
**Children & Family Services
Committee**

HB 2394

Brief Description: Including financial literacy in work activity provisions.

Sponsors: Representatives Dickerson, Morrell, Appleton, Moeller, Lantz, Hasegawa, Williams, Darnelle, Santos, Haler, Wallace, Walsh, McIntire and Simpson.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the development of WorkFirst individual responsibility plans to include consideration of the potential benefit of financial literacy training for the WorkFirst recipient.
- Permits up to 10 hours of financial literacy training to be included in an individual responsibility plan.

Hearing Date: 1/16/06

Staff: Sydney Forrester (786-7120).

Background:

WorkFirst is Washington's program of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). Under WorkFirst, recipients of public assistance are assessed prior to referral to job search activities. Information obtained through the assessment is used to develop an individual responsibility plan (IRP) for each recipient. An IRP includes an employment goal; a plan for obtaining employment as quickly as possible; and a description of services available to enable the recipient to obtain and keep employment.

Federal laws governing the administration of TANF moneys require a counting of the hours an individual participates in WorkFirst activities. For the purpose of counting, activities are designated as either core activities or optional activities. In general, most core activities are fully countable with few limitations. Optional activities, however, are countable only after a recipient completes a prescribed number of core activities.

Work Activities

Unless a good cause exemption applies, recipients of public assistance must be engaged in work or work activities as a condition of continued eligibility. Most work activities are counted as core activities, including subsidized and unsubsidized employment in the public or private sector;

internships required for vocational training or to obtain a license or certificate; job search and job readiness assistance; and participation in community service programs. Some work activities, however, are considered optional activities, such as job skills training, and education to obtain a diploma or general education development certificate (GED).

K-12 Financial Literacy Public Private Partnership

In 2004, the Legislature established the K-12 Financial Literacy Public Private Partnership for the purpose of assisting school districts in their efforts to ensure students are financially literate. Contributions from private partners have reached approximately \$30,000. The partnership meets monthly, and the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction is recruiting for a half-time position to assist the partnership in its efforts to coordinate availability of financial literacy resources.

Summary of Bill:

The assessment used to develop the IRP for WorkFirst participants must include consideration of the potential benefit to the individual of engaging in financial literacy training. The definition of work activities is expanded to include financial literacy training designed to assist a recipient in becoming self-sufficient and financially stable. Financial literacy training may be included in an IRP as either a core activity or an optional activity. The Department of Social and Health Services is directed to consider the local options available to WorkFirst participants for financial literacy training, including options and resources made available through the K-12 Financial Literacy Public Private Partnership.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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