

FINAL BILL REPORT

HB 1980

C 383 L 03

Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Changing work activity provisions under the TANF program.

Sponsors: By Representative Boldt.

House Committee on Children & Family Services

Senate Committee on Children & Family Services & Corrections

Background:

In 1996 federal law abolished welfare as an entitlement and replaced it with a program called Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF). In 1997 the Washington Legislature created Washington's own welfare reform program, the WorkFirst program, which was designed to comply with the federal requirements.

The WorkFirst program provides services to assist people to gain and maintain employment. Some of the specific services provided by WorkFirst include job search, education, jobs skills training, subsidized community jobs, and on-the-job training. In addition, there are services more tailored to the individual needs of the participant such as child care, transportation, substance abuse treatment, domestic violence counseling, and medical care.

The WorkFirst program utilizes two primary assessment tools. The first tool is the e-JAS screening/evaluation which is an automated tool for case managers, social workers, and job service specialists to screen for issues that can interfere with employment and retention. The second tool is the assessment which is a more comprehensive tool used by a social worker to gather detailed information about a participant's life and issues that may impact her or his ability to support the participant's family.

There is not a specific time set out in statute stating when an assessment must take place.

Summary:

The Department of Social and Health Services must assess each WorkFirst recipient once he or she becomes eligible for the WorkFirst program and before referral to job search. Additionally, upon referral to job search, recipients must receive a job skills assessment.

A technical correction is made by deleting language that references a section of the statute which was vetoed by the Governor when the original bill was passed in 1997.

Votes on Final Passage:

House 95 0

Senate 46 0 (Senate amended)

House 91 0 (House concurred)

Effective: July 27, 2003