
Housing, Human Services & Veterans Committee

HB 2048

Brief Description: Concerning temporary assistance for needy families time limit extensions.

Sponsors: Representatives Peterson, Ortiz-Self, Senn, Santos, Ormsby, Bergquist, Macri, Ramel, Simmons, Pollet and Harris-Talley.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Creates new time limit extensions for recipients of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program.

Hearing Date: 2/1/22

Staff: Serena Dolly (786-7150).

Background:

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) is a federal block grant that provides temporary cash assistance, subsidized childcare, and work programs for low-income families. With limited exceptions, adult TANF recipients must participate in one or more WorkFirst activities that are identified through an assessment and documented in the recipient's Individual Responsibility Plan. These activities may include paid and unpaid employment-based training programs, career development, community service, work skills assessment and job search training, and vocational training programs. The TANF program is administered by the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS).

Federal rules limit the length of time an adult can receive TANF benefits to a cumulative total of five years. Time limit extensions (TLE) may be offered to families on the basis of hardship, as defined by the State, or in instances of family violence. States can extend federal TANF

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assistance beyond the five-year limit for up to 20 percent of the average monthly caseload.

The DSHS has adopted rules identifying who is eligible for a hardship TLE. Examples of hardship under the adopted rules include a person with severe and chronic disabilities, a person acting as a caregiver for a disabled child or adult, and a person experiencing homelessness, among others.

Summary of Bill:

The DSHS must adopt rules to allow a hardship TLE if the recipient:

- is participating satisfactorily in the program;
- is temporarily prevented from working or looking for a job;
- is in need of mental health or substance use disorder treatment;
- is homeless or at substantial risk of losing stable housing or housing support services; or
- demonstrates another basis by which the 60-month time limit would cause undue hardship to the recipient or the recipient's family.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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