

Appendix 8:  
Major  
Changes in  
ESA  
Programs by  
Month

SFY

2025

## Table of Contents

Major Changes in ESA Programs by Month, July 1995 – June 2025 .....	9
March 2025 .....	9
February 2025 .....	9
January 2025 .....	9
December 2024 .....	9
October 2024 .....	9
August 2024 .....	9
July 2024 .....	9
June 2024 .....	10
May 2024 .....	10
April 2024 .....	10
February 2024 .....	10
January 2024 .....	11
December 2023 .....	11
November 2023 .....	11
September 2023 .....	11
August 2023 .....	11
July 2023 .....	12
June 2023 .....	12
May 2023 .....	12
March 2023 .....	13
February 2023 .....	13
January 2023 .....	13
December 2022 .....	14
November 2022 .....	14
September 2022 .....	14
August 2022 .....	14
July 2022 .....	14
June 2022 .....	15
May 2022 .....	15

---

February 2022 .....	16
January 2022 .....	16
October 2021 .....	16
July 2021 .....	17
June 2021 .....	17
May 2021 .....	18
April 2021 .....	18
March 2021 .....	18
February 2021 .....	18
January 2021 .....	18
November 2020 .....	19
October 2020 .....	19
July 2020 .....	19
June 2020 .....	19
May 2020 .....	19
April 2020 .....	20
March 2020 .....	20
July 2019 .....	21
May 2019 .....	21
February 2019 .....	22
August 2018 .....	22
July 2018 .....	22
June 2018 .....	22
March 2018 .....	22
January 2018 .....	23
October 2017 .....	23
August 2017 .....	23
July 2017 .....	23
January 2017 .....	23
October 2016 .....	24
July 2016 .....	24

---

June 2016 .....	24
May 2016 .....	24
February 2016 .....	24
January 2016 .....	24
October 2015 .....	25
August 2015 .....	25
July 2015 .....	25
May 2015 .....	25
April 2015 .....	25
January 2015 .....	26
November 2014 .....	26
July 2014 .....	26
June 2014 .....	27
May 2014 .....	27
April 2014 .....	27
March 2014 .....	27
February 2014 .....	27
January 2014 .....	27
December 2013 .....	28
November 2013 .....	28
October 2013 .....	28
September 2013 .....	29
August 2013 .....	29
July 2013 .....	29
May 2013 .....	29
April 2013 .....	29
February 2013 .....	29
January 2013 .....	30
August 2012 .....	30
July 2012 .....	30
June 2012 .....	31

---

February 2012 .....	32
January 2012 .....	32
December 2011 .....	32
November 2011 .....	32
October 2011 .....	33
September 2011 .....	33
July 2011 .....	33
May 2011 .....	35
April 2011 .....	35
March 2011 .....	35
February 2011 .....	36
January 2011 .....	37
December 2010 .....	38
October 2010 .....	38
September 2010 .....	40
July 2010 .....	40
May 2010 .....	41
April 2010 .....	41
March 2010 .....	41
November 2009 .....	42
October 2009 .....	42
September 2009 .....	43
July 2009 .....	43
April 2009 .....	43
February 2009 .....	43
October 2008 .....	43
August 2008 .....	44
July 2008 .....	44
February 2008 .....	44
December 2007 .....	44
July 2007 .....	45

---

April 2007 .....	45
July 2006 .....	45
June 2006 .....	46
May 2006 .....	46
April 2006 .....	46
March 2006 .....	47
February 2006 .....	47
January 2006 .....	48
December 2005 .....	48
November 2005 .....	48
October 2005 .....	49
September 2005 .....	49
July 2005 .....	49
June 2005 .....	49
March 2005 .....	49
February 2005 .....	49
January 2005 .....	49
October 2004 .....	50
July 2004 .....	50
May 2004 .....	50
April 2004 .....	51
January 2004 .....	51
December 2003 .....	51
November 2003 .....	52
October 2003 .....	52
September 2003 .....	52
August 2003 .....	52
July 2003 .....	52
June 2003 .....	53
May 2003 .....	53
April 2003 .....	53

---

March 2003 .....	53
February 2003 .....	53
October 2002 .....	53
August 2002 .....	54
July 2002 .....	55
June 2002 .....	55
May 2002 .....	56
April 2002 .....	56
March 2002 .....	56
February 2002 .....	56
January 2002 .....	57
December 2001 .....	57
October 2001 .....	58
August 2001 .....	58
July 2001 .....	58
March 2001 .....	58
October 2000 .....	58
July 2000 .....	59
June 2000 .....	59
May 2000 .....	59
April 2000 .....	59
March 2000 .....	59
January 2000 .....	59
November 1999 .....	60
October 1999 .....	60
September 1999 .....	60
August 1999 .....	60
July 1999 .....	61
June 1999 .....	61
May 1999 .....	62
April 1999 .....	62

---

March 1999 .....	62
February 1999 .....	62
January 1999 .....	62
November 1998 .....	62
October 1998 .....	62
September 1998.....	62
July 1998 .....	63
April 1998.....	63
March 1998.....	63
February 1998 .....	63
November 1997 .....	63
October 1997 .....	63
September 1997.....	64
August 1997 .....	64
July 1997 .....	65
May 1997 .....	65
April 1997 .....	65
February 1997 .....	65
January 1997 .....	65
November 1996 .....	67
October 1996 .....	68
August 1996 .....	68
July 1996 .....	68
May 1996 .....	68
March 1996 .....	68
December 1995.....	69
October 1995 .....	69
September 1995.....	69
August 1995 .....	69
July 1995 .....	69

## Major Changes in ESA Programs by Month, July 1995 – June 2025

### March 2025

#### Reduction in Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) and Refugee Medical Assistance (RMA)

##### Eligibility Periods

In March 2025, the U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement reduced the eligibility period for RCA and RMA from twelve months to four months from date of eligibility for federally eligible populations whose date of eligibility for refugee assistance is on or after May 5, 2025.

### February 2025

#### Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWD) Waiver

Effective February 1, 2025, ABAWDs living outside of King County and the Muckleshoot reservation are exempt from the three-month benefit time limit if they do not meet SNAP work requirements.

### January 2025

In alignment with the [Consolidated Appropriations Act 2024 \(PL 118-42\)](#) system programming was completed to move citizens under the Compact of Free Association (COFA) from state funded Food Assistance Program (FAP) and State Family Assistance (SFA) to federal public benefits, including SNAP and TANF.

#### Diversions Cash Assistance (DCA) Increase

The DCA program maximum payment amount was increased from \$1,250 to \$2,000 in a 12-month period. No other DCA eligibility requirements changed.

### December 2024

#### Replacement of Stolen Benefits Ends

Food and cash benefits stolen on or after December 21, 2024 cannot be replaced.

### October 2024

#### Change in eligibility for humanitarian parolees

Under [House Bill 815](#), most Ukrainians paroled into the US after September 30, 2024 will not qualify for federal benefits, but will qualify for state funded assistance programs if otherwise eligible.

### August 2024

#### Earned Income Disregard for Cash Programs

Effective August 1, 2024, the first \$500 of gross earned income began to be disregarded before applying the 50% earned income disregard for TANF, SFA, RCA, DCA, ABD, HEN, and PWA.

### July 2024

#### Apple Health Expansion

Effective July 1, 2024, the state funded Apple Health Expansion program was launched in partnership with the Health Care Authority. AHE provides healthcare to people with income up to 138% FPL and who are ineligible for federally funded medical programs due to their immigration status.

#### Replacement of Stolen Cash Benefits

TANF, SFA, PWA, RCA, and ABD cash benefits stolen on July 1, 2024, or later via card skimming, card cloning, and other similar, fraudulent methods could be replaced through December 20, 2024.

### **Infant, Toddler or Postpartum Time Limit Extension for TANF/SFA**

A new TANF time limit extension began for individuals who reach 60 months on TANF/SFA cash assistance and who qualify for the infant, toddler, or postpartum WorkFirst exemption.

### **WorkFirst Housing and Utility Temporary Support Services**

Effective July 1, 2024, a temporary support service was available for WorkFirst families to assist with housing and utility costs, broadening the ability to help WorkFirst participants meet their basic needs. The budget adopted by the Legislature provided an additional \$4 million for this support. These funds were exhausted as of February 28, 2025.

## **June 2024**

### **Summer EBT**

In June 2024, Summer EBT, known as SUN Bucks, was introduced as a new permanent program. Eligible children receive a one-time, \$120 benefit to buy groceries when they lose access to free and reduced-price lunch meals over the summer months. Benefit issuance for the 2023-2024 school year began in July 2024.

## **May 2024**

### **Pandemic Emergency Assistance Fund [COVID-19 response]**

In May 2024, an additional state and federally funded Pandemic Emergency Assistance Fund (PEAF) payment was issued to families on TANF/SFA or Basic Food assistance, under 75 percent of the 2022 federal poverty level, with children in the home who didn't receive the benefit in the previous issuance.

## **April 2024**

### **Ongoing Additional Requirements (OAR) Expansion**

Effective April 1, 2024, OAR expanded to include eligible HEN Referral recipients and added additional services such as:

- Boarding and veterinary care for service animals
- Transportation
- Dentures
- Optometrist exam for eyeglasses
- Eyeglasses
- Hearing aids

### **Medicare Savings Program (MSP)**

Effective April 1, 2024, the monthly income limit for the Qualified Medicare Beneficiary (QMB) MSP program increased to 110% FPL and the Qualified Individual (QI-1) MSP program increased to 138% FPL.

### **State Supplemental Payment (SSP) Decrease**

Effective April 1, 2024, SSP for SSI recipients who are aged, blind, or have an ineligible spouse decreased \$38.25 to \$35.50 to stay within available funds.

### **Federal Benefits for an Expanded Population of Ukrainian Humanitarian Parolees**

Effective April 24, 2024, Ukrainian humanitarian parolees who were paroled into the U.S. between February 24, 2022, and September 30, 2024, are eligible for federally funded benefits, including TANF, SNAP, and RCA.

## **February 2024**

### **Asset/Resource Limit increase for Cash Programs**

Effective February 1, 2024, the Asset and Resource Limits for ESA cash assistance programs increased. The resource limit doubled from \$6,000 to \$12,000, and one vehicle (no matter the value) and retirement/pension-related funds or accounts became completely exempt.

### **Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWD) Waiver**

Effective February 1, 2024, ABAWDs living outside of King County are exempt from the three-month benefit time limit if they do not meet SNAP work requirements.

### **January 2024**

#### **Cash Grant Increase**

Effective January 1, 2024, cash grant payment standards increased by 8% for all ESA cash programs including TANF/SFA, ABD, RCA, PWA, and CEAP.

#### **New ABAWD 36-Month Period**

Effective January 1, 2024, a new 36-month period began for ABAWD work requirements. ABAWDs must participate in a qualifying activity to maintain their Basic Food benefits. Any non-qualifying months incurred in the prior 36-month period were removed. ABAWDs who lost eligibility, after three months of non-participation, were able to reapply for Basic Food.

### **December 2023**

#### **Basic Food Elderly Simplified Application Project (ESAP) Certification Extension**

Effective December 18, 2023, ESAP certification periods expanded from 12 to 36 months. As was the case prior to this change, Mid-Certification Review (MCR) and Eligibility Review interview requirements are waived for ESAP households. In order to participate in ESAP, all household members must be age 60 or older or disabled, with no earned income.

### **November 2023**

#### **Diaper Benefit for TANF/SFA Families**

Effective November 1, 2023, a benefit specifically targeted at mitigating diaper-related

costs for TANF/SFA families with a child under the age of three was implemented.

### **September 2023**

#### **Fiscal Responsibility Act (FRA), 2023 (H.R.3746)**

signed into law on June 3, 2023 changed SNAP ABAWD age requirements for participation and provided new participation exceptions for some groups. These changes are temporary (*due to sunset – October 1, 2030*):

- Expanding Able-Bodied Adults without Dependents (ABAWDs) age requirements:
  - Age of those subject to the ABAWD time limit increases to age 50 – *effective September 1, 2023.*
  - Age of those subject to the ABAWD time limit increases to age 52 – *effective October 1, 2023.*
  - Age of those subject to the ABAWD time limit increases to age 54 – *effective October 1, 2024.*
- New work exemptions for specific groups – *effective September 1, 2023*, allowing for expanded access to Basic Food benefits for:
  - Individuals experiencing homelessness.
  - Veterans.
  - Individuals who are 24 years of age or younger who were in foster care on their 18th birthday.

### **August 2023**

#### **Replacement of food assistance stolen through skimming or other fraudulent methods based on the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023 began.**

Under the act, benefits stolen on or after October 1, 2022 through September 30, 2024 can be replaced if the claim is valid and reported within 30 days of the date the theft was discovered. Replacements are limited to the lesser of the total amount stolen or the

amount equal to twice the monthly allotment the household received immediately before the theft and cannot exceed more than two replacements during a federal fiscal year.

## July 2023

### **State Supplemental Payment increase for certain individuals in medical institution or residential setting**

Effective July 1, 2023, State Supplemental Payment for certain individuals who receive a Personal Needs Allowance increased from \$70 to \$100. This increase occurred for individuals receiving care in a medical institution or residential setting.

### **Expanding WorkFirst Good Cause**

Effective July 23, 2023, good cause reasons used to determine whether a WorkFirst family should face financial sanction for situations where the parent does not engage in agreed upon activities with their service and participation plan expanded.

### **Abolishing the TANF/SFA Time Limit for Ineligible Parents**

Effective July 1, 2023, the TANF time limit for households headed by a parent who is ineligible for assistance due to factors such as receipt of SSI, their legal status, or their immigration status, was abolished.

### **Able Bodied Adults Without (ABAWD)**

Effective July 1, 2023, with the end to the Public Health Emergency, participation resumed for ABAWDs residing in King and Snohomish Counties. Residents of Tulalip and Muckleshoot remained exempt.

## June 2023

### **Tribal SNAP Eligibility Demonstration Project**

In June 2023, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) approved Washington's request to expand the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) demonstration pilot conducted at Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe to an additional five tribes. Tribes are to work with Community Services Division (CSD) to operate as a Community Service Office (CSO) and perform eligibility and certification of SNAP benefits on behalf of the state.

### **End of Expanded Student Eligibility [COVID-19 Response]**

The temporary expansion of Basic Food Basic Food eligibility for students of higher education who were eligible for work study or had an expected family contribution of \$0 on their federal financial aid at application ended in June 2023.

### **TANF Time Limit Extension Ended [COVID-19 Response]**

Families that did not meet any other TANF time limit extension criteria were able to continue to receive an extension due to the pandemic beginning April 1, 2020. This provision ended effective June 30, 2023, after which families must meet specific time limit extension criteria to remain eligible for TANF.

## May 2023

### **TANF *In Loco Parentis* Eligibility Change**

In May 2023, the application process for TANF *In Loco Parentis* caregivers was streamlined and no longer required the caregiver to pass a background check in order to receive benefits on behalf of the child in their care.

### **Extended Parole (and Benefits) for Ukrainian Humanitarian Parolees**

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) began extending parole for an additional year on a case-by-case basis for Ukrainians who were paroled at a port of entry between February 24, 2022, and April 25, 2022. These individuals were originally issued a one-year term of parole. This allowed for federal benefits (e.g., TANF, SNAP, and Medicaid) to remain open for these households, if all other eligibility requirements were met.

**Medicaid Continuous Enrollment and other Public Health Emergency (PHE) Flexibilities End [COVID-19 Response]**

With the passing of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, beginning with May 2023 renewals, terminations resumed for all Medicaid recipients who did not complete their Eligibility Reviews. Recipients found ineligible during their renewal period were also terminated. COVID-19 flexibilities, such as self-attestation of medical expenses, income, and resources also ended.

Per CMS requirements, the Community Services Division (CSD), also implemented the completion of Medicaid renewals on ex-parte' basis, by attempting to complete a Medicaid renewal using data matches and not requiring a recipient to contact the department to initiate a renewal.

**Office of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance (ORIA) Community Outreach and Education Program Launch**

In May 2023, ORIA implemented the Community Outreach and Education (COE) to help the growing number of refugees and humanitarian entrants arriving in Washington to connect with services and resources through information and referral, resource navigation,

community & cultural orientation, and outreach services.

**March 2023**

**End of Basic Food Emergency Allotments [COVID-19 Response]**

After February 2023, Washington Basic Food households returned to regular monthly allotments and no longer received the maximum food benefit based solely on household size. Households who are eligible for the maximum food benefit due to household circumstances no longer received the difference between their regular monthly benefit allotment and the maximum amount for their household size, with a minimum supplement of \$95.

**February 2023**

**Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWD) Waiver**

Effective February 1, 2023, ABAWDs outside of Snohomish and King counties were exempt from work requirements through a SNAP time limit waiver. Also exempt were individuals living on Tulalip and Muckleshoot land within Snohomish and King Counties. FNS' approval extended through January 31, 2024. Clients remained eligible to participate in BFET services voluntarily.

**January 2023**

**Resumption of Home Visits for Teen Living Assessments**

**[COVID-19 Response]**

Effective January 1, 2023, home visits for Teen Living Assessments were resumed. These assessments apply to all unmarried, minor parents applying for TANF cash assistance, to determine eligibility and offer support to the household.

## December 2022

### **TANF Home Visiting Referral – Statewide Expansion**

Effective December 1, 2022, the TANF Home Visiting and Parent Support referral option expanded statewide for WorkFirst families. Starting in May of 2015, this initiative was intended to support and improve outcomes for both parents and children receiving public assistance. In 2015, the referral process was expanded to include over 25 Community Services Offices. With statewide expansion, all WorkFirst families who are expecting a child or have a child under the age of two are offered a referral to Home Visiting or other parent support services. Participation in this activity is voluntary, without repercussions to the family if they decide to decline the referral or discontinue engagement in services.

## November 2022

### **Employment Authorization for Certain Afghan and Ukrainian Humanitarian Parolees**

Effective November 21, 2022, certain Afghan and Ukrainian humanitarian parolees were considered employment-authorized to the same extent as refugees. This consideration allowed them to get an unrestricted Social Security card and removed the requirement to obtain employment authorization from the federal government before engaging in work within the U.S.

### **ABD/HEN Referral Review and Engagement Processes Resume**

#### ***[COVID-19 Response]***

Effective November 1, 2022, DSHS reinstated the disability and incapacity review cycles of 24 and 12 months, resumed the good cause process for those not cooperating with medical and mental health treatments or the SSI

application process, and resumed gathering medical evidence from within the last 90 days of application and 45 days of review from sources accepted by SSA.

## September 2022

### **ABD Cash Grant Increase**

Effective September 1, 2022, the payment standard for ABD increased to \$417 based on funding provided in the 2022 supplemental operating budget. This increase was a step toward fully meeting the basic needs of disabled individuals and was the first approved grant increase in the history of the program.

### **ABD Expands to Patients Age 21-64 of Eastern and Western State Hospital**

Effective September 1, 2022, eligibility for ABD expanded to patients residing in Eastern or Western State Hospital who had been civilly committed or found not guilty by reason of insanity. Residents determined eligible received a CPI grant of \$41.62.

## August 2022

### **Fast Track to Employment Pilot**

The Fast Track to Employment program pilot, a model of supported employment called “Individual Placement and Support,” helps people find work at jobs of their choosing. In August 2022, this pilot began supporting WorkFirst participants and ABAWDS in specific counties who were eligible to receive these services. Pilot counties included Spokane, Snohomish, Cowlitz, and Lewis.

## July 2022

### **TANF Time Limits**

#### ***[COVID-19 Response]***

Families that do not meet any other TANF time limit extension criteria were able to continue to receive an extension due to the pandemic,

effective July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023. The extension supported poverty reduction and eliminating disparities for families struggling to maintain economic stability as they reached the 60-month time limit.

### **WorkFirst Housing and Utility Temporary Support Services**

Effective July 1, 2022, a temporary support service was made available for WorkFirst families specifically to support housing and utility costs, broadening the ability to help WorkFirst participants meet their basic needs. The budget adopted by the Legislature provided an additional \$6.6 million for this support through June 30, 2023.

### **Implementation of HB 1748- Expanding ABD/HEN program to Survivors of Certain Crimes**

Effective July 1, 2022, noncitizens harmed by a crime who were in the process of filing an application for specific visas or immigration status with the federal government, became eligible for the Aged, Blind or Disabled program if all other eligibility criteria was met.

### **Aged, Blind or Disabled Cash Assistance Program Mid Certification Review Requirement Eliminated**

Effective July 1, 2022, the supplemental operating budget included funding to eliminate the Mid-Certification Review (MCR) requirement for all ABD cash recipients.

### **Office of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance Housing Stabilization Services Program**

Effective July 1, 2022, ORIA launched its Housing Stabilization Services program to assist eligible refugees and humanitarian entrants with short-term housing services, rental assistance, and utility assistance.

## **June 2022**

### **Expansion of Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) and Refugee Medical Assistance (RMA)**

#### **Eligibility Periods**

Effective June 1, 2022, the eligibility period for RCA and RMA expanded from eight to twelve months from date of eligibility for federally eligible populations whose date of eligibility of refugee assistance was on or after October 1, 2021.

## **May 2022**

### **Ukrainian Humanitarian Parolees Eligible for Federally Funded Benefits**

Effective May 21, 2022, humanitarian parolees from Ukraine and their parents, spouses, and children paroled into the U.S. between February 24, 2022 and September 30, 2023, were eligible for federal funded benefits (e.g., Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), RCA, and Basic Food Employment & Training (BFET)).

### **Pandemic Emergency Assistance Fund [COVID-19 response]**

Washington state received \$22.7 million in federal Pandemic Emergency Assistance Funds (PEAF) to support non-recurring, short-term benefits for families. State funds were also approved to enable the benefits to go to otherwise eligible families that do not qualify for federal programs based on citizenship status. Washington's PEAF benefit was issued in May 2022 as a one-time cash payment of \$127 per child for families with minor children receiving TANF/SFA, Basic Food, FAP, or TFA with income at or under 75% of the Federal Poverty Level.

## February 2022

### **State-Funded Cash, Food and Medical Benefits for Survivors of Certain Crimes**

Effective February 1, 2022, state-funded benefits were provided to noncitizens harmed by a crime who were in the process of filling an application for specific visas or immigration status with the federal government.

### **Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWD) Waiver**

Effective February 1, 2022, ABAWDs were exempt from work requirements through a statewide SNAP time limit waiver. FNS' approval extended through January 31, 2023. Clients remained eligible to participate in BFET services voluntarily.

## January 2022

### **Mid-Certification Review Requirement Waived [COVID-19 response]**

DSHS continued to receive federal approval to implement flexibilities to waive Mid-Certification Reviews from January 1, 2022 through June 30, 2022. This waiver applied to TANF, State Family Assistance (SFA), Aged, Blind or Disabled (ABD) Cash Assistance, Working Family Support (WFS), and all Food Assistance programs.

## November 2021

### **Disaster Cash Assistance Program (DCAP) Activation for Severe Weather**

Effective November 22, 2021 through December 18, 2021, DCAP was activated in response to Governor Inslee's declaration of a state of emergency for 14 counties due to the devastating effects of severe weather. DCAP provided cash to eligible households impacted by the flooding, landslides, mudslides or other hazardous storm events, who lived in these counties.

## October 2021

### **Thrifty Food Plan (TFP) Increase**

Effective October 1, 2021, Basic Food benefit amounts were permanently adjusted to provide 40-cents more per person per meal. Separate from the 15% allotment increase to Basic Food in January 2021 in response to COVID, Congress had directed USDA to study the costs required to purchase foods to support a healthy diet. This study resulted in a permanent allotment increase of 25% enacted to the TFP which allowed for the increase in benefits, replacing the temporary COVID-19 15% allotment increases.

### **Afghan Humanitarian Parolees Eligible for Federally Funded Benefits**

Effective October 1, 2021, per federal law, humanitarian parolees from Afghanistan and their parents, spouses, and children, paroled into the U.S. between July 31, 2021 and September 30, 2022, became eligible for federal funded benefits (TANF, SNAP, RCA, and BFET). Prior to this change, this population was eligible for certain state-funded cash and food assistance, if all other eligibility criteria were met.

## September 2021

### **WorkFirst Participation Requirements Resume [COVID 19 response]**

Effective September 1, 2021, WorkFirst participation requirements, suspended since March 2020 due to the pandemic, resumed. DSHS has since worked to connect with families to update assessments and develop participation plans appropriate for their situation.

### **WorkFirst Integrated Interview**

DSHS launched the WorkFirst integrated interview starting September 20, 2021— a streamlined intake process and suite of new engagement tools (including a new assessment tool). This approach is client-centered and strengths-based, giving families receiving TANF the opportunity to complete financial eligibility, evaluation and development of a plan for participating in WorkFirst activities in a single phone or in-person interview.

## July 2021

### **WorkFirst Sanction Policy**

Effective July 1, 2021, WorkFirst Non-Compliance Sanction policies changed, providing participants two continuous months of non-compliance before reduction of cash benefits and an additional ten months on a reduced grant before cash benefits are terminated. Additionally, sanction-related home visits and immediate sanction closures were no longer a part of the sanction process. Though policy was changed, WorkFirst participation requirements remained suspended until September 1, 2021.

### **Cash Assistance Grant Increase**

Effective July 1, 2021, the payment standard for TANF, SFA, Pregnant Women Assistance (PWA), RCA and Consolidated Emergency Assistance Program (CEAP) increased by 15% based on funding provided by the Legislature in the biennial operating budget. This increase was a step toward fully meeting the basic needs of families and individuals who experience financial hardship. The change also increased the maximum earned income limits for these programs.

### **TANF Time Limits**

Effective July 1, 2021, the criteria for TANF 60-month Time Limit Extensions expanded to

support families who exhausted their 60 months and were homeless or who had a child in their home who met the broad McKinney-Vento definition of homeless. This change allowed families experiencing housing instability, or who care for a child in this situation, to continue receiving cash assistance.

Additionally, families that do not meet any other time limit extension criteria were able to continue to receive an extension due to the pandemic, effective July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022.

### **Pandemic-EBT (P-EBT) Summer 2021 Expansion [COVID-19 Response]**

Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) approved the issuance of P-EBT benefits to eligible children for the summer period following the 2020-21 school year. A standard benefit of \$375 was issued to both school aged children and children under the age of six for the months July and August of 2021.

## June 2021

### **ABAWD Waiver**

Effective June 8, 2021, ABAWDs were exempted from work requirements through a statewide SNAP time limit waiver. Food and Nutrition Service's (FNS) approval extended through May 31, 2022; however, clients remained eligible to participate in BFET services voluntarily.

### **P-EBT Children Under 6 Expansion [COVID-19 Response]**

DSHS received FNS approval to expand P-EBT benefits to children under the age of six for the 2020-21 school year. Children living in both a Basic Food household and a county participating in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast program whose schools reported limited on-site meal service

between October 1, 2020 and June 30, 2021, were eligible for P-EBT.

## May 2021

### **ABD and HEN Case Management Resumes**

Effective May 12, 2021, DSHS resumed case management activities for new ABD Cash Assistance and Housing and Essential Needs (HEN) Referral recipients. Staff continued to provide support for individuals with participation in medical treatment for disabling conditions, and with assessment and treatment services for substance use disorders, similar to how case planning activities were offered prior to suspension due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

## April 2021

### **ABAWD Navigator Program Ends**

Effective April 1, 2021, DSHS ended the ABAWD Navigator program due to loss of funding. FNS notified the department of its disagreement with the state's use of "Good Cause" to exempt ABAWDs during the public health emergency in March 2021, and disqualified funding to support the navigator program. DSHS filed a formal appeal.

### **Basic Food Emergency Supplement \$95 Minimum [COVID-19 Response]**

Effective April 2021, all Basic Food households became eligible for a minimum emergency supplement of \$95. This change provided additional assistance to the lowest income households that previously did not qualify or received small supplements.

### **DCAP**

Effective April 19, 2021, DCAP activated for Washington families without children impacted by COVID-19 who met the income and resource limits and were not eligible for other cash programs. Prior to this date, households were

only eligible for DCAP once in a 12-month period. In accordance with SHB 1151 and Governor Inslee's proclamation dated April 15, 2021, this program was available monthly for eligible households through June 30, 2021.

## March 2021

### **P-EBT 2020-2021 Plan Approval**

DSHS received FNS approval of its state plan to issue P-EBT for the 2020-21 school year. The 2020-21 plan differed the previous year as DSHS shifted from internal eligibility determination to working with the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) and a third-party vendor, Accenture, to determine free or reduced priced school meal eligibility and issue benefits through designated P-EBT cards.

## February 2021

### **Child Support Pass-Through Payments**

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) households were eligible to receive child support payments disbursed by Division of Child Support (DCS) without a reduction to their TANF grant. These "pass-through" payments are received each month DCS collects child support. Active TANF recipients may receive:

- Up to \$50 a month of support collected for a TANF assistance unit with one child; or
- Up to \$100 a month of support collected for a TANF assistance unit with two or more children.

## January 2021

### **Basic Food 15% Allotment Increase [COVID-19 Response]**

The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021, provided Basic Food households with an increase of 15% to their maximum allotments. This approval covered the period of January through June 2021 but was later expanded

through September 2021 in the American Rescue Plan Act.

### **Expanded Student Eligibility [COVID-19 Response]**

The Consolidated Appropriations Act expanded SNAP eligibility to students participating in state or federally funded work-study during the school year with an expected family contribution of \$0 for the duration of the Public Health Emergency.

Effective January 16, 2021, CSD expanded Basic Food to students of higher education who are eligible for work study or have an expected family contribution of \$0 on their federal financial aid at application through their certification period.

### **November 2020**

#### **Continued Certification Period Extensions [COVID-19 Response]**

The Continuing Appropriations Act maintained certification extensions for all programs beginning November 2020 through February 2021. November and December 2020 certification periods were extended two months and January and February 2021 certification periods were extended four months. All food Mid-Certifications Reviews were waived through June 30, 2021.

### **October 2020**

#### **Home Detention and Monitoring Eligibility**

Effective October 5, 2020, individuals released from incarceration to home detention or home monitoring were now potentially eligible for the ABD and HEN Referral programs which aligns with other programs, such as TANF. This change supported Governor Inslee's Executive Order 16-05 to reduce recidivism and assist

incarcerated individuals as they return to the community.

### **July 2020**

#### **Elimination of the Supplied Shelter Grant**

Based on additional funding provided by the Legislature, DSHS eliminated the separate payment standard for households receiving cash assistance (ABD, TANF, SFA, RCA, and PWA) who report their housing is provided at no cost. This change increased cash benefit amounts and streamlined benefit eligibility work.

### **June 2020**

#### **Pandemic EBT [COVID-19 Response from the SFY 2020 Briefing Book]**

Eligible families with children who would have received free or reduced-price meals through the National School Lunch Program, received P-EBT food benefits for the months of March through June 2020 due to school closures.

#### **PWA Eligibility for Referral to HEN Program [State Change]**

Effective June 11, 2020, eligibility for referral to the HEN program was extended to all PWA recipients. While PWA recipients are eligible for cash assistance only while pregnant, the referral to HEN is valid for 24 months from the date PWA eligibility was established. A referral to HEN was a significant additional benefit for the small population receiving PWA.

### **May 2020**

#### **Refugee Cash Assistance / Refugee Medical Assistance Time Limit Extension [COVID-19 Response]**

Due to the global COVID-19 pandemic, the federal Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) approved states to request a waiver to extend RCA and RMA to eligible recipients beyond the

normal eight-month time limit. Washington State received a waiver to provide benefits to people who became eligible between April 1, 2019 and January 30, 2020 for more than the eight-months.

## April 2020

### **Certification Period Extension for Cash Programs and Basic Food [COVID-19 Response]**

Due to the global COVID-19 pandemic, DSHS extended certification periods for households with Eligibility Reviews due in the months of April, May and June for six additional months, extending these certifications through October, November and December 2020. Mid-Certification Review requirements for April, May and June were also waived, and benefits continued through the end of certification periods as long as households continued to meet all other eligibility requirements. This applied to Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF); SFA, ABD Cash Assistance, HEN Referral; WFS; and all Food Assistance programs.

### **DCAP [COVID-19 Response]**

Effective April 17, 2020, DCAP eligibility was expanded to include Washington families and people without children impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic who met the income and resource limits and were not eligible for other cash programs. The program ended January 15, 2021.

### **TANF Time Limit Extensions [COVID-19 Response]**

Effective April 1, 2020, the criteria for TANF 60-month Time Limit Extensions were expanded to support families experiencing hardships related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

## March 2020

### **Emergency Allotment (EA) Food Supplements: [COVID-19 Response]**

Beginning in March 2020, DSHS issued monthly supplemental benefits to food assistance recipients on a month-to-month basis with federal approval during the federal and state public health emergency declaration. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Food Assistance Program for Legal Immigrants (FAP) households were issued the difference between their regular monthly benefit allotment and the maximum amount for their household size.

### **TANF WorkFirst Participation and Sanction Suspension [COVID-19 Response]**

Effective March 16, 2020, all WorkFirst participants were temporarily exempted from required participation. Clients could choose to continue participation voluntarily and, to the extent possible, case management continued, but participation was not required. WorkFirst sanction reduction or case closure penalties were also temporarily suspended.

### **Suspension of Home Visits for Teen Living Assessments [COVID-19 Response]**

Effective March 16, 2020, home visits were suspended for Teen Living Assessments. These assessments apply to all unmarried, minor parents applying for TANF cash assistance, to determine eligibility and offer support to the household.

### **Basic Food ABAWD Requirements Final Rule Injunction**

Effective March 16, 2020, a federal court injunction delayed implementation of USDA's final rule limiting states flexibilities in waiving ABAWD work requirements. The rule was

scheduled to take effect April 1, 2020. The court denied the request for a preliminary injunction related to the final rule's changes to discretionary exemptions. The final rule on discretionary exemptions was scheduled to take effect October 1, 2020.

**ABD and HEN Referral Program [COVID-19 Response]**

Effective March 18, 2020, DSHS suspended pursuing treatment verification and good cause for participation in medical treatment, participation in substance use assessment and treatment, and participation in vocational rehabilitation.

Effective March 26, 2020, DSHS postponed ABD disability reviews, modified HEN referral incapacity reviews, and expanded medical evidence rules for eligibility purposes.

Mental Incapacity Evaluation contracts were amended to allow for telephonic psychological evaluations.

**ABAWD Participation Good Cause [COVID-19 Response]**

Effective March 16, 2020, all mandatory ABAWDs in King County have good cause not to participate due to Stay Home Stay Healthy orders by the Governor. Clients have the option to continue participation to the extent possible. Staff members continue to provide ABAWDs with referrals to Navigators. Navigators continue to refer ABAWDs to appropriate employment and training opportunities, but participation is not required.

**July 2019**

**Changes to TANF-WorkFirst Permanent Disqualification Rules & Expansion of Time Limit Extension Criteria [State Change]**

Effective July 28, 2019, families were no longer permanently disqualified from TANF cash assistance due to three sanction case closures for noncompliance with required WorkFirst activities. Also, TANF time limit hardship criteria was expanded to families experiencing homelessness, including individuals living:

- a. Outside;
- b. In a building or a location not meant for human habitation;
- c. In a building or location which they have no legal right to occupy;
- d. In an emergency shelter; or
- e. In a temporary housing program, which may include transitional and supportive housing programs with a limited duration of stay.

**PWA Payment Standard Increase [State Change]**

Effective July 1, 2019, the payment standards for the PWA recipients increased to \$363 (paying shelter) and \$221 (supplied shelter). These increases are based on changes approved in the 2019-21 Operating Budget. This change is a step towards improved support for families and individuals who are experiencing financial hardship.

**Child Care Subsidy Programs [State Change]**

Effective July 1, 2019, service delivery for the Working Connections Child Care and Seasonal Child Care subsidy programs moved to the Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF).

**May 2019**

**Cash Assistance Overpayments [State Change]**

Effective May 1, 2019, CSD no longer established cash overpayments for dependent children. This change supports the dependent child's financial well-being. CSD will establish an overpayment when a non-needy caretaker

relative or guardian receives an overpayment on behalf of a dependent child. CSD will not use grant reductions to recover overpayments from non-needy caretaker relatives or guardians when the assessed overpayment was for a child who is not currently part of the assistance unit.

## February 2019

### **Asset Limit Increase [State Change]**

Effective February 1, 2019, resource limits for cash benefits increased. Increased resource limits allow applicants and recipients of cash benefits to save for emergencies and keep a reliable vehicle to get to and from appointments, school and work. The new limit for liquid resources increased from \$1,000 to \$6,000 and the new limit for vehicle equity increased from \$5,000 to \$10,000. This increase affected the following programs:

- a. TANF
- b. SFA
- c. ABD cash assistance
- d. HEN Referral program
- e. RCA, and
- f. PWA.

## August 2018

### **Foundational Community Supports**

Recipients of ABD and the HEN Referral program received referrals for Supported Employment and Supportive Housing benefits available for eligible clients through their Medicaid coverage.

## July 2018

### **TANF Grant Increase [State Change]**

Effective July 1, 2018, there was a 6.8 percent cash grant increase (in addition to the 2.5 percent increase in the 2017-19 enacted budget) for TANF, SFA, and RCA. The cumulative cash grant increase was 9.3 percent.

### **Child-Only TANF Means Testing Repeal [State Change]**

Effective July 1, 2018, for child-only TANF or SFA, the caregiver's income no longer counted in determining eligibility or benefit amount. This change applied to households where the cash assistance provided is only for the child or children in the home. This change applied to relatives other than the child's parents (like a grandparent, sibling, aunt or uncle) and caregivers who are not related to the child.

### **Domestic Violence Unit Transfers to CSD [Administrative Change]**

Effective July 1, 2018, the Domestic Violence (DV) Unit, including Victim Services and DV Perpetrator programs, transferred from DSHS Children's Administration to ESA/CSD. This change was a result of a DSHS reorganization following the move of Children's Administration to the newly created Department of Children, Youth and Families (HB 1661 2017 Legislative Session).

## June 2018

### **Staying Connected**

Effective June 1, 2018, recipients of CSD programs could access additional cell phone minutes if they were also customers of the federal Lifeline program through participating wireless carriers.

## March 2018

### **ABD/HEN Referral**

Effective March 13, 2018, recipients of the ABD program became eligible to receive a referral to the Commerce administered HEN program. Eligibility for the HEN Referral program was also expanded to include individuals who are primarily incapacitated due to a substance use disorder.

**Child Care**

Effective March 1, 2018, there were new household composition requirements for single parent households when status could not be verified through DSHS systems.

**Getting Connected**

Effective March 2018, Employment Security Department and Community Service Division (CSD) created marketing materials to inform CSD recipients of free cell phone and voicemail services.

**January 2018****Minimum Wage Increase**

Effective January 1, 2018, the Washington minimum wage increased to \$11.50 per hour statewide with some areas having local increases above that amount.

- a. Paid Employment – the minimum wage increase affected all wages and cash benefits paid to Community Jobs (CJ) participants.
- b. Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) – the minimum wage increase may result in a decrease in the number of hours clients are required to participate in unpaid Work Experience (WE).

**October 2017****WorkFirst**

Effective October 19, 2017, the infant exemption was expanded to include parents with a child under two years of age. This change allowed a parent to be exempt from mandatory WorkFirst activities for up to 24 months in a lifetime as long as there is a child in the home under two years of age. Parents were allowed to participate voluntarily in WorkFirst activities.

**August 2017****Child Care**

Starting August 1, 2017, licensed childcare programs that accept state childcare subsidies and serve children younger than school age must have completed training, verified the professional records of their staff, and completed self-assessments among other activities in Early Achievers, Washington's Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) for childcare.

**July 2017****Child Care**

Effective July 1, 2017, families experiencing homelessness were eligible for childcare subsidies for a four-month grace period to address homelessness. At the end of this period, the parents must be working or in another approved activity for childcare subsidy to continue. This new policy replaced the prior Department of Early Learning Homeless Child Care Program.

**Working Family Support**

Effective July 1, 2017 funding was approved through the biennium for Working Family Support program with a cap of 10,000 cases.

**WorkFirst Activity**

Effective July 23, 2017, allows for the expansion of vocational education as an approvable work activity from 12 months to 24 months.

**January 2017****Basic Food**

Beginning January 1, 2017, the Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDs) exemption was again expanded statewide, except for King County (not including Muckleshoot tribal land). Non-exempt ABAWDs

within King County, except for those residing on Muckleshoot tribal land, may only receive three months of Basic Food benefits within a 36-month period unless they:

- a) Worked at least 20 hours per week averaged monthly (80 hours/month);
- b) Completed at least 16 hours per month of unpaid volunteer work (called Workfare); or
- c) Participated in the BFET or Resources to Initiate Successful Employment (RISE) programs.

## October 2016

### Child Care

Effective October 1, 2016, when childcare applicants reapply for childcare and are above 200% FPL and below 220% FPL, they became eligible for a three-month grace period to transition to private pay childcare.

## July 2016

### Child Care

Effective July 1, 2016, childcare applicants no longer had to report most changes after being approved, creating a true 12-month eligibility period. Clients could continue to use childcare if they were no longer in an approved activity or if their income went above 200% FPL. If the household income went above 85% State Median Income (SMI), the client's childcare would be closed. Licensed Child Care Centers and FFN providers received a flat 2% increase. Licensed Child Care Family Homes received an increase that varies geographically and is based on the 75th percentile of the local childcare market rate.

## June 2016

### Basic Food /Cash

Effective June 16, 2016, an applicant or recipient was only considered a fleeing felon if a law enforcement official presents the agency with a warrant for Escape, Flight, or Escape – Flight. This change was made to comply with federal regulations.

## May 2016

### Working Family Support

Effective May 1, 2016, families that receive Basic Food, Food Assistance for Legal Immigrants (FAP), or Transitional Food Assistance (TFA), work at least 35 hours per week, and have a qualifying child within their Basic Food household, may be eligible to receive an additional \$10 monthly food benefit. Benefits are covered by state funds.

## February 2016

### CEAP Suspension

Beginning February 1, 2016, the Consolidated Emergency Assistance Program (CEAP) was suspended due to the exhaustion of state program funds.

## January 2016

### Basic Food

Beginning January 1, 2016, non-exempt Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDs) in King, Snohomish, and parts of Pierce counties only received three months of Basic Food benefits within a 36-month period unless they:

- a. Worked at least 20 hours per week averaged monthly (80 hours/month);
- b. Completed at least 16 hours per month of unpaid volunteer work (called Workfare); or
- c. Participated in the BFET or Resources to Initiate Successful Employment (RISE) programs.

The first-time benefits closed because of these updated ABAWD rules was March 31, 2016. Even if the Basic Food benefits ended, ABAWD individuals were able to requalify if the person became exempt or participated in an approved activity. Otherwise, they would not be able to qualify for Basic Food again until January 1, 2018 when the 36-month period reset.

## October 2015

### New Refugee Program

The Office of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance utilized federal resources to create the new “PRIME” Program or Promoting Refugee Integration, Mobility, and Empowerment. PRIME is administered across the state by 16 different providers that offer comprehensive case management services, self-sufficiency education workshops, immigration assistance helping refugees apply for lawful permanent residence (a.k.a. green cards), and other new programs – such as a program targeting persons granted asylum or asylees. This program replaced the former Refugee Resettlement Assistance Program.

## August 2015

### Basic Food/Cash

Effective July 2015, households receiving Basic Food or Cash assistance with self-employment income could choose the greater of:

- a. A standard 50% deduction from the gross self-employment income; or
- b. A deduction consisting of actual verified and allowable costs of producing self-employment income that is above the 50% standard.

This rule change eliminated the \$100 standard self-employment income deduction for the cost of doing business rules.

## July 2015

### Basic Food

Effective July 1, 2015, the Legislature increased benefits under state-funded FAP from 75% of the federal SNAP benefit level to 100% of the federal SNAP benefit level.

## May 2015

### Child Care

Effective May 15, 2015, verification and eligibility changes were made regarding Working Connections Child Care 110-hour rule, verification requirements, eligibility determinations, and changes associated with school breaks. The changes, based on ACLARA sub-group recommendations and policy clarifications from the Department of Early Learning (DEL), are intended to streamline the eligibility determination process, remove barriers for consumers, and simplify billing procedures for childcare providers.

### CEAP Reinstatement

Beginning May 7, 2015, funding for the Consolidated Emergency Assistance Program (CEAP) was available. The program had been suspended effective January 27, 2015.

### TANF Home Visiting Referral Pilot

In spring of 2015, the TANF Home Visiting Referral Pilot for WorkFirst families began in six Community Services Offices. This pilot program provided exempt pregnancy to employment pathway participants a referral to local Home Visiting Services.

## April 2015

### Child Care

Effective April 30, 2015, the Non-Standard Hours Bonus (NSHB) was suspended because funds were exhausted.

## January 2015

### Basic Food

Effective January 1, 2015, the Department provided a LIHEAP benefit of \$20.01 per year under the 'Heat and Eat' program to Basic Food households who do not receive the maximum food allotment and are not eligible for the Standard Utility Allowance based on paying heating costs.

### Minimum Wage Increase

Effective January 1, the Washington minimum wage increased to \$9.47 per hour.

- a. Paid Employment – the minimum wage increase affected all wages and cash benefits paid to Community Jobs (CJ) and Job Connection (JC) programs.
- b. Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) – the minimum wage increase may result in a decrease in hours of mandatory participation.

### CEAP Suspension

Beginning January 27, 2015, the Consolidated Emergency Assistance Program (CEAP) was suspended due to the exhaustion of state program funds.

### Child Care

Effective January 1, 2015, childcare providers received a base rate increase in their childcare subsidy rates of four percent.

### Refugee Cash Assistance

Effective January 1, 2015, refugee adults receiving RCA received a formal assessment and referral to the Limited English Proficient Pathway employment and English programs by Social Services Specialists through eJAS.

## November 2014

### WorkFirst

Effective November 1, 2014, the WorkFirst sanction rules were changed to re-engage WorkFirst participants sooner and to help them get full benefit from their 60 months of TANF assistance. There were now two types of sanction penalties: sanction reduction penalty and sanction termination penalty. If the parent attended the noncompliance case staffing and did not have good cause, the parent would be subject to the sanction reduction penalty for two months. If the parent was sanctioned for two months in a row, his/her TANF grant might close. If the parent did not attend the noncompliance case staffing or the home visit, the TANF case would be closed the first of the following month after 10-day notice.

### Basic Food

Effective November 1, 2014, all Basic Food households that did not receive WASHCAP had to pay heating or cooling separate from rent, or receive LIHEAP benefits of more than \$20 yearly, to qualify for the Standard Utility Allowance (SUA). The change was in response to the passage of the Agriculture Reform and Risk Management Act of 2014 (Farm Bill), limiting the option for states to use a \$1 or other minimal energy assistance payment to provide food assistance households the Standard Utility Allowance or SUA.

## July 2014

### ABD Disability Standards

Effective July 1, 2014, the ABD program reverted to the more restrictive disability standards, in accordance with the passage of Senate Bill 6573. The minimum duration requirement increased from nine to twelve months and consideration of an individual's

ability to perform past work extended from ten to fifteen years.

### **WorkFirst Comprehensive Evaluation (CE)**

Effective July 18, 2014, a new WorkFirst CE assisted case managers in completing a more thorough upfront evaluation when TANF was approved. The new CE was recommended as part of the 2010 WorkFirst Redesign Initiative.

### **Child Care**

Effective July 1, 2014, childcare providers received a base rate increase in their childcare subsidy rates of four percent.

## **June 2014**

### **WorkFirst Orientation**

Effective June 1, 2014, completion of a new WorkFirst (WF) Orientation is required as a condition of eligibility for all TANF and SFA applicants. The new orientation was implemented to ensure clients receive consistent information statewide about the WF program, including the services and supports available and activities that may be required for participation in the TANF/SFA program.

## **May 2014**

### **AREN Twelve-Month Limit**

Effective May 1, 2014, the Department reinstated the 12-month limit for the Additional Requirements for Emergent Needs (AREN) program and eliminated the \$750 lifetime limit.

### **Reporting Indigence Exemptions**

A new streamlined process for reporting indigence exemptions to sponsor deeming for legal immigrants was introduced, and except for SSI related medical (S02), the Department no longer reports indigence exemption for medical programs.

## **April 2014**

### **Categorical Eligibility for Basic Food Income Limit**

Effective April 1, 2014, the 200% of federal poverty level (FPL) standards used for categorical eligible households increased.

## **March 2014**

### **Reinstatement of Basic Food Standard Utility Allowances**

Effective March 10, 2014, the Department began using actual utility expenses to calculate the shelter expenses and final benefits for all new applicants

## **February 2014**

### **WorkFirst Housing Pathway Pilot-Phase 2**

Starting February 15, 2014, the WorkFirst Housing Pathway Pilot was expanded to Pacific, Wahkiakum, and Jefferson counties. In partnership with the Department of Commerce, this pilot focused on serving WorkFirst families who were currently homeless by obtaining housing, with the goal of moving families to self-sufficiency within six months.

## **January 2014**

### **Changes to the ABD, HEN, and Medical Care Services (MCS) Programs**

Substitute House Bill 2069 temporarily established less restrictive disability criteria for the ABD cash assistance program, created a new HEN referral program, and modified the eligibility for the state-funded MCS medical assistance program.

- a. ABD-Disability criteria reduced the minimum disability duration requirement from twelve to nine months, and reduced consideration of an individual's ability to

perform past work from fifteen to ten years.

- b. HEN Referral-this new referral program replaced MCS as the gateway to potential HEN eligibility.
- c. MCS-Maintained the state-funded MCS medical assistance program for ABD and HEN Referral recipients who are ineligible for Medicaid due to their immigration status.

#### **Affordable Care Act (ACA) Implementation**

Effective January 1, 2014, eligible ABD and HEN Referral recipients were transitioned from medical programs administered by DSHS to Washington Apple Health (WAH) Medicaid administered through the Health Benefit Exchange (HBE).

#### **CEAP Suspension**

State funding for Consolidated Emergency Assistance Program (CEAP) was exhausted. The program was suspended effective January 1, 2014 through June 30, 2014.

#### **Minimum Wage Increase**

Effective January 1 2014, the Washington minimum wage increased to \$9.32 per hour.

- a. Paid Employment – the minimum wage increase affected all wages and cash benefits paid to Community Jobs (CJ) and Job Connection (JC) programs. A client’s January income must be prospectively budgeted against January benefits.
- b. Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) – the minimum wage increase may result in a decrease in hours of mandatory WorkFirst participation.

### **December 2013**

#### **Child Care**

Effective December 1, 2013, parents who received Working Connections Child Care benefits and participated in 110 hours or more of approved work or work-related activities became eligible for full-time childcare services in accordance with the passage of Senate Bill 5595.

#### **State Supplemental Payment (SSP) Decrease**

Starting December 1, 2013, the Department reduced the State Supplemental Payment (SSP) for SSI recipients who are aged, blind, or have an ineligible spouse from \$46 to \$40 to stay within available funds.

### **November 2013**

#### **WorkFirst Housing Pathway Pilot-Phase 1**

Starting November 1, 2013, the WorkFirst Housing Pathway Pilot rolled out in the five “Ending Family Homelessness” pilot counties: Whatcom, Snohomish, Cowlitz, Mason, and Spokane. In partnership with the Department of Commerce, this pilot focused on serving WorkFirst families who are currently homeless by obtaining housing, with the goal of moving families to self-sufficiency within six months.

#### **Reductions to Basic Food, Washington Combined Application Project (WASHCAP), and FAP for Legal Immigrants Benefit**

Effective November 1, 2013, American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) supplements ended resulting in a decrease in SNAP benefit levels. FAP benefit levels based on Basic Food levels (75% of SNAP) also decreased.

### **October 2013**

#### **WorkFirst Support Services Instant Issuance Fuel Card**

Starting October 1, 2013, Bank of America (BOA) fuel cards could provide gasoline assistance for participants in the WorkFirst program. Fuel cards could be authorized for up to \$50 and would only work at gas pumps.

#### **Restoration of Community Works**

Effective October 18, 2013, the Department introduced the Community Works (WC) program as a new unpaid work experience program that was structured to provide WorkFirst participants structured unpaid work experience.

#### **Affordable Care Act (ACA) Implementation**

Starting in October 2013, the Department began transitioning eligible Family, Children, and Pregnancy Medicaid recipients from medical programs administered by DSHS to Washington Apple Health (WAH) Medicaid administered through the Health Benefit Exchange. The transition process continued through September 2014.

### **September 2013**

#### **Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) Second Program Violation**

As required by Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill ESSB 5921, the Department now requires a protective payee for a client after two program violations for using public assistance benefits at a prohibited location.

### **August 2013**

#### **Basic Food Elderly Interview Waiver**

Starting August 2013, elderly households (age 60+) without earnings were no longer required to have an interview for Basic Food Benefits if all necessary verification was provided or available through system interfaces, and no information was questionable.

### **July 2013**

#### **CEAP Reinstatement**

Funding became available for CEAP. Any applications for CEAP received on or after July 1, 2013 could be approved.

#### **Increased Benefit Level for FAP**

Effective July 1, 2013, the state budget changed the benefit calculation from 50% of the SNAP to 75% for the state-funded food benefits to legal immigrants.

### **May 2013**

#### **Voluntary Community Service (VS)**

An instructional memo and flyer were issued that encouraged the use of Voluntary Community Services as a core WorkFirst activity, including for parents with young children re-engaging in WorkFirst after the temporary suspension allowed under ESSB 5921 ended.

### **April 2013**

#### **LEP Pathway expansions/pilot projects (skills training & intensive ESL)**

The Office of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance (ORIA) implemented these expansions/pilots to focus on two of the most important skills newcomers need to integrate into their new communities: 1) teach job skills in specific industries, and 2) provide intensive ESL instruction to give newly arrived refugees and immigrants additional time to increase their English proficiency.

### **February 2013**

The Department removed individual dollar limits for each WorkFirst support service type while retaining the annual \$3,000 limit.

## January 2013

### Minimum Wage Increase

Effective January 1, 2013, the Washington minimum wage increased to \$9.19 per hour.

- a. Paid Employment – the minimum wage increase affected all wages and cash benefits paid to Community Jobs (CJ) and Job Connection (JC) programs. A client's January income must be prospectively budgeted against January benefits.
- b. Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) – the minimum wage increase may result in a decrease in hours of mandatory WorkFirst participation.

### CEAP Suspension

State funding for Consolidated Emergency Assistance Program (CEAP) was exhausted. The program was suspended effective January 1, 2013 through June 30, 2013

## August 2012

### EBT Fees

Starting August 1, 2012, public assistance recipients were no longer charged an \$0.85 fee by JP Morgan Chase when using their EBT card to make an ATM cash withdrawal.

### Pre-Paid Merchant Cards

Starting August 1, 2012, the use of an automated system (Card Minder) was implemented to track pre-paid merchant cards to assist in issuing Support Services. The pre-paid merchant cards did not eliminate the use of vouchers. Vouchers would continue to be used for support services exceeding \$50.00, or when pre-paid merchant cards were not an option.

The temporary automated system used to track pre-paid merchant cards is called "CardMinder." This system:

- a. Allowed the Department to track the cards from the time they arrive in ESA Fiscal to when they are issued to a client.
- b. Used a magnetic card reader similar to EBT.
- c. Had limited functionality because it was not able to track negotiables that did not have magnetic coding such as bus passes or tickets. The current purchase, issuance and tracking of transportation negotiables remained unchanged.

Is unable to attribute issuances to a specific client or subcategory in eJAS.

## July 2012

In accordance with the 2012 Supplemental Budget (3ESHB 2127), the following changes took effect:

- a. TANF Payment Standard – the maximum TANF cash grant was increased from \$726 to \$941 for families of six or more.
- b. FAP for Legal Immigrants – funding now
  - i. Provided at 50% of the benefit level for federal SNAP.
- c. Child Care Subsidy Program:
  - i. Eligibility increased from 175% to 200% FPL; and
  - ii. Certifications increased from 6-month to 12-month periods.
- d. WorkFirst Services – funding reduced by about \$821,000 (1.1%).
- e. Division of Child Support – funding provided for 16 additional FTEs in SFY 2013 (effective July 1, 2012) to increase the amount of child support collected and retained by the state.

- f. Department of Early Learning – funding of \$100,000 provided for a contract with an independent consultant to evaluate and recommend an optimum system for the childcare eligibility determination process, with a report due to the Office of Financial Management and Legislature by December

	Monthly Case Fee		
	Prior to July 1, 2012	Effective July 1, 2012	Difference
Food-only Cases	\$1.24	\$0.85	Savings of \$0.39 per case
Cash-only Cases	\$0.67	\$0.53	Savings of \$0.14 per case
Combined Food and Cash Cases	\$1.65	\$1.26	Savings of \$0.39 per case

31, 2012.

**WorkFirst Participation**

As required by ESSB 5921, the Department began re-engaging TANF parents with young children who chose a temporary suspension of WorkFirst participation requirements. ESSB 5921 required DSHS to begin phasing parents required to participate in WorkFirst back into work activity over the course of SFY 2013, starting with parents closest to reaching the 60-month TANF time limit.

**CEAP Reinstatement**

Funding was available for CEAP. Any applications for CEAP received on or after July 1, 2012 might be approved.

**EBT**

The Department negotiated changes to the EBT fee structure with JP Morgan Chase:

- a. Cost per case fee – JP Morgan Chase reduced the monthly fee charged to the state for each case that receives an EBT benefit deposit during a given month, called

the 'Cost per Case Month' fee. The fee varied, depending on the type(s) of benefits that was deposited in a person's EBT card account (food only, cash only, or combined food and cash benefits). The chart below compares the old and new monthly cost per case fees.

- b.
- c. Liquidated Damage fee – Washington's EBT contract included a 'Liquidated Damage' fee for an option that allowed the Department to assess charges against the EBT vendor for extended and unplanned EBT service outages that resulted in clients being unable to access their benefits. Because it was not cost-effective, the Department and JP Morgan Chase agreed to drop this option effective July 1, 2012.

**June 2012**

**Child Care Subsidy Program** – As required by SSB 6386 and HB 2828, the requirement that an applicant or recipient of childcare subsidies seek child support services through the Division of Child Support was eliminated.

**Early SSI Transition Pilot** – As required by SB 6223, the pilot was repealed. The pilot was started in August 2010 (as part of the Disability Lifeline program) and ended in December 2011.

**FAP for Legal Immigrants** – On June 10, 2012, the U.S. District Court formally dismissed the claims in Case No C11-119 MJP based on an earlier ruling by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. This action by the US District Court fully resolved the FAP lawsuit (see February 2011). Because the state budget changed, the Department no longer needed to eliminate FAP. The Department moved forward with implementing a change in FAP benefit levels. The SFY 2012 Supplemental Budget approved

by the Legislature funded FAP at only 50% of the benefit level for the federal SNAP, to be effective July 1, 2012.

**February 2012**

**AREN Lifetime Limit** – The Department implemented a \$750 lifetime limit for the AREN program. All AREN payments issued to any adult recipient since April 2001 would be counted against the lifetime limit. Exceptions were granted only when the household’s health and safety would be in imminent danger. All AREN payments were to be issued directly to a vendor.

**January 2012**

**CEAP Suspension** – The Department suspended the consolidated Emergency Assistance Program (CEAP) through June 30, 2012 due to exhaustion of state program funds. Staff manually denied all CEAP applications that were not processed or in pending status prior to January 1, 2012

FPL	Payment Standard
201% thru 225% of FPL	80% of payment standard
226% thru 250% of FPL	60% of payment standard
251% thru 275% of FPL	40% of payment standard
276% thru 300% of FPL	20% of payment standard

**December 2011**

A **pilot to eliminate issuance of EBT replacement cards in local offices** began in the Access Spokane offices for a six-month period. The majority of EBT replacement cards were to be issued by the vendor via mail, with limited and clearly defined emergency exception

criteria for local office issuance. If the pilot was successful, the EBT replacement card mailing protocol would be expanded statewide in July 2012.

The Department implemented a **permanent TANF/SFA disqualification** for clients who had three or more WorkFirst non-compliance sanction (NCS) terminations since March 1, 2007 when the NCS termination policy was implemented.

**November 2011**

In accordance with *Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill (ESSB) 5921*, the Department changed the rules for determining eligibility for a non-parental “child-only” TANF/SFA cash grant. The Department began means testing non-parental child-only grants by counting the income for all household members in addition to the recipient child’s income to determine eligibility.

- a. Means testing applied to kinship or legal guardian child-only cases.
- b. Households with income:
  - I. At or below 200% of FPL would receive a grant based on the payment standard for TANF/SFA families.
  - II. Between 200% and 300% of FPL would receive a grant based on reduced payment standards:
  - III. Over 300% FPL would no longer be eligible for a child-only cash grant.
- c. Required a Social Security number (SSN) for anyone in the household when needed to verify income.
- d. Children who had been placed by a state or tribal child welfare agency and had an open child welfare case would *not* be subject to means testing.
- e. The means testing assistance unit (household) would include the person applying on the

child's behalf, any dependents of the caregiver, and other persons who were financially responsible for the caregiver or the TANF child. For example, the caregiver/relative, caregiver's spouse, caregiver's children, and TANF/SFA recipient child(ren).

- f. There would be no resource test for non-parental child-only caretaker relative households.
  - i. Budgeting of the recipient child(ren)'s income and resources against the payment standard would remain the same but would occur only after the household means test had been applied.
  - ii. Means testing did not change medical, food and childcare eligibility.

In accordance with *Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill (ESSB) 5921*, the Department implemented a **60-month time limit** on TANF child-only cases in which the parent is in the home and is ineligible for TANF, with the same limited hardship extensions that apply to regular TANF cases.

In accordance with Engrossed Substitute House Bill 2082, the **Disability Lifeline (DL) program ended** effective November 1, 2011, pursuant to RCW 74.60.020. Three new programs were created under RCW 74.60.030 to serve the former DL population:

- a. The **ABD** program would provide cash assistance to persons who were age 65 or older, blind or likely to meet the disability standard for the federal SSI program. The maximum monthly grant would be \$197 for one person.
- b. The **PWA** program would provide cash assistance to individuals who are pregnant and not eligible for Washington's Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. The maximum monthly grant would be \$197 for one person.
- c. The **HEN** program, administered through the Department of Commerce, would provide essential needs items (e.g., bus passes, personal hygiene items, toiletries)

and housing supports (e.g. rent and utility assistance) to certain individuals who were unable to work for at least 90 days due to a physical or mental incapacity.

### October 2011

In accordance with *Engrossed Substitute House Bill 2082*, the **Disability Lifeline (DL) program** was eliminated effective October 31, 2011.

### September 2011

The Economic Services Administration (ESA) issued supplemental payments, ranging from \$27 to \$69 per month, to about 34,000 Disability Lifeline clients after discovering that the emergency rule had expired that allowed the DL grant reduction in April 2011. The emergency rule expired on July 12, 2011 and because the permanent rule had not been filed to continue the lower grant standard (\$197) beyond July 12, the Department was obligated to restore the DL grant standard to the higher amount (\$266) in effect prior to April 1.

### July 2011

The Washington State Legislature made seeking **child support enforcement services** from the Division of Child Support (DCS) a condition of eligibility for childcare subsidies, effective July 1, 2011, unless the applicant met one of the good cause reasons set forth in the Department of Early Learning rules. It was expected that child support would increase household income to the point that either co-payments were increased, or families were no longer eligible for subsidized care, using the savings realized to provide childcare subsidies for more families.

The Washington State Legislature adopted changes to the **Uniform Parentage Act** (Chapter 26.26.RCW), changing the focus of the act to the determination of parentage, as opposed to

the former emphasis on paternity. Although the changes in the law did not have a major impact on the administrative procedures of the Division of Child Support (DCS), the law made many changes that impacted judicial proceedings concerning parentage, which affected the prosecuting attorneys who represent DCS. Certain persons were now considered to have the legal status of parents regardless of gender or biological connection, based on their legal relationship at the time the child was born. A new presumption of parentage was established where an individual resides with a child for the first two years of the child's life and openly claims the child as his or her child. A minor parent who signed an acknowledgment or denial of paternity now had until the minor parent's 19th birthday to file an action in court to rescind the acknowledgment. The former two-year statute of limitations was increased to four years: a person may challenge an acknowledgment or bring a proceeding in court to adjudicate the parentage of a child having a presumed parent within four years of the child's birth; if the child was more than two years old when the action commenced, the child must now be made a party to the action.

**FNS** amended overpayment rules to remove the alien sponsor liability for food assistance overpayments incurred by aliens they sponsored. This change was the result of regulations filed on December 15, 2010.

The Washington State Legislature reset the state **FAP benefit** at half the amount of the federal SNAP benefit effective July 1 as a cost saving measure to help balance the state's budget. Prior to that, FAP households received the same amount of benefits as SNAP households.

### **Temporary Suspension of WorkFirst Participation**

Parents could choose to suspend participation for a WorkFirst parent, or caretaker, with a child under age two, or two or more children under age six. During the suspension period, parents would be encouraged to participate in WorkFirst activities, be placed in participation suspension upon request, and not be eligible for support services such as transportation and childcare unless volunteering to participate in WorkFirst activities. Notices regarding this change will be mailed by July 6, 2011 to WorkFirst participants that met the criteria.

### **Expanded WorkFirst Work Activities**

State law changed to expand allowable activities to include the following:

- a. WorkFirst "work activities" would include parent education services or programs that support development of parenting skills, life skills, and employment-related competencies; and
- b. Community Service activities were expanded to include volunteering at their child's licensed childcare, preschool, or elementary school.

**Department of Commerce** began two new programs:

- a. Job Connection Program – This program provided participants with opportunities to build references, develop networking connections, and demonstrate their work skills directly through employment by performing jobs within their chosen field.
- b. Career Development Program – This program provided a volunteer unpaid work activity to participants to support their engagement in an education pathway.

**Career Scope Pilots**

Career Scope was ESD's new approach to employment service delivery that focused on individualized services. Pilots began in July 2011 in Mount Vernon, Bellingham, North Seattle, Port Angeles, Bremerton, and Spokane.

**Diversion Cash Assistance (DCA) Changes**

DCA maximum payment amount increased from \$1,000 to \$1,250 in a twelve-month period.

**Consolidated Emergency Assistance Program (CEAP) Changes**

CEAP funding was made available for the next biennium. Staff could approve all applications received on or after July 1 if the household met the program eligibility.

**Child Care Changes**

The Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) policies were changed to reflect the following:

- a. Applicants were required to seek support enforcement services as a condition of WCCC eligibility unless they had good cause.
- b. Customer Service Center began processing seasonal childcare applications.
- c. Non-Standard Hours Bonus (NSHB) funding was reinstated due to the approval of state program funds for the new biennium.

**May 2011**

**The grant maximum for cash assistance** was reduced from \$941 to \$726 per month. The change reduced TANF, State Family Assistance, and Refugee Cash Assistance grants for most families with more than five household members. The change was necessary due to a budget shortfall and increased demand for services by families affected by the economic recession.

**Child support pass-through payments** to custodial parents receiving TANF were suspended May 1, 2011, as required under SSB 6893 that was passed by the Washington State Legislature in a special session held in December 2010.

**April 2011**

**The full Pregnancy-to-Employment assessment** for the other parent in a two-parent household was eliminated. A partial assessment was required after the child was born.

**Disability Lifeline grants** were reduced by 25%, from \$266 to \$197 for one person.

**March 2011**

In an effort to achieve cost savings and align participation requirements with the federal TANF standard, **WorkFirst participation requirements for single parents** with a child under age six were reduced from 32 to 20 hours per week. The 20 hours per week participation requirement had to be in a core activity. Parents were allowed to voluntarily participate full-time. Full-time activities included Community Jobs and Vocational Education.

**Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) changes:**

- a. **Waiting List** – With the exceptions noted below, families applying for WCCC with income at or below 175% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) would be placed on a waiting list. Program openings would be filled on a first-come, first-served basis. Families would be notified when there are openings in the program and would have ten days to begin the application process.

The following groups would receive **priority access** to WCCC and would not be included in the waiting list:

- I. All TANF families;
- II. Families with pending TANF due to curing a WorkFirst sanction; and
- III. Families with a verifiable special needs child.

- b. **Copayment Increase** – Copays for families with income above 82% of the FPL increased as follows:

Income level	Copayment	Change
At or below 82% of FPL	At or below 82% of FPL	No change
Above 82% up to 137.5% FPL	Above 82% up to 137.5% FPL	\$10 increase
Above 137.5% through 175% FPL	Above 137.5% through 175% FPL	\$10 increase plus an increase in multiplying from 44% to 50%

In response to a budget shortfall, the Department implemented **emergency rules to count federal Supplemental Security Income (SSI)** when determining TANF eligibility and benefit levels. The emergency rules were challenged in federal court. The plaintiffs' motion for a temporary restraining order was orally granted on February 28, 2011, and an order entered shortly thereafter. During the month of March 2011, the Department reinstated benefits for approximately 8,250 families affected by this change. Subsequent legislation in 2011 (ESSB 5921 Section 5) prohibited DSHS from including SSI income when determining TANF eligibility and benefit levels.

## February 2011

In December 2010, DSHS adopted a rule-making order to **eliminate the FAP** on February 1, 2011. FAP provided state-funded food assistance to approximately 13,700 individuals who resided in Washington legally, but did not meet the requirements for the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (Washington's Basic Food program) because of their immigration status. Roughly 68% of these individuals lived in "mixed" households, where some family members were eligible for and receiving federal food benefits. On January 20, 2011, legal services filed a lawsuit in federal court to stop DSHS from ending FAP. On January 27, 2011, the court granted legal services' motion for a temporary restraining order and required DSHS to continue providing FAP benefits. This motion was later followed by a preliminary injunction that barred DSHS from terminating or reducing FAP benefits. The Washington State Legislature passed Supplemental Budget ESHB 1086, which reduced FAP benefits to 50% of the benefit levels for the SNAP program. Benefit rule changes under this legislation were to be implemented April 1, 2011; however, the preliminary injunction also prevented implementation of this reduction. Currently, the preliminary injunction is on appeal before the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals.

**TANF time limit hardship extension** changes took effect. Revised hardship extensions were granted for parents or needy relative caregivers:

- a. Approved for WorkFirst exemption due to age, disability or because of a need to stay home to care for a disabled family member or required to apply for SSI; or

- b. Participating in a family violence service plan developed by someone trained in family violence; or
- c. With an open child welfare case with a state or tribal government and it is the first time any child in the home has been involved in dependency considerations or action; or
- d. Employed 32 hours or more per week; or
- e. Recipient needy relative caregivers over age 55.

In response to budget reductions, **TANF 15% grant reduction** took effect. This change also reduced payment standards for Refugee Cash Assistance, State Family Assistance, Consolidated Emergency Assistance Program, and the Maximum Earned Income and Grant Maximum payment standards.

#### **Temporary Suspension of Working Connections Child Care Field Trip Fee Reimbursement**

In response to budget reductions, licensed or certified childcare centers would no longer be able to bill for field trip fees. The change did not affect licensed or certified family home childcare providers.

### **January 2011**

#### **Disability Lifeline**

Effective January 1, 2011, ESA implemented a reduction of 21.4% to the average grant for Disability Lifeline clients (formerly General Assistance). About 41,000 clients, who were eligible for the program due to physical or psychological incapacities, were affected by the reduction. The reductions were needed to meet the Governor's mandate for 6.3% across the board spending cuts and to offset anticipated savings lost due to the *Elkins vs. Dreyfus* Temporary Restraining Order (TRO).

Disability Lifeline – the **Vocational Rehabilitation Assessment Tool** was implemented. When a determination was made that a person would be likely to benefit from vocational rehabilitation services, the individual was required to participate with DVR in order to remain eligible for the monthly stipend and housing voucher or cash grant. If the person refused to participate, the Department was required to terminate the cash stipend and housing voucher or cash grant but could not terminate medical coverage.

#### **DCA Reduction**

Effective January 1, 2011, the DCA maximum payment amount decreased from \$1,250 to \$1,000 in a 12-month period. This reduction was approved by the Legislature during the 2010 Special Session. The reduction was temporary and expected to end June 30, 2011, as it was not proposed to be carried over into the next biennium.

#### **Working Connections Child Care**

Changing the income limit for Working Connections Childcare (WCCC) to 175% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) began in October 2010 and was anticipated to be phased in over six months. Effective January 1, 2011, the new income limit was applied to all remaining households exceeding 175% of FPL.

#### **Tribal TANF Maintenance of Effort (MOE) Funding Reduction**

Effective January 1, 2011, state MOE funding for Tribal TANF programs was reduced by 6.3% in response to the Governor's Across-the-Board budget reduction directive.

#### **WorkFirst Funding for Children's Administration**

Effective January 1, 2011, WorkFirst funding used to support the delivery of child welfare services was reduced by 6.3% in response to the Governor's Across-the-Board budget reduction directive.

## December 2010

### Naturalization

The Department eliminated the Naturalization program, which was projected to serve approximately 4,200 clients in 2010. The program provided assistance, such as help paying fees and preparation for the Naturalization test, to individuals who received public assistance but had not yet attained citizenship. Although the Naturalization program included a proviso for a small portion of the funding, the majority of the program funding was provided by the State's General Fund.

### Refugee Services

The Department reduced contracts with community-based agencies that provide employment placement, English-as-a-Second Language (ESL) training, job skills training, job search workshops, and job retention services for refugees and legal immigrants with limited English proficiencies who receive TANF or Refugee Cash Assistance, and those who have resided in the United States for less than five years but do not receive assistance. The reductions were effective December 1, 2010 and limited services available to this population.

### TANF Two-Parent Participation Change

An additional participation option was added to allow both parents in a qualifying family to split the 35 hour per week requirement.

## October 2010

On August 12, 2010, the Governor announced the details of a plan to keep the WorkFirst budget in balance. Faced with a \$51 million shortfall, difficult decisions had to be made to ensure a balanced budget and protect the safety net for vulnerable families and children. The following changes became effective October 1, 2010:

### a. Eliminated Services –

- i. **Post TANF/SFA Services –** All support services and tuition assistance for clients who no longer received TANF or SFA were eliminated. Staff no longer provided clients with post-TANF support services or post-TANF tuition assistance once a client had exited the program.
- ii. **Sanction Review Panel –** The Sanction Review Panel (SRP) was eliminated.

### b. Suspended Services

The Career Services Program (CSP) administered by the Employment Security Department was suspended.

### c. Reduced Services

- i. **DCA –**The maximum DCA allotment was reduced to \$1,250 from \$1,500 in a 12-month period.
- ii. **Working Connections Childcare (WCCC) –** Income limit for (WCCC) was reduced to 175% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL). The new income limit was used to determine eligibility:

1. When the current authorization period ends for families with open WCCC cases.
  2. For new WCCC applications submitted on or after October 1, 2010.
- iii. **Reduced Partner Agency Funding and Expenditures**
1. DSHS staffing program support costs were reduced by 6%
  2. Education and training expenditures and funding to the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges were reduced by 10%
  3. Employment services expenditures and funding to Employment Security Department were reduced by 2.1%
  4. Funding for Supported Works programs operated by the Department of Commerce was reduced by 9.8%. This reduction eliminated the Supported Works programs once funding was exhausted in December 2010.
- d. **Participation Requirement Change – Two-Parent Participation** – Two-parent households were now able to coordinate their activities to meet WorkFirst participation requirements. The parents were required to engage in at least 35 hours per week of WorkFirst activities (30 hours core/5 hours of core or non-core). One parent in a qualifying two-parent household could opt out of participation as long as the participating parent was engaged in WorkFirst activities at least 35 hours per week. Effective December 1, an additional option was added to allow both parents in a qualifying family to split the 35 hour per week requirement.
- e. **AREN Change** – Rules for AREN did not change but were reinforced. In accordance with WAC 388-436-0002, prior to issuance of funds for utility assistance, a client was required to apply for local community resources and submit written verification from the community provider that utility assistance was not available.
- As of October 2010, AREN requests beyond \$500 and up to the \$750 program limit now required referral to a supervisor or designee for approval.
- Elkins v. Dreyfus* – **Disability Lifeline time limits were stopped.**
- a. A lawsuit was filed in August 2010 against the Department regarding the implementation of the time limits for the Disability Lifeline (DL) program. The plaintiffs sought an injunction to stop any termination of benefits and to reinstate October benefits for those terminated from the program. On October 13, 2010, a federal District Court judge issued a temporary restraining order, prohibiting the Department from terminating Disability Lifeline clients due to time limits and ordering the Department to reinstate benefits for persons previously terminated for time limits. The court found that plaintiffs were likely to succeed in their claims that they did not receive adequate notice of termination and that the Department’s disability review process did

not determine whether the plaintiffs met the SSI disability standard prior to termination, as required under the statute. It was determined that the Department did not have the resources to complete the full five-step sequential evaluation process for SSI disability for all clients subject to the time limits and was unable to implement the policy under the current statutory language. Therefore, the Department reinstated benefits for all affected clients and did not implement time limits before the disability lifeline program was eliminated in October 2011.

- b. The Department revised the estimated ratable reduction that was scheduled to take effect January 1, 2011. The revised reduction was increased from approximately 11.8% to grant payment standards for Disability Lifeline clients (formerly General Assistance) to 23.9% due to the effect of the Temporary Restraining Order. About 41,000 clients, who were eligible for the program due to a temporary incapacity, were affected by the reduction.

### September 2010

Governor Christine Gregoire announced that all state agencies had to **reduce their budgets** by 6.3%. ESA was required to achieve a reduction target of about \$36.6 million in General Fund-state savings between October 1, 2010 and June 30, 2011.

**Disability Lifeline** – time limits took effect. By September, case reviews had to occur for all clients who had been on assistance for at least 12-19 months. A client could be terminated, due to the time limits, unless the case had been reviewed to determine whether the client was likely to be eligible for SSI.

### July 2010

**CEAP eligibility was expanded** to include families who had been terminated due to a Non-Compliance Sanction and who were participating for 4 consecutive weeks before they could qualify for TANF/SFA.

**Disability Lifeline (DL) changes** mandated by E2SHB 2782 began July 6, 2010:

- a. Chemical dependency treatment became a condition of eligibility for all DL recipients who were assessed as chemically dependent;
- b. Training for chemical dependency treatment, vocational rehabilitation services and sanction policy became available;
- c. Case reviews were to be completed by July, 2010 when a client had been on assistance for at least 20 months; and
- d. Early SSI Transition Project began in King, Pierce and Spokane counties – the Department contracted with a managed health care system, Community Health Plan of Washington (CHPW), to operate a project intended to quickly transition Disability Lifeline recipients to Medicaid and SSI. Under the project, CHPW would:
  - I. (Starting August 1, 2010) help recipients identified as potentially disabled file and pursue applications for Supplemental Security Income (SSI).
  - II. (Starting November 1, 2010) schedule and perform incapacity evaluations when medical evidence was not already available.

**Non-Compliance Sanction Termination Policy** was changed so that families were terminated after four consecutive months of sanction. Prior

policy was to terminate after six months of sanction. In addition:

- a. Parents who were terminated for non-compliance sanction were required to comply with program requirements for four consecutive weeks before they could receive a TANF grant, regardless of the length of time between termination and reapplication.
- b. All parents who exited TANF while they were in sanction status were required to come back in sanction when they reapplied, regardless of the length of time they had been off TANF.
- c. The process was streamlined by eliminating one case staffing, giving parents one comprehensive case staffing before sanction occurred. Effective October 1, 2010 the panel that reviewed cases prior to termination was eliminated.

**Career Services Program (CSP)** eligibility changes took effect. In response to budget reductions, CSP no longer enrolled Basic Food Assistance parents. Basic Food Assistance parents that had enrolled in CSP prior to July 1, 2010 continued to receive services and assistance for the duration of their six months of enrollment as long as they maintained their program eligibility.

Effective July 1, 2010, DCS adopted rules to provide that collections from federal tax refund offset were to be applied only to support arrears, and first to arrears assigned to the state; this rule change was based on budgetary needs.

### May 2010

The following **Disability Lifeline medical evidence rule changes** took effect:

Diagnoses of impairments based on examinations performed within 12 months of the application were now accepted.

Rules clarified that the Department could use only diagnoses of impairments that were independent of addiction or chemical dependency, defined as “expected to persist after 90 days of abstinence,” to determine incapacity.

A medical evidence request letter for physical impairments (Form 14-150) was revised to support these changes.

### April 2010

The **WorkFirst procedures for approving deferrals and exemptions** for WorkFirst parents who were needed in the home to care for children and adult relatives with physical, mental or emotional disorders were changed:

- a. The changes limited Children with Special Needs Public Health Nurse evaluations to an initial evaluation unless a supervisor approved a follow-up evaluation.
- b. Two Public Health Nurse Evaluation forms were condensed and consolidated into a new DSHS 10-255, Special Needs Evaluation and Engagement Recommendations form. The revised form focused on the child’s care requirements, the parent’s ability to participate, and how long the parent was expected to be needed in the home to care for the child.
- c. The changes eliminated the case staffing and set new criteria for approving disability-related exemptions.

### March 2010

Effective March 29, 2010, the Washington State Legislature enacted E2SHB 2782, which

eliminated the General Assistance (GA) program and created the **Disability Lifeline (DL)** program. Major characteristics of the new DL program were:

- a. Time limits of 24 months out of 60 months, effective September 1, 2010 through June 13, 2013;
- b. Participation in chemical dependency treatment or vocational rehabilitation services as conditions of eligibility;
- c. Creation of a housing voucher program administered by the Department of Commerce;
- d. Development and use of a new assessment tool to determine whether Division of Vocational Rehabilitation programs could assist Disability Lifeline recipients in returning to work;
- e. The Department is required, during the application process, to ask if the applicant had ever served in the U.S. military. If yes, the Department must confer with the state or federal Department of Veterans Affairs or contracted veteran's affairs service officer to determine whether the applicant might be eligible for any benefits or programs offered to veterans; and
- f. The Department is required to contract with a managed health care system or other qualified entity to operate a project aimed at quickly transitioning individuals with a disability who are likely to qualify for federal disability benefits into the Disability Lifeline Expedited Program, extending what was previously known as the GA-X program. The pilot began in King, Pierce and Spokane counties July 1, 2010 with a mandate to expand statewide by October 1, 2011.

## November 2009

Most GA-U recipients began access to Medical Care Services (MCS) benefits through Community Health Plan of Washington (CHPW). CHPW provided medical benefits to GA-U recipients in King and Pierce Counties beginning January 2005 through a managed care pilot project. A mental health component was added to the pilot in December 2007.

## October 2009

**Income rules** for employed General Assistance recipients changed to a 50% earned income disregard.

**A new Washington State Child Support Schedule** was implemented. Changes included:

- a. The presumptive minimum child support order increased to \$50 per month per child;
- b. The need standard was replaced by a "self-support reserve" set at 125% of the federal poverty level;
- c. The schedule was now presumptive from the \$1,000 to \$12,000 income levels;
- d. Income from second jobs was excluded from the gross income calculation;
- e. New rules were created for imputing income.

Based on requirements in the federal regulations, Child Support orders entered in Washington State were now required to have language requiring medical support from both parents and allowing for a collection of a medical premium share against one or both parents when that parent did not provide insurance. If the obligated parent did not provide health insurance for the child and the order contained a provision for allowing collection of the medical premium share, that share could be collected upon request. Each

parent was responsible for a proportionate share of uninsured medical costs. Upon proof of expense, DCS would enforce uninsured medical costs.

Annual federally required standards were updated for Basic Food and WASHCAP.

## September 2009

**WorkFirst participation requirements for dependent teens** were eliminated.

**Standardized WorkFirst policies and procedures** were established to help parents with physical, mental and emotional conditions become employable, and for those with severe and chronic health conditions, to access federal disability benefits.

## July 2009

**General Assistance (GA) program changes** were implemented as required by the 2009-2010 Operating Budget, including:

- a. Working with the Department of Veteran Affairs to establish a referral process to facilitate applications for veteran's services.
- b. Implementing a plan to evaluate General Assistance Unemployable (GA-U) cases that had been on assistance for over 12 months to determine if the available medical and incapacity related evidence indicated the recipient should remain on GA-U or be referred to General Assistance Expedited Medicaid (GA-X).
- c. Referring appropriate GA recipients to Naturalization Services.
- d. Referring appropriate GA recipients to Workforce Development Councils in King, Pierce, Snohomish and Spokane Counties for worker retraining or development services.

## April 2009

**Suspended support services** for parents enrolled in Career Services due to Diversion Cash Assistance.

**The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009** (ARRA) provided a 13.6 percent increase in the maximum SNAP benefits (Basic Food). This equated to a \$24 increase for a one-person household.

## February 2009

**The Career Services program was expanded** to include Non-Assistance Food Stamps (NAFS) parents who were working 30 hours per week.

**Under the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), \$1 payments were provided** to all households receiving Basic Food benefits. This joint effort between DSHS and the Department of Commerce leveraged federal LIHEAP funds to confer the highest utility deduction for Basic Food available, resulting in increased benefits for many households. The payment also reduced administrative effort related to verifying household utility costs. Washington's issuance of federal SNAP benefits increased by approximately \$3.6 million monthly or \$43.4 million on an annual basis as a result of this initiative.

## October 2008

Effective October 1, 2008 the **Gross Income Standard for the Basic Food Program** (BFP) was raised from 130% to 200% of the Federal Poverty Level for Categorically Eligible (CE) households (under BFP rules, most households are CE). An extensive marketing and outreach campaign was implemented to inform potentially eligible households of the new rules.

An additional 23,300 households were expected to qualify for BFP as a result of this change.

The Division of Child Support (DCS) began paying **pass-through payments** to TANF recipients beginning October 1, 2008. Recipients received up to \$100 a month of support collected for one child, and up to \$200 a month of support collected for two or more children. The pass-through payment did not affect TANF grants.

Effective October 1, 2008 the **final federal regulations for the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005** went into effect.

- a. The Division of Child Support (DCS) now applied Funds intercepted from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) to current support.
- b. The types of WorkFirst activities that counted towards participation were expanded, the methodology for counting job search and excused absences towards participation were changed, and some of the participation documentation requirements were relaxed.

Effective October 1, 2008, provisions of the 2008 Farm Bill went into effect. These provisions included an increase in the standard income deduction, an increase in the minimum benefit for one and two-person households, and removal of the cap on the dependent care expense deduction.

### August 2008

Effective August 1, 2008, ESA implemented **policy changes to promote family reunification and support temporary placement of children with relatives**. The primary changes included:

- a. Extending eligibility for TANF cash and medical benefits from 90 to 180 days when a child is temporarily absent and is expected to return to the home within 180 days.
- b. Providing **concurrent TANF benefits** for the child for up to 180 days to both the parent and another adult caregiver with whom the Division of Children and Family Services has placed the TANF child.
- c. Allowing a child who is temporarily out of the home due to hospitalization to be added to the TANF grant.

### July 2008

Effective July 1, 2008, the TANF, SFA, CEAP and RCA payment standards were increased by three percent.

### February 2008

On February 12, 2008, the Division of Assistance Programs' restructuring of headquarters staff was completed. The division was renamed the Community Services Division.

### December 2007

Local Community Services Offices began referring parents in long-term WorkFirst sanction or who lost TANF benefits due to non-compliance sanction to **Pathway-to-Engagement** contractors. These contractors helped parents re-engage with the WorkFirst program or develop exit plans for supporting themselves without a monthly cash grant. Pathway-to-Engagement services were mandated and funded under a proviso in the 2007-09 Biennial Operating Budget.

On December 10, 2007, ESA began implementing the **federal Disaster Food Stamp Program (DFSP)** in Grays Harbor and Lewis counties to provide emergency food benefits

for storm and flood victims. Under the DFSP, the USDA Food and Nutrition Service allowed states to waive regular Food Stamp Program eligibility rules for persons in federally declared disaster areas. On December 18, 2007, the DFSP was expanded to Thurston, Mason and Pacific counties. On December 21, 2007, the program was expanded to Clallam and Kitsap counties. By January 7, 2007, over \$5.2 million in DFSP benefits had been issued to over 16,000 households. In addition, regular Basic Food Program (BFP) recipients were authorized replacement issuances for food lost during the disaster.

### July 2007

Effective July 1, 2007 ESA and the Employment Security Department implemented a **new WorkFirst Career Services program** to provide services to families who left TANF and who were employed at least 30 hours per week. The program was administered primarily by ESD and provided cash payments and employment services for up to six months for eligible parents who chose to enroll. The Career Services program was a post-TANF work transition program funded under the WorkFirst program budget.

Effective July 1, 2007, ESA, the WorkFirst Partner agencies, and WorkFirst contractors began implementing **procedures for verifying actual hours of client participation** in activities that were used to determine the federal TANF participation rate. These included job search and job readiness activities, community service and work experience, and some education and training activities. Verification of actual hours of participation in these activities was required under the federal Deficit Reduction Act of 2005.

Effective July 22, 2007, ESA began implementing Second Substitute Senate Bill (2SSB) 6016, which changed the **WorkFirst infant exemption** by allowing parents to be exempt from participation for up to 12 months in the parent's lifetime.

Effective October 1, 2007, the **federal Deficit Reduction Act of 2005** required state child support agencies to charge a \$25 annual fee on each case when:

- a. The custodian had never received Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Tribal TANF or Aid to Dependent Families (AFDC) funds as a custodian of minor children, and
- b. The support agency had paid \$500 in collections to the custodian on the case during the federal fiscal year (October through September).

### April 2007

On April 16, 2007, two divisions in the DSHS Economic Services Administration – the Community Services Division and the Division of Employment and Assistance Programs – **began merging into a single division** – the newly defined **Community Services Division**. This merger brought public assistance policy development, program management, service delivery and field operations in regional offices and Community Services Offices (CSO) all together under a single “roof.”

### July 2006

**The Department of Early Learning (DEL)** came into existence July 1, 2006 as a result of Second Substitute House Bill (2SSB) 2964. This legislation was requested by Governor Christine Gregoire and was passed by the 2006 Washington State Legislature. The Department

was formerly known as the Division of Child Care and Early Learning (DCCEL) and was housed within the Economic Services Administration. The newly formed department included other programs, such as the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program, also known as ECEAP, which was once part of the Department of Community Trade and Economic Development (CTED), as well as the Early Reading Initiative, formerly part of the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI).

### June 2006

WorkFirst parents began going through a **new Comprehensive Evaluation (CE) process** (see WorkFirst changes outlined in December 2005 below). The Comprehensive Evaluation was a multi-part evaluation conducted by WorkFirst partner agencies to identify a parent's strengths, participation options and best pathway to employment. Primary objectives of the Comprehensive Evaluation included:

- a. Increased parent involvement in developing their plan for participation, resulting in more parent buy-in and better results;
- b. Better information about parents' skills and abilities and quicker placement in an employment pathway;
- c. More objective case management decision making based on clearer program criteria; and
- d. More consistency in how the WorkFirst program operates across the state through stronger program standards.

**WAC changes for the new Non-Compliance Sanction for WorkFirst** were filed on June 1, 2006 with a September 2006 effective date (see WorkFirst changes outlined in December 2005

below). Under the new sanction policy, a family would lose its WorkFirst cash grant after six months of sanction for refusal to participate in WorkFirst activities. The six-month count for families in sanction status began September 1, 2006.

**Sanctioned WorkFirst** parents were no longer automatically assigned protective payees. Protective payees continued to be available for teen parents and to help those families who had difficulty managing their cash grants.

**Child Safety Net Payments** for parents who had been on WorkFirst over 60 months and were not in compliance with WorkFirst work requirements were no longer issued to a protective payee but issued directly to the family.

In accordance with the federal Deficit Reduction Act of 2005, federal rules requiring states to begin **verifying citizenship** for those receiving Medicaid went into effect.

### May 2006

**Education and training changes** for WorkFirst went into effect in May 2006 (see WorkFirst changes outlined in December 2005 below). These changes allowed more parents to engage in full-time education/training and to combine more types of activities with education/training.

### April 2006

**Utility standards** for the Basic Food Program and the WASHCAP changed in April 2006 to partially offset the increase in energy costs.

**Positive prevention strategies** for WorkFirst went into effect in April 2006 (see WorkFirst changes outlined in December 2005 below). WorkFirst parents and applicants were

informed about alternatives to WorkFirst cash assistance and linked to other services that can meet their needs, including:

- a. Child Support;
- b. Basic Food;
- c. Medical Assistance;
- d. Unemployment Benefits;
- e. Child Care assistance; and
- f. Diversion Cash Assistance.

### March 2006

The Washington State Legislature passed Substitute House Bill (SHB) 2394, which required the Department of Social and Health Services to start **assessing WorkFirst parents for financial literacy** during the comprehensive evaluation effective January 1, 2007. The legislation directed DSHS to offer referrals to financial literacy services available in the local communities to all WorkFirst parents to help them become self-sufficient and financially stable.

### February 2006

On February 8, 2006, President Bush signed into law S. 1932, **the federal Deficit Reduction Act (DRA)** of 2005 that reauthorized the TANF program for an additional five years. The DRA contained significant changes that would impact the state's TANF program, WorkFirst, and child support enforcement. Interim final federal regulations for TANF were issued in July 2006 with an October 1, 2006 effective date.

Changes to TANF and child support included:

- a. A requirement that the federal Administration for Children and Families define work activities for TANF.
- b. Redefinition of which adults were required to participate in WorkFirst activities.
- c. Recalibration of the TANF caseload reduction credit, replacing the FFY 1995 base year with a base year of FFY 2005.
- d. Establishment of the TANF work verification requirements for states, under which states could now lose up to five percent of the TANF federal block grant for failure to comply.
- e. Disallowance of states from using federal child support performance incentive funds to draw down federal matching funds, effective October 1, 2007.
- f. A requirement for states to charge families that had never received TANF-funded assistance an annual fee of \$25 if the state collected at least \$500 in support.
- g. A requirement for states to pursue medical insurance from custodial parents in appropriate cases where the insurance was not provided by the non-custodial parent, and to recover unpaid co-pays, deductibles and medical costs.
- h. Changes gave states the option to pass through to TANF families up to \$100 per month in child support for one child and up to \$200 per month in child support for two or more children, and to disregard that assistance to the family as income for TANF. States could choose to make this change effective October 1, 2008.
- i. Limits on the amount of child support that TANF recipients must assign to the state. Effective October 1, 2009 or one year earlier (at state option), the allowable assignment would be limited to the amount of child support due to the custodial parent for each month that TANF was received by the family (limited to the total amount of

TANF expended). Past due (unpaid) child support would no longer be assigned to the state

### January 2006

A court order from the **WASHCAP lawsuit** (*Chamberlain v. DSHS*) was implemented. Approximately 41,500 low-income aged, blind, and disabled residents who participated in WASHCAP were to share \$2.7 million in food benefits to comply with the Thurston County Superior Court ruling.

In accordance with Engrossed Second Substitute House Bill (E2SHB) 1290 (passed by the 2005 Legislature), new **expedited medical determinations procedures** were phased into selected areas of the state to help jail and prison inmates and psychiatric hospital patients with serious disorders get immediate access to Medicaid and other medical assistance programs upon their release from confinement. The following Community Services Offices (CSOs) worked in partnership with local jails, prisons, institutions and Regional Support Networks to do speedy medical eligibility determinations: Spokane Southwest CSO; Spokane Central CSO; Yakima CSO; Kennewick CSO; Sky Valley CSO; Everett CSO; Mt. Vernon CSO; Bellingham CSO; Oak Harbor CSO; Belltown CSO; Bremerton CSO; Pierce North CSO; Olympia CSO; and Columbia River CSO.

### December 2005

Governor Gregoire's **WorkFirst Re-Examination Workgroup**, established to make recommendations to improve the WorkFirst program and achieve financial sustainability, presented its final recommendations, which were endorsed by the Governor. The Governor

issued the following program and policy directives:

- a. Increase the use of positive prevention strategies to determine whether services other than WorkFirst cash assistance will meet the need of parents. Examples of these services included child support, medical, Basic Food, and Diversion Cash Assistance. The Department was directed to complete an upfront screening of all new and returning WorkFirst applicants and to help parents access alternative supports. This change was implemented in **April 2006**.
- b. Expand education and training opportunities to allow more parents to engage in full-time education/training. This change was implemented in **May 2006**.
- c. Complete a cross-partner agency evaluation of all WorkFirst parents to identify strengths, participation options, and best pathway to employment. This process was called the Comprehensive Evaluation (CE) and was implemented in **June 2006**.
- d. Implement a non-compliance sanction policy that would end WorkFirst cash assistance for families refusing to participate in program activities for six consecutive months. The six-month count for families in sanction status began **September 1, 2006**.

### November 2005

Families receiving Basic Food at the time they transitioned off of WorkFirst and Tribal TANF to self-sufficiency were automatically eligible for TFA, which was five months of Basic Food benefits after the TANF cash grant ends. TFA was not available to the following families: (1) families in which someone was in sanction (for not complying with work requirements or child

support collection requirements), and (2) families whose TANF cash grant ended because the family moved out of state. During the five-month TFA period:

- a. The family would not have to report any changes in their household;
- b. The TFA benefit would be based on the family's circumstances in the last month they were on WorkFirst but would be adjusted to exclude the TANF grant; and
- c. The benefit level was frozen for the five-month period.

**Childcare subsidy rates** for licensed providers were raised 6.47%.

### October 2005

**Annual updates to WASHCAP standards and Basic Food income standards**, maximum benefit amounts, standard deduction, and maximum shelter standard went into effect.

### September 2005

**Felons with drug convictions** could now receive TANF. Engrossed Second Substitute Senate Bill (E2SSB) 5213 (Chapter 714, Laws of 2005) exercised the state option to exempt individuals convicted of a drug-related felony from the TANF ban on the receipt of benefits.

### July 2005

**WPLEX (Washington Post-Employment Labor Exchange)** was eliminated after WorkFirst budget reductions mandated changes to client services that were provided by ESD.

**New EBT (Electronic Benefit Transfer) features** allowed clients to see their account information online 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Using their EBT card and Personal Identification Number (PIN), clients could now:

- a. see current EBT cash/food balances;
- b. see 180 days of EBT transactions;
- c. download an online statement of transactions to their PC;
- d. change their PIN in "real time"; and
- e. send and receive messages to/from EBT customer services representatives.

### June 2005

EJAS system was modified to **record actual hours of work participation** replacing the time-block model in use.

### March 2005

**Columbia Legal Services (CLS)** was verbally upheld in the WASHCAP lawsuit. Emergency rule filing was rendered void by Superior Court and the Department was directed to restore benefits to a WASHCAP class of recipients for the period of January 1, 2005 through March 22, 2005.

### February 2005

DSHS was sued by **Columbia Legal Services (CLS)** over a WASHCAP emergency rule filing. CLS asserted that the Department did not have sufficient justification to file an emergency rule change.

### January 2005

**WASHCAP rules** were amended by emergency adoption to maintain cost-neutrality as required by FNS. Changes were:

- a. The benefit calculation used the limited utility allowance (LUA) instead of the standard utility allowance (SUA).
- b. The opt-out rule was changed to allow people to opt-out of the program based on their shelter expenses or if they made the request prior to January 1, 2005. The

provision to opt-out when Basic Food benefits would be greater than WASHCAP benefits was removed.

### October 2004

**Annual updates** to Basic Food income standards, maximum benefit amounts, standard deduction, and maximum shelter standard went into effect.

**Simplified reporting changes** went into effect for cash, medical and Basic Food. Senate Bill (SB) 6411 (Chapter 54, Laws of 2004) required the Department to implement simplified reporting for the Basic Food program beginning October 2004.

### July 2004

**New maximum childcare subsidy rates** for Spokane County went into effect until July, 2005.

**Basic Food eligibility restrictions for persons convicted of a drug-related felony** were removed as mandated by Senate Bill (SB) 6411 (Chapter 24, Laws of 2004). The fleeing felons provisions still applied to Basic Food.

### May 2004

**Categorical Eligibility (CE)** was expanded to eliminate resource requirements for most Basic Food applicants and recipients. Changes in federal regulations now allowed states to use non-cash services paid for with Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds to make people categorically eligible for Basic Food. Assistance Units (AU) that were categorically eligible for Basic Food did not have to meet the resource or net income requirement for Basic Food.

- a. Households that currently had CE status would not be affected by the change. Most AUs who met any of the following criteria were categorically eligible:
  - i. An AU where all persons received General Assistance (GA), Alcoholism and Drug Addiction Treatment and Support Act (ADATSA), or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits;
  - ii. An AU where any person received TANF, State Family Assistance, or Diversion Cash Assistance; or
  - iii. AUs that met the gross income limit for Basic Food.
- b. Circumstances when a household that met CE criteria could not be categorically eligible for Basic Food included situations such as:
  - i. The head of household of the Basic Food AU failed to meet work requirements;
  - ii. Anyone in the AU was disqualified for an Intentional Program Violation (IPV); or
  - iii. Anyone in the AU was a disqualified drug-felon (*through 6/30/04*).
- c. Households that met the new CE requirements did not have to meet the resource or net income limits for Basic Food. However, CE households still had to meet other Basic Food eligibility requirements.
- d. A person who was ineligible for Basic Food for a reason other than income or resources would not be made eligible due to the AU's CE status. An example of this is an ineligible fleeing felon.

**Changes to sanction policies** went into effect. The graduated three-level process was replaced by a single process. When a WorkFirst recipient refused to engage in work and work-related activities, a penalty equal to the greater of either 40% or the non-compliant person's pro-rata share was to be deducted from the grant and the grant was sent to a protective payee until the sanction was lifted.

**Revised WACs for WCCC** were filed.

### April 2004

**AREN payment policy** was revised to allow multiple payments within a 12-month period but was capped at a total of \$750. Exception to rules were still granted at state-office level and had to be related to health and safety.

**New background checks** were not needed for WCCC when the results were less than 90 days old and the Background Check Central Unit's letter stated "No Record."

### January 2004

**Changes to WorkFirst Post-60-Month policies** took effect:

- a. **"Playing by the Rules"** was changed to "Full-Time Participation." After 60 months, participation consisted of working or preparing for work full-time (including Community Jobs, pre-approved educational/training activities, or a combination of work-related activities); barrier removal activities would be approved only in addition to full-time preparation if the client was considered to be "playing by the rules."
- b. **Temporary Hardship Exemption** – Clients who reached 60 months on TANF and beyond who were unable to participate in full-time work-related activities could meet the criteria for a TANF Hardship Extension and possibly be exempt from participation. The criteria for a hardship extension approval were based on verification of the issue, severity, duration, and impact on the client's ability to function in the workplace.
- c. **Changes to Child Safety Net (CSN)** – Clients now had the opportunity to return to full-time participation and full grant status but had to fully participate for 12 weeks before the CSN status could be lifted.

**Need Standards for Cash Assistance** were updated to reflect annual cost-of-living adjustments.

### December 2003

**Changes to Basic Food eligibility requirements** for strikers and those attending institutions of higher education at least half-time went into effect:

- a. **Striker eligibility** – the definition of strike now included expiration of a collective bargaining agreement, and eligibility was determined using the greater of the striker's income before the strike or the striker's current income.
- b. **Student eligibility** – for students attending an institute of higher education, employment for 20 hours a week must be *paid employment*; self-employed students could be eligible if they worked at least 20 hours a week and earned at least as much as they would earn working 20 hours a week at the federal minimum wage; students had to be responsible for *more than half* of a dependent's care; and a student was eligible for Basic Food based entirely on work study only while they were

working and receiving money through the work study program.

### November 2003

**Changes to client reporting requirements, verification, and interview requirements** for the Basic Food program went into effect:

- a. **Change Reporting/Income Budgeting** – the threshold for reporting changes in unearned income increased from \$25 to \$50; job changes only needed to be reported if there was a change in income; and changes in income that were expected to last at least 1 month beyond the date reported required an adjustment to the AU income estimate.
- b. **Verification** – clients no longer needed to verify income when the change was \$50 or less; medical expenses if they changed by \$25 or less; and unchanged child support paid to someone outside the AU.
- c. **Interview Requirements** – clients could have a telephone interview if they had trouble attending an in-office interview; interviews were required at initial application and every 12 months; and staff could use a desk review if the AU had an interview within the last 12 months.

SSI recipients who are blind or age 65 and older began receiving **State Supplemental Payments (SSP)**. These two groups of SSI recipients increased the number receiving the ESA SSP to about 30,000.

### October 2003

Annual updates to **Basic Food income standards, maximum benefit amounts, standard deduction, and maximum shelter standards** went into effect.

### September 2003

ESSB 2252 **changed the burden of proof from the Department to the recipient** for continuing GA benefits based on incapacity.

### August 2003

The client monthly co-pay for **Washington Telephone Assistance Program participation** increased from \$4 to \$8.

### July 2003

**Post-employment services** for post-TANF families were reduced from 24 months to 12 months.

**Support services** changed:

- a. Services for post-TANF families were reduced from 12 months to 6 months;
- b. Car repairs were reduced from \$500 to \$250 per year;
- c. Clothing payments were reduced from \$200 to \$75 per year;
- d. Liability insurance was no longer available except via Exception To Rule; and
- e. ESD no longer authorized support services for relocation, diapers, or personal hygiene (this authorization was only made by DSHS and OTED).

**Employment supports paid for by GA program funds**, known as the WorkPlus program, were discontinued. This use of program funds was authorized by the Legislature in July 2001.

**Community Service Voice Mail (CSVM)**, a component of WTAP, became effective. DSHS began the development of an agreement with the Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development to provide a portion of the WTAP budget for operation of CSVM to

provide homeless individuals with a community service voice mail box.

### June 2003

**Washington Telephone Assistance Program rate changes** went into effect limiting the amount a telephone company could be reimbursed out of the WTAP fund for monthly services to a maximum of \$19.

Completed background checks were required for in-home and relative providers prior to the start date of childcare subsidy payments, ending the practice of backdating benefits to the date the original request was received upon approval through the background check process.

### May 2003

Substitute House Bill (SHB) 1624 was signed into law on May 7, 2003, permanently authorizing the **Washington Telephone Assistance Program (WTAP)**, which was scheduled to expire on June 30, 2003. In addition to permanently authorizing the WTAP program, effective July 1, 2003, the program was expanded to include Community Service Voice Mail (CSVM) as a component. DSHS was directed to enter into an agreement with the Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development to provide a portion of the WTAP budget for operation of CSVM, which would provide homeless individuals with a community service voice mail box.

**AREN payments based on Exception to Rule (ETR)** were reinstated on a limited basis and had to be approved at the State-office level. Only those relating to health and safety were granted.

### April 2003

**The Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002**, P.L. 107-171, restored federal food stamp benefits to certain legal immigrants. Beginning in April, these families began receiving federal Food Stamp benefits and no longer received state-funded Food Assistance benefits (formerly known as FAP).

**Community and Technical colleges were no longer eligible for an enhanced rate for consumers** who were enrolled in the Families-That-Work program or at Extended Hour Care sites.

### March 2003

**The Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) co-pay** increased by \$25 for families with co-payments of \$25 or more.

**The Non-Standard Bonus for childcare** prior to 6 a.m., after 6 p.m., and on weekends was eliminated.

### February 2003

**The Early Exit Bonus** (sometimes called the transitional work expense) was eliminated. The second early exit bonus of \$500 could only be authorized for persons who received their first \$500 payment on or before January 31, 2003.

**AREN payments were reduced** from \$1,500 to \$750 per 12-month period and all AREN payments based on Exception to Rule (ETR) were eliminated

### October 2002

The \$134 **standard deduction for food assistance** was replaced with a tiered deduction based on the number of individuals in the food assistance household. The Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (P.L. 107-171)

required that this standard be adjusted each year. No households received a deduction less than \$134.

**Eligibility for federal food stamp benefits** was expanded to include blind or disabled immigrants who received disability-related cash or medical benefits. This change was required under P.L. 107-171.

**The countable resource limit for food assistance households** that included a disabled individual was changed from \$2,000 to \$3,000. This change was required under P.L. 107-171.

**An annual adjustment to multiple standards for food assistance** for FFY 2003 was implemented. The following standards were updated: gross income limit, net income limit, maximum allotment, utility allowances, and the maximum excess shelter deduction.

**The exemption of all homeless individuals from ABAWD Food Stamp Employment & Training Program requirements** was removed. Homeless clients had to meet requirements or be exempt for a reason other than homelessness.

**The food assistance treatment of time-loss income** as unearned income for cash was adopted to make policy consistent in both programs. Time-loss benefits were counted as earned income for cash in certain situations.

**The Department assumed state administration of the SSI State Supplement Program**, a program that was previously administered by the Social Security Administration. The Washington State Legislature mandated that the Department assume administration of this program to reduce the administrative costs of the program.

## August 2002

The Economic Services Administration (ESA) implemented **TANF time limit extensions** in conjunction with the WorkFirst partner agencies – the Employment Security Department, Department of Community, Trade, and Economic Development, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, and tribal governments. ESA conducted case staffing and extended benefits for families who need more than sixty months of TANF cash aid due to age, disability or inability to become self-sufficient. Parents who had not participated in WorkFirst after 60 months on TANF would not receive money. To ensure that children were not penalized for their parents' failure to participate in WorkFirst activities, ESA provided child safety net payments to a third-party contractor to pay rent, utilities, and items for the children in the home.

**ESA implemented the WorkFirst Improvement Initiative** in conjunction with the WorkFirst partner agencies and tribes. The initiative increased accountability for clients and staff, ensuring active engagement and progression through full-time participation requirements, close monitoring, daily sign-in at job search activities, a strengthened sanction policy, and monthly reporting by contractors.

**Graduated sanctions for TANF/SFA clients** who failed to participate in WorkFirst activities without good cause were implemented. Clients graduated to the next sanction level by remaining in sanction status or by returning to sanction status. After three months of sanction, it would take four weeks (instead of two) to cure the sanction. WorkFirst sanctions had three levels:

- a. the person(s)' share of the grant was removed;
- b. the reduced grant in the first level sanction was to be sent to a protective payee every month until the client cooperated and left sanction status; and
- c. the grant was reduced by the person(s)' share or forty percent, whichever was more. The grant continued to be sent to a protective payee until the client participated in WorkFirst activities.

## July 2002

### Eligibility for the SSI State Supplement

**program was restricted** to SSI recipients who had an ineligible spouse based on Social Security Administration (SSA) criteria and individuals who SSA considered as Mandatory Income Level (MIL) clients. Beginning July 1, 2002, ESA paid about 5,200 people an SSP payment. About 100,000 SSI recipients' payments ended June 30, 2002. The current SSP amount for an individual with an ineligible spouse was \$70 per month. MIL recipients' payments varied based upon the amount of the payment they received in January 1974 when states converted from state programs for the aged, blind, and disabled to the Federal SSI program. MIL rates varied between \$0.74 and \$199.50 per month.

**A change in required background checks** was made to include any individuals sixteen years of age or older who resided with a provider when childcare occurred outside the WCCC child's home.

## June 2002

With the passing of House Bill 1144, a **one-time exemption from full-time participation** was allowed in the WorkFirst program. Recipients

who had a child between the ages of four months and 12 months might be exempt only once from full-time participation, however, part-time participation was required, up to 20 hours, until the child reached 12 months. Full-time participation was required with each subsequent child.

Criteria were adopted in June 2002 for **extending eligibility for TANF/SFA clients** beyond the 60-month limit established under PRWORA.

- a. The following individuals were exempt from participating in WorkFirst activities:
  - i. older caretaker relatives;
  - ii. adults with chronic and severe disability including facilitated applicants for SSI or other federal disability benefits;
  - iii. clients caring for a child with special needs; and
  - iv. clients caring for an adult with disabilities.
- b. The following adults were extended beyond the 60-month time limit:
  - i. those participating in WorkFirst activities;
  - ii. those that were impacted by family violence and participating in approved family violence activities;
  - iii. those resolving barriers to employment; and
  - iv. those caring for an infant less than four months old.
- c. Families beyond the 60-month limit where the adults were not participating in WorkFirst activities received a child safety net payment for only the children's needs.

The Department assigned a protective payee to manage these benefits.

### May 2002

The policy of using **Kelly Blue Book online** as the only source to determine a vehicle's value when determining resource eligibility for cash or food assistance benefits was adopted in May 2002. Clients retained the right to provide information from other sources if they disagreed with the value of the vehicle.

### April 2002

The income eligibility level for **Working Connections Child Care Program (WCCC)** was decreased from 225% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) to 200%.

**A family's portion of the childcare cost or co-payment** also changed in April 2002. For family income from 0 to 82% of the FPL, the co-payment increased from \$10 to \$15 per month. For families with income over 82% through 137.5% of the FPL, the co-payment increased from \$20 to \$25 per month. Families with income over 137.5% to 200% of the FPL experienced a \$5 per month increase in co-payment following the application of the co-payment formula. The WCCC program grew beyond expectations causing a budget shortfall. The changes were implemented in an attempt to reduce the deficit.

### March 2002

The JAS system was migrated to a web enabled system called e-JAS. **E-JAS** provided a 24/7 interactive and collaborative online case management tool that integrated employability screening, evaluation, assessment, case staffing, referrals, case notes, information exchange, support services payments and

caseload/management reporting functions for the WorkFirst, Food Stamps Employment and Training, Teen parent barrier removal and Protective Payee programs. E-JAS users expanded from two state agencies - DSHS Community Services Division staff (Case Managers, Social Workers and supervisors) and Employment Security Department (Counselors) – to include the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (WorkFirst staff), Office of Trade and Economic Development Community (Jobs partners), Contractors, and Tribal Staff.

Legislative direction of the **State Supplemental Payment (SSP) program** changed when about \$21.3 million of the original \$28.9 million maintenance of effort (MOE) was transferred to the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD), leaving the Economic Services Administration with approximately \$7.6 million for SSP. The final budget bill included specific language regarding how the state should distribute SSP and who would receive payments. Within this change, the Legislature directed ESA to pay SSP to Mandatory Income Level (MIL) (a small number of people who have been receiving SSI continuously since 1974) and SSI recipients with a spouse ineligible for SSI benefits.

### February 2002

New federal regulations were implemented replacing income received under Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) income with the **new Workforce Investment Act (WIA)**. WIA income was treated the same as JTPA income.

**New rules for the earned income of a child** were implemented in February 2002. For food assistance and medical programs for families, children, and pregnant individuals, the new rule did not count the earnings of a child if the child

was in school, age seventeen or younger, not married, and not emancipated. For cash assistance, the rule did not count the earnings of a child if the child was in school and met the age and attendance requirements to be considered a dependent child.

### January 2002

Economic Services Administration implemented three **No Wrong Door (NWD) start-up sites** to provide a seamless access system for clients receiving services from multiple DSHS administrations and community-based organizations. NWD integrated services through coordinated agency efforts and a single decision point. The start-up sites included one primary site in Seattle, and two volunteer sites in Puyallup and Spokane. All sites focused on long-term TANF recipients (30-60 months on TANF). ESA began expanding NWD to be incorporated into all community services offices by November 2003.

New federal regulations were implemented for **Assistance Unit (AU) composition for Food Stamps**. “Spouse” was now defined as a husband or wife through a legally recognized marriage. The Department no longer considered unmarried people as spouses when they presented themselves to the community as married. Ineligible ABAWDs were now considered ineligible AU members instead of non-household members. Live-in attendants were now optional members of the AU.

**Childcare subsidy rates** were set at the 58<sup>th</sup> percentile of the 2000 Market Rate Survey.

### December 2001

**WASHCAP** was implemented in December 2001 on a statewide basis. WASHCAP was a 5-year

demonstration project approved by FNS and partnered with SSA.

- a. Clients had to be:
  - I. eligible for SSI money;
  - II. at least age 18;
  - III. unemployed; and
  - IV. living alone or purchasing and preparing food separately from others in the household.
- b. Client benefits:
  - I. the SSI application and interview with SSA acts as the application and interview for WASHCAP food assistance;
  - II. twenty-four month food assistance certification periods;
  - III. recertified by SSA when SSI was re-determined;
  - IV. all changes must be reported to SSA;
  - V. SSA had to notify DSHS of client changes via the State Data Exchange (SDX) System in an overnight reporting process.

Program administration was easier than the regular food assistance program because of automatic opening and closing features programmed into the ACES system and triggered by the SDX system.

**New federal regulations for Food Stamps** were implemented for the treatment of the income and resources of certain ineligible members. For drug-related and fleeing felons, all of the client’s income, expenses, and resources to the eligible members of the AU were now to be counted. For ineligible ABAWDs, ineligible aliens, and clients ineligible for not providing their social security numbers, all of the client’s

resources were also to be counted, as well as a prorated share of the client's income and expenses.

### October 2001

**A new standard deduction for households with self-employment income** was implemented in October 2001. These households were now automatically eligible to receive a business expense deduction of \$100. If the household had expenses greater than \$100, they were required to itemize and verify these expenses to receive a deduction equal to their expenses.

### August 2001

**New federal regulations for Food Stamps** were implemented for the recoupment of overpayments. With this change administrative overpayments would be collected through an automatic allotment reduction equal to the greater of 10% of the allotment or \$10 per month; households not currently receiving food assistance would not have an overpayment established if the claim was less than \$125 unless discovered through federal quality control review; and all overpayments had to be established (or disposed of) no later than the last day of the calendar quarter after the quarter in which the overpayment was discovered.

New federal regulations added **flexibility to interview requirements** for all programs. A face-to-face interview would only be required once every 12 months. This face-to-face requirement could be waived if the household applied for medical only or if they met the hardship criteria.

New federal regulations for Food Stamps for **the recertification process** were implemented. In the new regulations, households had up to 30

days after their certification period ended to complete the recertification process. Benefits could be prorated in the first month of the new certification period if the household was late in reapplying for benefits.

New federal regulations for Food Stamps were implemented that **excluded any vehicle** that had an equity value less than \$1,500

### July 2001

**The Division of Child Care and Early Learning (DCCCEL)** was created in the Economic Services Administration (ESA) in July 2001.

### March 2001

In the settlement of the **Hagen v. DSHS lawsuit**, the Department used TANF funds for the costs of providing income assistance to children living with adults who were standing in *loco parentis*. Under Washington state law, children living with adults who stood in *loco parentis* constituted eligible families for the purpose of TANF assistance.

### October 2000

**Categorical eligibility for Food Stamps** was expanded to include households that lost eligibility for TANF due to excess earnings (for 24 months after grant termination) and households that received Diversion Cash Assistance (month of receipt and following three months). For these cases, categorical eligibility meant that the household was exempt from the Food Stamp gross income test (130% of Federal Poverty Level) and Food Stamp resource standards.

**Eligibility for Additional Requirements – Emergent Needs** (TANF, SFA and RCA) was restricted to:

- a. require that family must be eligible for ongoing grant;
- b. cap benefits at \$1,500; and
- c. limit eligibility to once every 12 months.

These policy changes were implemented to control AREN program expenditures.

### July 2000

In July 2000 the Department began using TANF funds for **children living with legal guardians** (GA-H program) to comply with proviso in 1999 budget bill. GA-H program was folded into the TANF program and ceased to exist as a separate program.

Effective July 14, aliens who were **Permanently Residing (in the USA) Under Color of Law (PRUCOL)** were eligible for State-funded FAP.

### June 2000

**Employment and training requirements** were increased for Food Stamp recipients who were ABAWD. Enhanced tracking mechanisms were implemented to better monitor clients' job search progress.

**Changes in federal law were implemented to ensure asylees** received refugee cash aid and medical assistance for up to eight months from the date their application for asylum is granted. (Formerly, the eight months of aid were reduced by months of pending asylee status.)

### May 2000

On May 1, 2000 the **Family Medical Project initiative** began to reinstate clients who lost benefits when their cash grant ended, between August 1, 1997 and August 31, 1999. The Centralized Medical Unit in Seattle was operational.

**Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT)** was implemented statewide. Clients who had a bank account now had the option of having their monthly cash assistance benefits deposited directly into their account.

### April 2000

**Virtual Integrated Employability Worksheet (VIEW)** was created and implemented. VIEW was a TANF screening and evaluation system for WorkFirst case managers to use to identify and document WorkFirst clients' barriers to employment and to make appropriate referrals for services.

A new medical coverage group, **Family Medical Project**, was promoted in ACES. Individuals who were terminated from TANF cash assistance from 8/1/97 through 8/31/99 and were not authorized medical benefits the month following cash termination were reinstated as of May 1, 2000.

### March 2000

**TANF Early Exit Bonuses** were implemented in March 2000 (bonuses were a once-in-a-lifetime \$1,000 support service payment to employed TANF clients, with low cash grants, who voluntarily exited TANF). The bonus was paid to cover work expenses and allow clients to "bank" months of TANF use for times of greater need.

### January 2000

In January 2000 **TANF intensive services** were implemented statewide.

**"Prospective" income budgeting policy** was implemented for cash and food assistance. Eligibility was now to be determined based on anticipated income, rather than income

received in past months (“retrospective” budgeting).

**Overpayments occurring due to reconciliation of retrospectively budgeted income** were eliminated.

**Upper limit for eligibility for childcare subsidies** were changed to 225% of Federal Poverty level (unadjusted) from 175% of Federal Poverty level (adjusted).

**Reduction in co-payment formula for families using subsidized childcare**, particularly those with income over 135% Federal Poverty Level (unadjusted).

### November 1999

An overall childcare eligibility increase to families with gross incomes at or below 225% of the Federal Poverty Level was authorized in November 1999.

The Department began phasing in **the intensive services model**, which provided DSHS social worker assessments, collaboratively developed Individual Responsibility Plans (IRP) and bundled services for the harder-to-employ. The model required more frequent use of employability evaluations to determine which participants might benefit from intensive services.

**Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT)** was implemented statewide. Cash and food assistance benefits were now issued using the Quest card.

### October 1999

**The Limited English Proficiency (LEP) pathway** was implemented statewide (i.e., Phase Two).

**The participation report in the JAS management information system** was changed to collect more information about those who are receiving alternative services and redefine what counts as participating in the WorkFirst program.

**The Children with Special Needs Initiative statewide** was implemented (i.e., Phase Two).

### September 1999

**The General Assistance Supported Employment Project** added a pilot site at the King Eastside CSO.

The Division of Child Support (DCS) was awarded a federal grant to develop an **Internet-based lien registry**. State and local government agencies and private businesses would be able to check if a claimant owes a child support debt and voluntarily notify DCS.

### August 1999

**Deprivation due to absence, incapacity, death, or unemployment of a parent** was eliminated by Engrossed Senate Bill (ESB) 5798, effective July 25, 1999. Associated qualifying parent requirements were eliminated.

**The 185% of Need Test** was eliminated.

**The Striker provision**—a person on strike on the last day of the month was retroactively ineligible to the first of the month and an overpayment established—was eliminated.

**The guidelines for support services** were simplified and the upper limit was increased for how much support services a client could receive.

**Phase I of the WorkFirst Children with Special Needs Initiative** was implemented (phasing in

services for WorkFirst clients raising children with special needs).

**Age limits** were expanded for children receiving TANF/SFA/GAH based on school participation.

**SFA eligibility** was expanded to pregnant individuals who are ineligible for TANF due to a conviction for a drug-related felony or misrepresentation of residence.

ESA field staff began an **audit of all TANF cash terminations** to determine if medical benefits should continue. An agreement was reached between MAA and Columbia Legal Services to reinstate medical benefits to individuals who exited TANF from August 1, 1997 through August 31, 1999 and were not authorized medical benefits the month following termination of their cash assistance. In addition to audits, several enhancements to the Automated Client Eligibility System (ACES) were initiated to ensure clients eligible for continued medical benefits received them

## July 1999

**The Washington Telephone Assistance Program (WTAP) client threshold** was reduced from \$7.50 to \$4.00.

State law changed **WorkFirst participation exemption criteria** from parents with a child less than 12 months of age to parents with a child less than three months of age. It established the Pregnancy-to-Employment pathway to meet the parenting and employment needs of parents with infants, who were no longer exempt from WorkFirst participation, and former GA-S participants, who had been moved into the TANF program.

**CEAP funds** were transferred to the Department of Community, Trade, and

Economic Development (DCTED) as part of a plan to deal with homeless issues and settle the “Homeless Lawsuit.” CEAP eligibility was limited to clients who were not eligible for any other cash assistance program.

The **cap for Additional Requirements-Emergent Need (AREN)** payments was **removed**.

**The TANF eligibility review cycle** was decreased from twelve to six months in order to transition cases to Prospective Budgeting.

**FAP eligibility** was expanded to non-citizens legally admitted into the country in order to escape domestic violence.

The **Region 5 SSI Facilitation Project** was completed.

**Working Connections Child Care** began requiring criminal background checks for exempt providers, i.e., providers that either provided childcare for a child in the child’s own home or were a close relative of the child.

## June 1999

**Phase One implementation of Children with Special Needs Initiative** began.

**Working Connections Automated Program (WCAP)** pilot began.

**Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT)** began in Region 1.

**SSA On-Line Access (SOLQ)** statewide through ACES was implemented.

**The Community Jobs Program statewide** was implemented and the earnings disregard was changed from 20% to 50%.

## May 1999

**Face-to-face contact with WorkFirst participants in sanction status** for more than three months was now required.

**Region 5 SSI Facilitation Project** started looking at long-term GAU cases and testing ways of shortening the time between GAU approval and the filing of the SSI application.

**The first phase of Limited English Proficiency Pathway** contracts became effective.

**GA-S clients were folded into the WorkFirst program** and become subject to TANF 60-month time limit and work requirements.

**Requirements for post-employment services** in the Washington Administrative Code were established.

**Hourly requirements for college work study** were changed from 20 to 16 hours a week for a deferral from job search.

New regulations clarified that **mandatory WorkFirst participants** might be required to participate for up to 40 hours a week in working, looking for work or preparing for work in the Washington Administrative Code (WAC).

On May 1, 1999 **the Family Medical Project initiative** began to reinstate clients who had lost benefits when their cash grant ended between August 1, 1997 and August 31, 1999. The Centralized Medical Unit in Seattle became operational.

## April 1999

The **General Assistance Supported Employment Project** added pilot sites at the Vancouver and Spokane Southwest CSOs.

## March 1999

The **Project Access** pilot started in King County. Using a \$36,000 grant from Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (WUTC), providing community services voicemail to the homeless and local telephone service in community service sites such as shelters and food distribution centers.

**The “Most Wanted” Internet website** began posting photos of selected persons owing child support debt.

## February 1999

**The Re-Employ Washington Workers program** was established, administered by the Employment Security Department. The program offered enhanced job search activities and bonuses for early re-employment to non-TANF, low-income families.

## January 1999

**Washington State Minimum Wage** increased to \$5.70 per hour.

**Eligibility for the community jobs program** was changed to pay for actual number of hours worked with a 20% earnings disregard and to screen out fewer clients from the program.

## November 1998

Based on a change in federal law, **eligibility for federal Food Stamps** to certain minor, elderly, or disabled non-citizens was expanded.

## October 1998

**The Tribal TANF agreement with the Port Gamble S’Klallam Tribe** was finalized.

## September 1998

**The Tribal TANF agreement with the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe** was finalized.

An overall **childcare rate increase** was authorized.

Special rates for **non-standard hour childcare** were established.

A \$250 one-time bonus for **licensed childcare providers** who agree to provide infant care was authorized.

### July 1998

The Legislature renewed authorization for **Washington Telephone Assistance Program (WTAP)** for five years (through June 30, 2003).

**Fleeing felon disqualification** was applied to General Assistance programs. A person is not eligible for General Assistance benefits for any month in which they are fleeing from the law to avoid going to court or jail for a crime considered a felony or for breaking a condition of probation or parole.

### April 1998

Complete phase-in of the **Integrated Child Care System** began.

### March 1998

The **Washington Telephone Assistance Program (WTAP) client threshold** was reduced from \$9.25 to \$7.00.

### February 1998

Due to a court injunction, **DSHS stopped enforcing the residency requirement** (grant payment to be made at the previous state of residence level for the first twelve months) for non-immigrants.

### November 1997

**Residency requirements went into effect for those applying for WorkFirst.** Payment was to

be made at the previous state of residence level for the first twelve months.

**WorkFirst Individual Responsibility Plan** was implemented.

TANF recipients were allowed to establish **“Individual Development Accounts.”**

**DCA** became available for TANF-eligible applicants.

Under the **Consolidated Assistance Units** rules, non-sibling children living with the same caretaker were to be placed in the same assistance unit.

**WorkFirst self-employment** was implemented.

Phase-in of four programs into the **Integrated Child Care System** began.

**Quality Assurance TANF data reporting** requirements began.

A pilot program was initiated to **eliminate the 100-hour rule** for TANF applicants. The rule was to be waived on an exception to policy basis for one year to determine fiscal impact.

**An adult parent of teen parent’s child was ineligible** for TANF if the Department determined that the living situation was inappropriate.

**Childcare subsidy rates** were set at 59<sup>th</sup> percentile of the 1996 Market Rate Survey.

### October 1997

The **General Assistance Supported Employment Project** began in Region 4. The pilot project at the Belltown CSO was named “Partnership with Adults for Community Enhancement (PACE).” Recipients, sorted by

physical impairments or mental disorder, were provided contracted job development and placement services and related work supports.

### September 1997

As of September 1, 1997 **certain legal immigrants were no longer eligible for federal food stamps**. The state implemented the Food Assistance Program for eligible legal immigrants to receive state-funded food stamps. Eligibility and employment & training requirements were the same as for the federal food stamp program.

The **General Assistance-Unemployable Pilot (GAP)** project in Region 3 ended.

### August 1997

Changes to the **Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program** were made to complete implementation of P. L. 104-193, the *Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996* (PRWORA), and to begin implementing state welfare reform legislation. The *Washington WorkFirst Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Act* (EHB 3901) was signed into law in April.

Changes included:

- a. A five-year time limit for cash assistance;
- b. Exemption of 50% of gross earned income from consideration when determining benefit level;
- c. Elimination of establishment of overpayments due to retrospective budgeting;
- d. Elimination of the 100% needs test;
- e. Increased allowable equity of \$5,000 for a client's automobile;
- f. Exemption of client savings accounts of up to \$3,000;
- g. Pregnant Teen and Teen Parent requirements for education (teen had to be pursuing high school completion or GED) went into effect;
- h. Diversion Services provided directly or through referral to other agencies as an alternative to WorkFirst Cash Assistance;
- i. A vehicle used to transport a disabled individual was exempt without regard to value;
- j. DCS non-cooperation sanction is replaced by 25% grant reduction penalty and determination of DCS non-cooperation to be made by the IV-D agency (under PRWORA, each state must operate a Title IV-D child support program to be eligible for TANF funds);
- k. The eligibility review cycle was extended from six to twelve months;
- l. Disqualification for drug-related felony conviction was modified to add an exception for clients who participated in or had completed treatment;
- m. Temporary disqualification of caretaker relative for failure to make timely report of a child's absence from home;
- n. Teen parent requirements for appropriate living situation were amended by state law to further restrict eligibility beyond TANF requirements, a living situation was not appropriate if a minor parent was under age 16 and resided with the adult parent of his/her child ("child rape" situations); and
- o. Certain categories of aliens were denied TANF benefits.

The **State-funded cash aid, SFA**, program for legal immigrants was implemented.

**The AREN component of TANF was broadened** so that clients no longer needed an eviction or

utility shut-off notice in order to qualify for a payment. Also, the AREN payment was no longer limited to the grant payment standard for the family size. The effect was to allow some clients with income (earned or unearned) that exceeded the grant standard to retain eligibility because of the increase in the need (i.e., the payment standard plus the amount requested for AREN).

### July 1997

The **License suspension program** (for noncustodial delinquent parents) for Child Support Enforcement was implemented.

**Quality Assurance** began Phase One implementation of TANF payment accuracy evaluation.

The **100-hour rule** was permanently eliminated for TANF recipients.

### May 1997

**Changes to the TANF program** were made to continue implementation of P. L. 104-194 and requirements under existing state law. Changes included:

- a. Disqualification periods for individuals convicted in state court of unlawful practices (welfare fraud);
- b. Ten year disqualification for individuals convicted of misrepresenting residence to obtain assistance in two or more states; and
- c. Lifetime disqualification for individuals convicted of drug-related felonies

### April 1997

The **Naturalization Facilitation** for aged, blind or disabled SSI recipients at risk of losing SSI due to non-citizenship began.

On April 17, Governor Gary Locke signed into law the ***Washington WorkFirst Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Act (TANF) legislation (EHB-3901)***, which established the **WorkFirst Program**. This program replaced the Aid for Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program. The STEP Waiver 48 of 60-Month Time Limit was repealed.

### February 1997

As of February 1997, an unmarried minor parent who did not reside in an appropriate living situation, as determined by the DSHS, was ineligible for TANF (implementation of the TANF requirements).

### January 1997

**Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) replaced the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program** on January 10, 1997 when the TANF State Plan was submitted to the Department of Health and Human Services. The following TANF program changes were implemented in January as a result of the *Personal Responsibility & Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996* (P. L. 104-193) and existing state law that was no longer superseded by federal law:

- a. Upon the request of a law enforcement officer, the DSHS would furnish the address of any TANF recipient who was a fugitive felon or probation or parole violator or had information that was necessary for the conduct of the officer's official duties.
- b. Personal property of great sentimental value was exempt without regard to ceiling value.
- c. Non-recurring lump sum income in the form of compensatory awards or related

settlements that were not used to repair or replace damaged, destroyed or stolen property or to pay medical bills were treated as resources on the first of the month following receipt. Recipients could reduce the value of the award prior to the first of the month as long as the resource was not transferred for less than adequate consideration.

For lump sums that were not compensatory awards or related settlements, that portion of the award equal to the difference between the \$1,000 non-exempt resource ceiling and the client's existing non-exempt resources, would be considered exempt. If the remaining balance of the lump sum was:

- i. Less than the payment standard, the amount would be deducted from the recipient's grant.
  - ii. In excess of one month's grant payment less than two month's payment, the recipient's grant would be suspended.
  - iii. In excess of two month's payment, the recipient would be ineligible for two months and required to reapply for assistance at the end of the period of ineligibility.
- d. Fleeing felons were ineligible for TANF. A person was no longer eligible if fleeing from the law to avoid prosecution or imprisonment or violating a condition of probation or parole.

**The shelter deduction** was increased from \$247 to \$250.

The following **Food Stamp Program changes** were the result of the Personal Responsibility &

Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (P. L. 104-193):

- a. Children 21 years of age or younger living with a parent had to be included in the food stamp household with the parent.
- b. Fleeing felons were ineligible for the food stamp program. A person was no longer eligible for the food stamp program when fleeing from the law to avoid going to court or jail for a crime considered a felony and breaking a condition of parole or probation.
- c. The 20% work expense deduction from earned income was eliminated when a household failed without good cause to report earnings in a timely manner resulting in an over issuance.
- d. Immigrant eligibility changed so that many non-citizens who previously qualified now did not qualify for food stamps. The following non-citizens were eligible:
  - i. Immigrants residing in the United States who:
    - a) were veterans honorably discharged for reasons other than alienage,
    - b) were active-duty personnel of the armed forces,
    - c) were spouses or unmarried dependents of these veterans or active-duty personnel, or
    - d) had worked and earned money in 40 qualifying quarters.
  - ii. For five years after obtaining the designated alien status:
    - a) Refugees admitted under section 207 of the

Immigration and Nationality Act (INA),

- b) Asylees admitted under section 208 of the INA, or
- c) Aliens whose deportation had been withheld under section 243(h) of the INA.

**The energy disregard for cash grants** was eliminated. In the past a part of the cash grant was disregarded as energy assistance. This amount was now being counted as income. The grant remained the same, but each cash assistance household would lose between \$25 and \$30 in food stamp benefits.

**Food stamp households** that were late reapplying for food stamp benefits (after the certification period expired), would have the food stamp benefits prorated from the date of application.

**High school students age 18 and over** would have their earnings counted as income when calculating food stamp benefits.

**Food stamp benefits** would not increase when income was decreased because of failure to take an action required by a public assistance program.

**New penalties** were required for the Food Stamp Employment and Training Program and for voluntary quit. They were:

- a. One month for the first time and correct the violation,
- b. Three months for the second time and correct the violation, and
- c. Six months for the third time and correct the violation.

**Fraud penalties became stiffer.** People who knowingly broke a food stamp rule would be

barred from the food stamp program for 12 months for the first offense and 24 months for the second offense.

**People found guilty of buying, selling or trading food stamps** for illegal drugs would be barred for two years. People convicted of buying, selling or trading food stamps of \$500 or more would be barred for life.

**People found guilty of giving false information** about their identity or where they lived to get duplicate benefits would be barred for 10 years.

**ABAWD** were eligible for food stamp benefits for no more than three months out of a 36-month period unless working or participating in a work program at least twenty hours a week or participating in a Workfare program.

**The definition of a homeless person** was revised to limit homelessness to 90 days while temporarily residing in the home of another.

**The homeless shelter standard** was eliminated.

**The SSI state supplement payment standards** were increased when the state returned to the “payment level method” for determining the amount of the state supplement. This increase was made in anticipation of a drop in SSI caseload due to 1996 Welfare Reform legislation. However, under *the Balanced Budget Act of 1997*, most recipients would remain on SSI. Therefore, the state changed to the “Total Expenditure Method” for determining the state supplement amount.

## November 1996

Governor Mike Lowry presented Washington’s proposed **Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) State Plan** for public review and comment.

**The ACES On-line Manuals System was implemented statewide.** Policy and Procedural manuals as well as the ACES User Manual were now available electronically to all ACES users.

### October 1996

**The one-year General Assistance-Unemployable (GA-U) pilot (GAP) project** began. The Alderwood, Smokey Point, Sky Valley and Everett CSOs established working agreements with community employment services agencies to test an inter-agency assessment tool and determine the services, time and costs needed to help long-term (recipient for six months or more and not suitable to apply for SSI) GA-U recipients become employable.

**The vehicle resource limit for the food stamp program** was raised from \$4,600 to \$4,650.

**The standard deduction for food stamps was frozen** at \$134.

### August 1996

On August 22, 1996, President Clinton signed the ***Personal Responsibility & Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA)*** into law. Title IV of the Social Security Act was re-written to repeal the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program and replace it with the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. The entitlement to public assistance ended, states received block grants and were given flexibility to design their own assistance programs. A five-year lifetime limit on receipt of public assistance was established along with stringent work participation requirements.

### July 1996

Administration of most cases for persons receiving long term care services was transferred to **Home and Community Services, Aging and Adult Services**. General Assistance-Unemployable WAC was amended to waive the requirement for medical documentation to establish incapacity for these cases.

### May 1996

**The definition of student was expanded** to include an adult student who has parental control of a child 11 years of age or under when neither the child's natural or adoptive nor stepparent nor the adult's spouse resided in the household.

**DSHS received waiver approval from Food and Consumer Services** to eliminate the telephone interview for food stamp benefits at the time of the desk review for Aid for Families with Dependent Children (AFDC). A face-to-face interview was to be required every 12 months for the Food Stamp Program.

A new description was added to inaccessible resources – resources are inaccessible if, when sold, the resources would net the household less than one-half of the applicable resource limit.

### March 1996

**Contract with America Advancement Act of 1996, P. L. 104-121**, terminated disability benefits to persons receiving Title II benefits when disability is based on drug addiction or alcoholism. Disability benefits were denied to any person filing for benefits based on drug addiction or alcoholism or whose case was adjudicated on or after March 29, 1996.

## December 1995

**Washington Administrative Code (WAC) was changed** effective December 1, 1995 to allow AFDC recipient households the option of including or excluding the child of unmarried parents when the child is living with both parents. This change was made in response to the state court of appeals decision in *Sams v. DSHS*.

**Unmarried, two-parent AFDC applicants were offered the opportunity to sign paternity affidavits** at the time of financial interview. Those applicants choosing not to complete an affidavit were then to be referred to the Division of Child Support for paternity establishment.

**The Food Stamp Standard Deduction** was reduced from \$138 to \$134.

The Garcia decision from the U. S. Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals was implemented. An intentional program violation disqualification would be implemented the first of the month following the date the person received written notification of the Administrative Disqualification Hearing for both recipients and non-recipients.

## October 1995

**The Food Stamp Program** changed as follows:

- a. The Thrifty Food Plan amounts and Basis of Issuance tables were increased.
- b. Gross, net and 165% of Income Standards were increased.
- c. The standard deduction was increased to \$138.
- d. The homeless shelter deduction was increased to \$143.
- e. The maximum shelter deduction was increased to \$247.
- f. The Standard Utility Allowance increased to \$220.
- g. The Telephone Standard increased to \$29.
- h. The vehicle fair market value limit increased to \$4,600.

**Cooperation with Quality Control (QC)** was made an eligibility factor for AFDC. AFDC grants must be terminated for families that refuse to cooperate in the Quality Control review process.

**Refugees were eligible for extended Refugee Medical Assistance** through the eighth month after entry into the United States, regardless of their Refugee Cash Assistance status

## September 1995

**Need standards for grant recipients** were raised to reflect annual cost of living adjustment. AFDC grant Payment Standards remain unchanged and were now equal to 43.6% of the Need Standards.

## August 1995

**The Department suspended retrospectively budgeted Food Stamp households** for one month when the household received an extra periodic income. Retrospective budgeting meant budgeting income from a past month to determine benefits for a future month, e.g., earned income received in January would be reported to the Department in February and then budgeted against March food stamp benefits.

## July 1995

The Department added a **non-heating/non-cooling limited utility allowance**.

A mandatory verification for **household composition, shelter, and utility costs** was added.

The Washington Administrative Code (WAC) was amended, as required by the Legislature, to require the DSHS to **notify the parent with whom a child last resided** when the child was approved for AFDC while living with a nonparent relative. The parent also must be informed of the availability of Family Reconciliation Services and that they have the right to request their child's address. The Department was obligated to disclose the child's address to the parent provided there were no allegations of child abuse or neglect.

**Public Law 103-286 exempted payments made to victims of Nazi persecution** when determining eligibility and the amount of benefits or services.

As a result of the **Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation Grand Coulee Dam Settlement Act**, funds paid from a trust fund established through the act were disregarded.

**Bank accounts jointly owned by AFDC recipients and SSI recipients** could be excluded as a resource for AFDC if the account was considered by Social Security Administration Disability Office (SSADO) in determining SSI eligibility.