

---

SENATE BILL 6559

---

State of Washington

58th Legislature

2004 Regular Session

By Senators Stevens and Hargrove

Read first time 01/23/2004. Referred to Committee on Children & Family Services & Corrections.

1 AN ACT Relating to provision of cash grants, case staffing, and  
2 work requirements to families eligible for temporary assistance for  
3 needy families; amending RCW 74.08A.260; and creating a new section.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** It remains the intent of the legislature  
6 that all applicants to the Washington WorkFirst program shall be  
7 focused on obtaining paid, unsubsidized employment. The focus of the  
8 Washington WorkFirst program continues to be work for all recipients.  
9 The key principles of the state temporary assistance for needy families  
10 program must be to help move people from welfare to work; to be a  
11 short-term transitional experience, not a way of life; and to assist  
12 families to receive the child care and health care they need to protect  
13 their children as they move from welfare to work. A statewide  
14 partnership of state agencies, public education, business, and  
15 nongovernmental providers are in place in Washington to provide  
16 families with services and opportunities to gain competitive  
17 employment. The legislature recognizes that there will always be  
18 families while working hard to find work, need assistance over a longer  
19 period. It is the intent of the legislature to ensure that these

1 families have available to them continuing assistance and other  
2 services and resources that will assist in gaining competitive  
3 employment while those who are uncooperative and malingering no longer  
4 receive a cash grant.

5 **Sec. 2.** RCW 74.08A.260 and 2003 c 383 s 1 are each amended to read  
6 as follows:

7 (1) Each recipient shall be assessed after determination of program  
8 eligibility and before referral to job search. Assessments shall be  
9 based upon factors that are critical to obtaining employment, including  
10 but not limited to education, availability of child care, history of  
11 family violence, history of substance abuse, and other factors that  
12 affect the ability to obtain employment. Assessments may be performed  
13 by the department or by a contracted entity. The assessment shall be  
14 based on a uniform, consistent, transferable format that will be  
15 accepted by all agencies and organizations serving the recipient.  
16 Based on the assessment, an individual responsibility plan shall be  
17 prepared that: (a) Sets forth an employment goal and a plan for moving  
18 the recipient immediately into employment; (b) contains the obligation  
19 of the recipient to become and remain employed; (c) moves the recipient  
20 into whatever employment the recipient is capable of handling as  
21 quickly as possible; and (d) describes the services available to the  
22 recipient to enable the recipient to obtain and keep employment. If  
23 the assessment in this subsection indicates the recipient is able to  
24 engage in job search, he or she shall participate in job search for  
25 thirty days before receiving the cash benefit portion of public  
26 assistance.

27 (2) Recipients who are not engaged in work and work activities, and  
28 do not qualify for a good cause exemption under RCW 74.08A.270, shall  
29 engage in self-directed service as provided in RCW 74.08A.330.

30 (3) If a recipient refuses to engage in work and work activities  
31 required by the department, the family's grant shall be reduced  
32 initially by the recipient's share(~~(, and may, if the department~~  
33 ~~determines it appropriate, be terminated)~~). Failure to participate for  
34 six months without good cause shall end the cash benefit portion of  
35 public assistance. Before cash benefits are reduced to zero, the  
36 department shall conduct a case staffing to determine whether the  
37 recipient has good cause for nonparticipation as provided in RCW

1 74.08A.270. The recipient and his or her chosen representative shall  
2 be allowed to attend this case staffing. The cash benefit portion of  
3 the public assistance shall be restored the first of the following  
4 month after the recipient participates as required for four, full,  
5 consecutive weeks.

6 ~~(4) ((The department may waive the penalties required under~~  
7 ~~subsection (3) of this section, subject to a finding that the recipient~~  
8 ~~refused to engage in work for good cause provided in RCW 74.08A.270))~~  
9 The department shall end the cash benefit portion of public assistance  
10 for families that include an adult who has: (a) Received temporary  
11 assistance for needy families for sixty months after July 27, 1997, as  
12 provided under RCW 74.08A.010; and (b) refused to engage in work and  
13 work activities as required by the department, without good cause.  
14 Before cash benefits are reduced to zero, the department shall conduct  
15 a case staffing to determine whether the recipient has good cause for  
16 nonparticipation provided in RCW 74.08A.270. The recipient and his or  
17 her chosen representative shall be allowed to attend this case  
18 staffing. The cash benefit portion of the public assistance shall be  
19 restored the first of the following month after the recipient  
20 participates as required for four, full, consecutive weeks.

21 (5) In implementing this section, the department shall assign the  
22 highest priority to the most employable clients, including adults in  
23 two-parent families and parents in single-parent families that include  
24 older preschool or school-age children to be engaged in work  
25 activities.

26 (6) In consultation with the recipient, the department or  
27 contractor shall place the recipient into a work activity that is  
28 available in the local area where the recipient resides.

--- END ---