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HOUSE BILL 2230

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State of Washington

68th Legislature

2024 Regular Session

By Representatives Peterson and Eslick

1 AN ACT Relating to promoting economic inclusion by creating the  
2 economic security for all grant program; adding a new chapter to  
3 Title 43 RCW; and creating a new section.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

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

1 facilitate an inclusive economy by creating the economic security for  
2 all grant program to provide greater access to resources for those in  
3 need.

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** The definitions in this section apply  
5 throughout this chapter unless the context clearly requires  
6 otherwise.

7 (1) "Business services" means services by local workforce  
8 development councils to increase employer engagement in an effort to  
9 support industry growth, increase quality employment opportunities  
10 for job seekers, and enable persons served by economic security for  
11 all grants to access careers with wages that allow them to achieve  
12 self-sufficiency.

13 (2) "Department" means the employment security department.

14 (3) "People experiencing poverty" means people with a household  
15 income that is at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level.

16 (4) "People who demonstrate financial need" means people with a  
17 household income that is above 200 percent of the federal poverty  
18 level but below self-sufficiency who need employment-related services  
19 to achieve self-sufficiency.

20 (5) "Rural counties" has the same meaning as provided in RCW  
21 82.14.370.

22 (6) "Self-sufficiency" means a level of household income that is  
23 equal to or greater than the self-sufficiency standard for a  
24 household as determined by the University of Washington's self-  
25 sufficiency calculator.

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

29 (8) "Workforce development council" means a local workforce  
30 development board as established in P.L. 113-128 Sec. 107.

31 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** (1) The economic security for all grant  
32 program is created in the department. The purpose of the program is  
33 to empower and incentivize communities to coordinate existing poverty  
34 reduction resources and benefits to make them easier to access, get  
35 them to the people who need them, and work as a coordinated system to  
36 help more people move out of poverty and be included in Washington's  
37 economic success.

1           (2) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this  
2 specific purpose, the department, in consultation with the department  
3 of social and health services, the department of commerce, the  
4 department of children, youth, and families, the health care  
5 authority, the steering committee, and other stakeholders as  
6 determined by the department, shall make and oversee the  
7 implementation of economic security for all grants. Grants awarded  
8 under this section must be made available to local communities to  
9 promote equity, economic inclusion, and a stable financial foundation  
10 for people experiencing poverty and people who demonstrate financial  
11 need, with a particular focus on people of color and people in rural  
12 counties including tribal nations, primarily through better  
13 coordination of existing programs, resources, and provision of  
14 business services.

15           (3) Economic security for all grants awarded under this section  
16 shall be made available in communities throughout all regions of the  
17 state, including rural counties and urban communities for the  
18 purposes described in this section, distributed utilizing a funding  
19 allocation model.

20           (4) Recipients of economic security for all grants shall:

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

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

29           (c) Utilize the existing local workforce development councils to  
30 develop economic security for all grant partnerships that must  
31 include people experiencing poverty, people of color, homelessness  
32 programs, and representatives of the health care authority, community  
33 service offices, accountable communities of health, and associate  
34 development organizations, and may include other members;

35           (d) Coordinate leadership among the local workforce development  
36 council, associate development council, and other organizations, and  
37 utilize the local workforce development council as the fiscal agent;

38           (e) Work with people experiencing poverty and people who  
39 demonstrate financial need to ensure they have access to multiple  
40 benefits to help them meet their basic needs, in alignment with local

1 care coordination efforts, and when ready, to develop individualized  
2 career plans that will lead to a self-sufficiency wage, which must be  
3 the level established by the University of Washington self-  
4 sufficiency standard;

5 (f) Provide streamlined access to local partners who can pay for  
6 education or training elements of a person experiencing poverty or  
7 person with financial need's individualized career plan using federal  
8 Pell grants, the Washington college grant, or other resources;

9 (g) Provide streamlined access to local partners who can make  
10 monthly payments to people experiencing poverty and people who  
11 demonstrate financial need while in training, using existing  
12 resources such as incentive payments, work study payments, work  
13 experience payments, needs-related payments, or other financial aid  
14 or workforce development resources, as identified locally and in  
15 consultation with technical assistance provided by the department.  
16 Such payments must work to maximize the total benefits available to  
17 the individual;

18 (h) Through the local workforce development councils, develop an  
19 economic security for all grant coordination team that works to  
20 facilitate easier access to all state and local government services.  
21 The team may utilize and build upon, rather than duplicate, existing  
22 coordinators and navigators that are already in place in the  
23 community. The team must provide convenient one-stop access to  
24 benefits available to people experiencing poverty and people who  
25 demonstrate financial need. At a minimum, the team must encourage  
26 people served by the economic security for all grants to apply for  
27 and, if eligible, receive supplemental nutritional assistance program  
28 benefits, temporary assistance for needy families benefits, medicaid  
29 benefits, workforce innovation and opportunity act supportive  
30 services, or other financial and health benefits, as appropriate for  
31 each person;

32 (i) Provide equitable access to state and local government  
33 services for people with disabilities, which may include equipment  
34 and technology purchases;

35 (j) Identify where federal barriers hinder efforts to coordinate  
36 benefits for customers and elevate those issues to the department;

37 (k) Provide options for career development, English language  
38 learning, and other services for both parents in two-parent families,  
39 including child care if desired by the family; and

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

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** Members of the steering committee must be  
5 reimbursed for travel expenses as provided in RCW 43.03.050 and  
6 43.03.060, as well as child care and other expenses as needed for  
7 each day a steering committee member attends meetings to provide  
8 consultative assistance to the agencies managing the economic  
9 security for all grants as provided in sections 3 and 5 of this act,  
10 for up to 12 meetings per calendar year.

11 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** (1) The department, in consultation with  
12 the department of social and health services, the department of  
13 commerce, the department of children, youth, and families, the health  
14 care authority, the steering committee, and other stakeholders as  
15 identified by the department:

16 (a) Shall identify federal reforms that would help persons served  
17 by economic security for all grants access the federal benefits they  
18 need more efficiently, avoid sudden benefit cuts as their earned  
19 income increases, and move from poverty to self-sufficiency more  
20 effectively; and

21 (b) May apply for federal waivers and propose federal law changes  
22 to make the authorizing environment better support coordinated  
23 service delivery across programs.

24 (2) The department of social and health services, in consultation  
25 with the department, the department of commerce, the department of  
26 children, youth, and families, the health care authority, the  
27 steering committee, the legislative-executive WorkFirst poverty  
28 reduction oversight task force, and other stakeholders as determined  
29 by the department, shall further develop measures and indicators of  
30 yearly progress toward poverty reduction, reducing income inequality,  
31 and achieving an equitable and inclusive economy, using the  
32 University of Washington self-sufficiency standard as a primary  
33 measure, as well as other measures already underway in the department  
34 of social and health services technical advisory group on inclusive  
35 economic recovery, and apply those measures as needed to help promote  
36 a statewide economy that is inclusive of rural areas, racially  
37 equitable, and fully inclusive of people experiencing poverty, people  
38 of color, people with disabilities, unhoused people, and other key

1 demographics that have historically been left behind by the state  
2 economy.

3 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 6.** By December 1, 2024, and annually  
4 thereafter, and in compliance with RCW 43.01.036, the department  
5 shall report to the governor, the appropriate committees of the  
6 legislature, and the legislative-executive WorkFirst poverty  
7 reduction oversight task force on the economic security for all grant  
8 program. The annual report must include an analysis of the program, a  
9 detailed summary of the quarterly data collected, demographics and  
10 geography of people served, services delivered, average length of  
11 participation, number of persons served by the grants maintaining  
12 self-sufficiency in the years following program exit, and associated  
13 recommendations for program delivery. The report must include an  
14 analysis of customer feedback and actions taken to respond, based  
15 upon a standardized customer feedback mechanism. The report shall be  
16 publicized and easily accessible to the public.

17 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 7.** The department may adopt rules as  
18 necessary to implement this chapter.

19 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 8.** Sections 2 through 7 of this act  
20 constitute a new chapter in Title 43 RCW.

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