

Economic Services Administration

060 - M2 - F6 - CONNECTING ABAWDs TO WORK

Agency Submittal: 11-2017-19-YR Agency Req

Budget Period: 2017-19

SUMMARY

As a result of changing employment rates, Able-bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWD) in need of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits are at risk of not being able to access benefits without proper service support to achieve federal work participation requirements. The ABAWD population is federally required to participate in an average of 20 hours of work, employment training, or Workfare (unpaid community service activity) to access food benefits beyond three months within a 36 month period. The Economic Services Administration (ESA) requests 19.1 FTEs and \$1,536,000 (\$768,000 GF-State) to provide sufficient services to ABAWDs to meet federal requirements for access to sustainable nutrition.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Since 2007, Washington State has had authorization from the United States Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) to waive mandatory ABAWD participation requirements due to the state's high unemployment rate. In 2015, the request to waive mandatory ABAWD participation was denied due to the decrease in the unemployment rate, which required the department to begin enforcing ABAWD requirements in three counties effective January 1, 2016.

In January 2016, there were approximately 40,000 ABAWDs in the three impacted counties (King, Snohomish, and some areas within Pierce County) who were at risk of losing benefits if they were not exempted or engaged in work or "work-like" activities.

ESA created an ABAWD Specialized Team to respond to this shift in business practices for our clients, staff, and stakeholders. FNS approved \$816,000 in emergency funding in Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2016 (about six months of funding). However this funding was not enough to cover all the workload related to the ABAWD cases. Many overtime hours and assistance from other teams was necessary to meet the needs of the ABAWD clients.

The ABAWD Specialized Team:

- Engages ABAWDs in work requirements by referring eligible recipients to employment, training, Workfare sites and other programs and community resources;
- Verifies ABAWD participation in monthly work requirements and takes appropriate actions on cases;
- Ensures ABAWD cases are screened for potential exemptions (e.g. mental and physical health, employment and student status);
- Explains ABAWD program requirements such as exemptions, work requirements, and countable months; and
- Clarifies application procedures and reporting requirements.



DSHS VISION

People are healthy • People are safe • People are supported • Taxpayer resources are guarded

DSHS MISSION

To transform lives

DSHS VALUES

Honesty and Integrity • Pursuit of Excellence • Open Communication • Diversity and Inclusion • Commitment to Service

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ESA assumes it will be able to receive federal funding equal to that received in FFY 2016 in FFY 2017 and beyond. Therefore, ESA requests the remaining funding and full FTE authority (19.1) needed to maintain the ABAWD Specialized Team.

If federal funds are not provided, this request may be increased in order to fully fund the work of the ABAWD Specialized Team.

PROPOSED SOLUTION

In order to keep the momentum in providing ABAWD support in meeting federal work participation requirements, ESA requests funding in the 2017-19 biennium and beyond to retain staffing of the ABAWD Specialized Team in order to continue the work outlined above.

This work will provide impacted individuals with opportunities to move toward the highway to self-sufficiency and ultimately off of SNAP benefits.

EXPECTED RESULTS

ABAWDS will be able to access the ABAWD Specialized Team and will maintain their SNAP benefits until they find sustainable employment and receive exposure to training opportunities which can lead to self-sufficiency. If this request is not funded, ABAWD clients would be at risk of losing their benefits.

Additionally, the ABAWD team will work to maintain the accuracy rate for the SNAP program. With a high accuracy rate overall, Washington State may be eligible for federal bonuses.

By funding this request, ESA will comply with the rules and expectations set forth by the FNS in order to:

- Avoid losing essential SNAP funding;
- Avoid potential penalties for incorrect management; and
- Increase federal dollars at a fifty percent match rate to the state if approved by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

STAKEHOLDER IMPACT

This proposal received support from Northwest Justice Project, Northwest Food Network, Solid Ground and other numerous community assistance agencies.

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Program Contact: Monica Manikhoth, (360) 725-4526

OTHER CONNECTIONS

Performance Outcomes/Important Connections

1. Does this DP provide essential support to one or more of the Governor's Results Washington priorities?

Goal 4: Healthy & Safe Communities - Support People - Help the most vulnerable people become independent and self-sufficient.

2. The decision package meets the following DSHS' strategic objectives:

1.1: People below 125 percent of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) will have greater access to Basic Food assistance.

3. Identify other important connections or impacts below. (Indicate 'Yes' or 'No'. If 'Yes' identify the connections or impacts related to the proposal.)

- a) Regional/County impacts? Yes. Affected Counties include King and Snohomish counties for FFY 17. Future years will depend on unemployment rates with Pierce county being at higher risk of being impacted as they were impacted in FFY 16.
 - b) Other local government impacts? Yes. Several local government agencies have expressed interest in partnering with DSHS in order to serve the at risk ABAWD population.
 - c) Tribal government impacts? Yes. ESA has worked with leaders in the Muckleshoot and Tulalip tribes to secure exemptions for tribal members living on these reservations who are ABAWDs for FFY 17. The ABAWD unit will be key to ensuring the clients are exempted and honor this agreement.
 - d) Other state agency impacts? No.
 - e) Responds to specific task force, report, mandate or executive order? No.
 - f) Does request contain a compensation change or require changes to a Collective Bargaining Agreement? No.
 - g) Facility/workplace needs or impacts? No.
 - h) Capital budget impacts? No.
 - i) Is change required to existing statutes, rules or contracts? No.
 - j) Is the request related to litigation? No.
 - k) Is the request related to Puget Sound recovery? No.
 - l) Other important connections? Yes.
- 4. Please provide a detailed discussion of connections/impacts identified above.**

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Serving ABAWDs at risk of losing their benefits is an important mission for many stakeholders in the community including but not limited to Northwest Harvest, food banks located in the affected counties, Northwest Justice Project and Solid Ground.

Alternatives/Consequences/Other

5. What alternatives were explored by the agency, and why was this alternative chosen?

ESA will be submitting a grant request for FFY 2017 but the funding is contingent on FNS approval.

6. How has or can the agency address the issue or need within its current appropriation level?

Absorbing the work of the ABAWD specialized team by field staff would increase dropped calls, wait times and the amount of time it would take to process client documents. This would not only negatively impact the level of customer service provided to ABAWD clients, but to all DSHS clients attempting to reach our eligibility staff and services necessary to assist them on their pathway to self sufficiency.

7. Does this decision package include funding for any IT-related costs (hardware, software, services, cloud-based services, contracts or IT staff)?

- No**
- Yes (Include an IT Addendum)**

Fiscal Detail

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Operating Expenditures	<u>FY 2018</u>	<u>FY 2019</u>	<u>FY 2020</u>	<u>FY 2021</u>
001-1 General Fund-State	384,000	384,000	384,000	384,000
001-2 General Fund-Federal	384,000	384,000	384,000	384,000
Total Cost	768,000	768,000	768,000	768,000

Staffing	<u>FY 2018</u>	<u>FY 2019</u>	<u>FY 2020</u>	<u>FY 2021</u>
FTEs	19.1	19.1	19.1	19.1

Performance Measure Detail

Activity:	Incremental Changes			
	<u>FY 2018</u>	<u>FY 2019</u>	<u>FY 2020</u>	<u>FY 2021</u>
Program: 060				
F120 CSD Field Support Services	0	0	0	0
No measures submitted for package				

Object Detail

	<u>FY 2018</u>	<u>FY 2019</u>	<u>FY 2020</u>	<u>FY 2021</u>
A Salaries and Wages	409,000	409,000	409,000	409,000
B Employee Benefits	174,000	174,000	174,000	174,000
E Goods and Other Services	115,000	115,000	115,000	115,000
G Travel	7,000	7,000	7,000	7,000
P Debt Service	6,000	6,000	6,000	6,000
TZ Intra-agency Reimbursements	57,000	57,000	57,000	57,000
Total Objects	768,000	768,000	768,000	768,000

DSHS Source Detail

Overall Funding

Operating Expenditures	<u>FY 2018</u>	<u>FY 2019</u>	<u>FY 2020</u>	<u>FY 2021</u>
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Fund 001-1, General Fund-State

Sources Title

0011 General Fund State	384,000	384,000	384,000	384,000
Total for Fund 001-1	384,000	384,000	384,000	384,000

Fund 001-2, General Fund-Federal

Sources Title

E61L Food Stamp Program (50%)	384,000	384,000	384,000	384,000
Total for Fund 001-2	384,000	384,000	384,000	384,000

Total Overall Funding	768,000	768,000	768,000	768,000
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