

FINAL BILL REPORT

SSB 6495

C 322 L 20
Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Regarding essential needs and housing support eligibility.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senator Walsh; by request of Department of Social and Health Services).

Senate Committee on Human Services, Reentry & Rehabilitation
Senate Committee on Ways & Means
House Committee on Appropriations

Background: Essential Needs and Housing Support Program. The Essential Needs and Housing Support (HEN) program provides rental assistance and other housing support, as well as essential needs items such as personal hygiene and household supplies, bus passes, and laundry tokens. Housing support is assistance provided to maintain existing housing when the recipient is at substantial risk of becoming homeless; to obtain housing; or to obtain heat, electricity, natural gas, sewer, garbage, and water services when the recipient is at substantial risk of losing these services. Recipients of HEN referrals do not receive a cash grant.

Eligible individuals must meet income requirements; be temporarily unable to work for at least 90 days due to physical or mental incapacity; and be ineligible for the Aged, Blind, or Disabled Program, the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program, and other cash assistance programs.

HEN is funded by state general funds appropriated in the biennial operating budget.

Pregnant Woman Assistance. The Pregnant Women Assistance Program (PWA) was created by the Legislature in 2011. PWA is a state-funded program providing cash assistance to low-income pregnant individuals who are not eligible for TANF due to the 60-month time limits, or the State Family Assistance Program for a reason other than not cooperating with TANF program rules. This program provides a maximum monthly cash grant of \$197. To be eligible, the individual must reside in Washington, be pregnant, meet income and resource requirements, and meet citizenship or alien status requirements.

Summary: Within funds appropriated from the Department of Commerce, recipients of the PWA program are eligible for referral to the HEN program, provided they meet eligibility

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requirements. Recipients of PWA are eligible for HEN for 24 consecutive months from the date Commerce determines PWA eligibility.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate	47	0
House	97	0

Effective: June 11, 2020