

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6309

As of January 28, 2020

Title: An act relating to expanding access to nutritious food.

Brief Description: Expanding access to nutritious food.

Sponsors: Senators Lovelett, Wagoner, Nguyen, Walsh, Das, Salomon, Randall, Billig, Dhingra, Hasegawa, Saldaña and Wilson, C.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Human Services, Reentry & Rehabilitation: 1/22/20.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Expands the Farmer's Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) for Women, Infants, and Children program participants.
- Increases the FMNP benefit from \$28 to \$32 for the summer season, subject to appropriations.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES, REENTRY & REHABILITATION

Staff: Alison Mendiola (786-7488)

Background: Women, Infant, and Children Farmers' Market Nutrition Program. The federal Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) provides fresh, locally grown fruits and vegetables to participants. Women who are pregnant, breastfeeding, or post-partum and children ages one to five years are eligible to participate in the WIC FMNP. In Washington, the WIC FMNP is administered by the Department of Health (DOH). Each eligible client receives a benefit, currently \$28, for the summer season for purchasing fruits and vegetables at an authorized farmers market.

According to DOH, in Washington State the FMNP program is able to serve approximately 27,665 out of 133,000 potential eligible participants to receive WIC FMNP benefits. The current amount of the benefit is \$28 for each participant. The maximum benefit allowed under federal regulations cannot exceed \$30 per season, although states may offer benefits in excess of that amount with state, local, or private funds to create a total benefit level higher than \$30 per participant.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Summary of Bill: Subject to appropriation, DOH is to distribute a fruit and vegetable benefit of no less than \$32, per summer farmers market season to eligible participants in the WIC FMNP. To the extent federal funds are available, federal funds must be used to pay for the benefit.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: This bill was a provision of a bill last year. During the recession there were many conversations with the Legislature about how healthy food is very important for new moms and young kids. This program has not kept up with true costs. Moms on WIC get \$11 for food and veggies, and more under this program in order to buy more nutritious food at the farmers market. This builds on the nutrition education that WIC recipients get and also provides an economic benefit to local farmers. A WIC coordinator booth is set up at farmers markets and it is a joy to see the looks on the kids faces as they pick out fresh fruit and veggies. Fresh produce is the most requested item at foodbanks and food pantries. Also, access to fresh fruit and vegetables is an important health intervention.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Liz Lovelett, Prime Sponsor; Aaron Czyzewski, Food Lifeline; Claire Lane, Anti-Hunger & Nutrition Coalition; Brooke Pugliese, Nutrition First.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.