

**2SSB 5241** - H COMM AMD

By Committee on Housing, Human Services & Veterans

1 Strike everything after the enacting clause and insert the  
2 following:

3 "NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature declares that economic  
4 inclusion shall be a top priority of Washington state's economic  
5 recovery. The legislature finds that the novel coronavirus has had a  
6 disproportionate effect upon at-risk communities. The legislature  
7 recognizes that for communities to thrive and remain vibrant, that  
8 recovery needs to be inclusive of people who are furthest away from  
9 opportunity and disproportionately more likely to experience economic  
10 hardship. The legislature acknowledges that stand-alone human service  
11 programs meet a pressing need but can be difficult to access for  
12 those lacking the resources to do so. The legislature recognizes that  
13 barriers to access can delay reentry into the workforce and career  
14 development. The legislature finds that leveraging or supporting the  
15 integration of existing benefits and services whenever possible will  
16 help people access the benefits they need to help them move out of  
17 poverty, without creating another duplicative system. The legislature  
18 finds that incorporating people with lived experience into systems  
19 development can help improve meaningful access to state programs. The  
20 legislature, therefore, intends to help facilitate an inclusive  
21 economic recovery by creating an economic inclusion grant program to  
22 provide greater access to resources for those in need.

23 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** The definitions in this section apply  
24 throughout this act unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

- 25 (1) "Department" means the employment security department.  
26 (2) "People experiencing poverty" means households whose income  
27 are at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level.  
28 (3) "Rural counties" has the same meaning as provided for in RCW  
29 82.14.370.

1 (4) "Self-sufficiency" means a level of household income that is  
2 equal to or more than the self-sufficiency standard for a household  
3 as determined by the University of Washington's self-sufficiency  
4 calculator.

5 (5) "Steering committee" means the poverty reduction work group  
6 steering committee created in response to a directive of the  
7 governor, dated November 6, 2017.

8 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** (1) The department, in consultation with  
9 the department of social and health services, the department of  
10 commerce, the department of children, youth, and families, the health  
11 care authority, the steering committee, and other stakeholders as  
12 determined by the department, shall make and oversee the  
13 implementation of local economic inclusion grants available to local  
14 communities to promote equity, economic inclusion, and a stable  
15 financial foundation for people experiencing poverty, with a  
16 particular focus on people of color and people in rural counties,  
17 primarily through better coordination of existing programs and  
18 resources. The purpose of these grants is to empower and incentivize  
19 local communities to coordinate existing poverty reduction resources  
20 and benefits to make them easier to access, get them to the people  
21 who need them, and work as a coordinated system, to help more people  
22 move out of poverty and be included in Washington's economic success.

23 (2) Subject to the availability of funds appropriated for this  
24 specific purpose, local economic inclusion grants shall be made  
25 available in communities throughout all regions of the state,  
26 including rural counties and urban communities for the purpose as  
27 described in subsection (1) of this section, with an emphasis on  
28 economically distressed communities as defined by the department.

29 (3) Recipients of local economic inclusion grants shall:

30 (a) Coordinate with existing local providers to make benefits  
31 easier to access and work as a coordinated system, to help more  
32 people move out of poverty and be included in Washington's economic  
33 success;

34 (b) Provide input to inform the work described in section 5 of  
35 this act, by identifying examples of federal regulations that prevent  
36 better local coordination and identifying other needs for additional  
37 state or federal funding for continuous improvement of the poverty  
38 reduction system in future years;

1 (c) Utilize the existing local workforce development councils to  
2 develop local economic inclusion grant partnerships that must include  
3 people experiencing poverty, people of color, homelessness programs,  
4 and representatives of the health care authority, community service  
5 offices, accountable communities of health, and associate development  
6 organizations, and may include other members;

7 (d) Coordinate leadership among the local workforce development  
8 council, associate development council, and other organizations, and  
9 utilize the workforce development council as the fiscal agent;

10 (e) Work with people experiencing poverty to ensure they have  
11 access to multiple benefits to help them meet their basic needs, in  
12 alignment with local care coordination efforts, and when ready,  
13 develop individualized career plans leading to a self-sufficiency  
14 wage, which must be the level established by the University of  
15 Washington self-sufficiency standard;

16 (f) Provide streamlined access to local partners who can pay for  
17 education or training elements of a person's individualized career  
18 plan using federal Pell grants, the Washington college grant, or  
19 other resources;

20 (g) Provide streamlined access to local partners who can make  
21 monthly payments to the low-income person while in training, using  
22 existing resources such as incentive payments, work study payments,  
23 work experience payments, needs-related payments, or other financial  
24 aid or workforce development resources, as identified locally, and in  
25 consultation with technical assistance provided by the department.  
26 Such payments must work to maximize the total benefits available to  
27 the individual. To the extent possible under federal law, such  
28 payments must be structured so they do not reduce other benefits;  
29 including but not limited to the supplemental nutritional assistance  
30 program, temporary assistance for needy families, special  
31 supplemental nutrition program for women, infants, and children,  
32 medicaid, workforce innovation and opportunity act supportive  
33 services, or other financial and health benefits, and may be  
34 comparable to payments received by trade adjustment assistance or  
35 Montgomery GI beneficiaries; in order to provide stability during  
36 training and education;

37 (h) Through the local workforce development councils, develop a  
38 local economic inclusion grant coordination team that works to ensure  
39 easier access to all state and local government services, and  
40 identifies staff to be care and benefits navigators. These may be

1 existing coordinators and navigators if solutions are already in  
2 place for the community to build upon rather than duplicate. The care  
3 and benefit navigators must provide convenient one-stop access to  
4 benefits available to people experiencing poverty. At a minimum, it  
5 shall be encouraged that people served by the economic inclusion  
6 grants apply for and, if eligible, receive supplemental nutritional  
7 assistance program, temporary assistance for needy families,  
8 medicaid, workforce innovation and opportunity act supportive  
9 services, or other financial and health benefits, as deemed eligible  
10 and appropriate for each person. To the extent allowable under  
11 federal law, access to benefits may not be conditioned upon seeking  
12 employment nor limited to people pursuing individual career plans,  
13 and benefits must be available to people experiencing poverty who are  
14 in need of financial stability whether or not they are pursuing  
15 career plans;

16 (i) Ensure equitable access to state and local government  
17 services for people with disabilities, which may include equipment  
18 and technology purchases;

19 (j) Both identify where federal barriers hinder efforts to  
20 coordinate benefits for customers, and elevate those issues to the  
21 department. The department, in consultation with the department of  
22 social and health services, the department of commerce, the  
23 department of children, youth, and families, the health care  
24 authority, the steering committee, and other stakeholders as  
25 identified by the department may apply for federal waivers and  
26 propose federal law changes to make the authorizing environment  
27 better support coordinated service delivery across programs;

28 (k) Ensure options for career development, English language  
29 learners, and other services for both parents in two-parent families,  
30 including child care if desired by the family; and

31 (l) When available, use the local and state teams already in  
32 place for similar efforts, expanding the partners on those teams as  
33 needed to meet the requirements of this section.

34 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** In managing the economic inclusion grants,  
35 the department shall consult with the steering committee. Members of  
36 the steering committee must be reimbursed for travel expenses as  
37 provided in RCW 43.03.050 and 43.03.060, as well as child care and  
38 other expenses as needed for each day a steering committee member  
39 attends meetings to provide consultative assistance to the agencies

1 managing the economic inclusion grants; for up to 12 meetings per  
2 calendar year.

3 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** (1) The department, in consultation with  
4 the department of social and health services, the department of  
5 commerce, the department of children, youth, and families, the health  
6 care authority, the steering committee, and other stakeholders as  
7 identified by the department, shall develop a comprehensive list of  
8 federal waivers to remove federal barriers to coordinating service  
9 delivery across multiple programs. Where waivers are not possible,  
10 the department shall develop a comprehensive list of federal rules  
11 and or policies that are creating barriers and include this  
12 information. Information developed in this section shall be included  
13 in the annual report as provided for in subsection (4) of this  
14 section.

15 (2) The department of social and health services, in consultation  
16 with the department, the department of commerce, the department of  
17 children, youth, and families, the health care authority, the  
18 steering committee, and other stakeholders as determined by the  
19 department, shall further develop measures and indicators of  
20 equitable and inclusive economic recovery already underway in the  
21 department of social and health services technical advisory group on  
22 inclusive economic recovery, and apply those measures as needed to  
23 help promote economic recovery that is racially equitable and fully  
24 inclusive of people experiencing poverty, people of color, people in  
25 rural counties, people with disabilities, and other key demographics  
26 that have historically been left behind in economic recovery.

27 (3) In the event an applicant has not submitted adequate  
28 documentation to participate within three months after grant  
29 announcement, the agencies may redistribute the unclaimed funding to  
30 other participating local areas.

31 (4) By November 15, 2022, and annually thereafter, and in  
32 compliance with RCW 43.01.036, the department, in consultation with  
33 the department of social and health services, the department of  
34 commerce, the department of children, youth, and families, the health  
35 care authority, and the steering committee shall report to the  
36 governor, the appropriate committees of the legislature, and the  
37 legislative-executive work-first poverty reduction oversight task  
38 force. The annual report must include progress reports, an estimate  
39 of costs avoided by the state when a person moves out of poverty and

1 into self-sufficiency, measures of equitable and inclusive economic  
2 recovery, and model legislative language to further expand economic  
3 inclusion, reduce poverty, and increase coordinated service delivery  
4 across programs and agencies.

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 6.** Sections 1 through 5 of this act  
6 constitute a new chapter in Title 43 RCW."

7 Correct the title.

EFFECT: (1) Creates a new chapter in Title 43 RCW.

(2) Changes the definition of "Department" as used in the Act to mean the Employment Security Department, rather than the Department of Commerce.

(3) Requires recipients of local economic inclusion grants to:

(a) Coordinate with existing local providers to make benefits easier to access, rather than directing the recipients to coordinate existing poverty reduction resources and benefits to make them easier to access and get them to people who need them;

(b) Provide input to inform the work of developing a list of federal waivers to remove federal barriers to coordinating service delivery, developing measures and indicators of equitable and inclusive economic recovery, and reporting to the Governor and the Legislature;

(c) Utilize the existing local workforce development councils to develop local economic inclusion grant partnerships, rather than directing the recipients to develop a local leadership coalition or use or expand an existing local partnership;

(d) Coordinate leadership among the local workforce development council, associate development council, and other organizations, rather than identify a fiscal agent and lead coordinator;

(e) Work with people experiencing poverty to ensure they have access to multiple benefits, and when ready, develop individualized career plans leading to a self-sufficiency wage, which must be the level established by the University of Washington self-sufficiency standard, rather than at least 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Level or the higher level established by the self-sufficiency standard; and

(f) Use the local and state teams already in place for similar efforts, when available.

(4) Removes language requiring recipients of local economic inclusion grants to coordinate with similar federally funded or federally driven service coordination efforts as appropriate.

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