
**Children & Family Services
Committee**

HB 2548

Brief Description: Creating a food bank outreach pilot program.

Sponsors: Representatives Dickerson, Pettigrew, Darneille, Boldt, Miloscia, Bailey, Shabro, McIntire, Schual-Berke, Moeller, Chase and Santos.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Creates a food bank outreach pilot program which requires a Department of Social and Health Services worker to be located at six food bank sites to assist clients.

Hearing Date: 1/29/04

Staff: Sonja Hallum (786-7092).

Background:

The Food Stamp Program is a federal program enabling low-income families to purchase eligible food at authorized retail food stores primarily through the use of electronic benefit cards. The US Department of Agriculture administers the program at the federal level and the state agencies administer the program at the state and local levels, including determination of eligibility and allotments, and distribution of benefits. In Washington, the Food Stamp Program is called the Basic Food Program.

Food Stamp benefit program outreach provides information on eligibility and benefits to potentially eligible people with a primary goal of increasing participation. Outreach can also include assisting eligible individuals who have difficulty with a program's procedural steps. Most Food Stamp Program outreach efforts combine general program public education campaigns with direct assistance to individual households in completing the application process.

Washington currently invests state funds that are matched by federal funding to provide Food Stamp Outreach. The State contracts with a number of regionally-based prime contractors who in turn subcontract with community-based organizations that conduct outreach and education. The Department of Social and Health Services (Department) currently does not locate workers at food banks to assist with application process. However, the Department has offered such services in the past on a very limited basis.

Summary of Bill:

The Department is required to implement a food bank outreach pilot program no later than January 1, 2005. The Department must select six pilot sites with three sites to be located in eastern Washington and three sites to be located in western Washington. To be eligible as a pilot site, the site must consist of an organization that provides food to hungry and low-income individuals.

The Department must schedule an intake worker to regularly be available at the pilot site to assist clients no less than one time per week at each site.

The pilot program expires on December 31, 2005. The Department is required to submit a report to the legislature summarizing the effectiveness of the program by December 31, 2005.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 28, 2004.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.