to qualify for SSI and who are judged mentally and physically capable to participate. The work experience must be within the recipient's capabilities and not detrimental to his or her health or well-being. Recipients deemed not to be appropriate for participation in the work program as determined by the department are exempted.

The work program will be administered through the Department of Social and Health Services, which will contract with local agencies to place GA-U participants. The first priority of the program will be to serve recipients who do not appear to be eligible for the SSI program and have been on GA-U for 12 months or longer. Recipients determined appropriate for the Community Work Program will be required, as a condition of GA-U eligibility, to participate in the Community Work Program.

The goals of the Community Work Program are to provide GA-U participants opportunities for highly supervised noncompetitive employment and to develop the ability to perform gainful employment.

AFDC JOBS Participation Requirement

Currently, all AFDC recipients participate in the JOBS program on a voluntary basis. The bill requires two populations in the AFDC program to participate in the JOBS program as a condition of eligibility. The two AFDC populations required to participate are:

1. Nonexempt parents in single-family households who are under the age of 24; and
2. At least one parent in two-parent households.

The department must adopt sanctions to ensure compliance with the requirements of the policy.

Null and Void If Not Funded in the Budget

The bill is null and void unless funded in the supplemental operating budget.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The substitute bill adds an additional pilot program site for a total of three sites and specifies that the program sites be in the

three counties with the largest populations. The administration responsibilities of the Community Work Program will reside with the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) instead of the Department of Community Development (DCD). DSHS is required to submit a status report of the Community Work Service Program to the House of Representatives Appropriations Committee and Senate Ways and Means Committee by January 30, 1993.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect April 1, 1992.

Testimony For: This bill will help provide opportunities to GA-U recipients to receive work experience or training and determine if these opportunities can help people get off assistance programs. The program must be closely monitored to determine if it is achieving its objective. This bill recognizes that all GA-U participants are not capable of participating in the work program and is appropriate for a pilot project. The pilot program is a workable proposal.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: Bernice Morehead, Director, DSHS Division of Income Assistance; Cec Anderson, DSHS Division of Income Assistance; Dinnen Cleary, Puget Sound Legal Assistance Foundation; Mary Murphy, League of Women Voters; Tony Lee, Washington Association of Churches; Jackie McFayden, Washington Association of Cities; Jean Wessman, Washington State Association of Counties; and Elaine Rose, City of Seattle.