

FINAL BILL REPORT

ESHB 2901

C 89 L 98

Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Requiring a WorkFirst job search component.

Sponsors: By House Committee on Children & Family Services (originally sponsored by Representatives Cooke, Tokuda, Ballasiotes, Carrell, O'Brien, McDonald, B. Thomas and Boldt).

House Committee on Children & Family Services
Senate Committee on Health & Long-Term Care

Background: The 1996 Federal Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act replaced Aid to Families with Dependent Children with the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant. To receive a block grant, states must establish a program to move TANF recipients into permanent jobs. The program requires recipients to participate in work activities as a condition of receiving assistance.

In response to this legislation, Washington created the WorkFirst program. The WorkFirst program established by the Department of Social and Health Services includes a work search component. This component requires TANF recipients to participate in job search workshops and assisted job searches. Recipients may also receive short-term job training if a job search is initially unsuccessful. If it is clear that a job search will not be productive for a recipient, he or she is referred for assessment. The assessment may identify the need for more specific training, work experience, or help for personal conditions such as drug/alcohol abuse, domestic violence, or a learning disability.

Summary: A job search component for the TANF program is created in law. The initial job search period is limited to twelve consecutive weeks. During the first four weeks, a TANF recipient's progress is reviewed. If at anytime it becomes clear that the recipient cannot benefit from further searching, the Department of Social and Health Services will conduct an assessment. Based on the assessment, the department may refer the recipient to training, work experience, or another type of service that will make the recipient more employable. At any time, the department may have the recipient perform additional job searching.

Votes on Final Passage:

House 98 0

Senate 45 0

Effective: June 11, 1998