

1.5 Application Screening

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Legal References:

- [RCW 74.12.400, .410](#)
- [WAC 388-472-0005](#)

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1.5.1 What is WorkFirst Application Screening?

~~A WorkFirst application screening is part of the process we go through~~occurs when a ~~n individual or~~ family applies for ~~WorkFirst or SFA~~ cash assistance. ~~When an application for benefits is submitted to the Community Services Office (CSO), a DSHS worker will conduct a screening of the application before the eligibility interview. However, this screening must not delay the screening for expedited Basic Food assistance nor take the place of required application processing for WorkFirst or other programs. The process from application until determination of eligibility will take an average of 11 calendar days~~

~~It is an opportunity to~~ The purpose of the screening is to provide information to the applicant and review their family's ~~a family's situation so that they can in order for a family to~~ decide whether WorkFirst/~~SFA~~ is the best choice or ~~whether if their~~ financial needs can be met by other means ~~with other programs or income~~. This is called "positive prevention." The goal is to:

- Determine if the ~~parent or~~ family has other income.
- Identify possible sources of income or other types of benefits for the family.
- Assist ~~parents and their~~ families in making a decision that will best serve their needs.
- Reduce or eliminate the ongoing need for ~~WorkFirst~~ TANF/SFA.

All ~~CSOs~~ WorkFirst staff must offer positive prevention services ~~as a minimum standard~~ which to include discussion of:

- Basic Food Assistance
- Basic Food Employment and Training (BFET)
- Child Care

- Child Support
- Community Resources
- Diversion Cash Assistance
- Health Benefit Exchange referral
- Other Income (Social Security, Veterans Benefits, Labor and Industry, etc.)
- Unemployment Compensation
- ~~Child Care~~
- ~~Unemployment Insurance Compensation~~
- ~~Child Support~~
- ~~Community Resources~~
- ~~Other Income (Social Security, Veterans Benefits, Labor and Industry, etc.)~~
- ~~Diversion Cash Assistance~~
- ~~Health Benefit Exchange referral~~
- ~~Basic Food Assistance~~
- ~~Basic Food Employment and Training (BFET)~~

1.5.2 Is the family parent eligible for other income or benefits?

The ~~DSHS worker~~ WorkFirst staff must review available resources to help ~~individuals and~~ families avoid ongoing cash assistance if other services will meet their needs. This includes. ~~The DSHS worker:~~

- Determining i~~Determines if the person:~~
 - Participated in ~~has received~~ WorkFirst in the past and whether they ~~he or she~~ still qualifies for support services;
 - Determining if ~~Determines if the person i~~s receiving or could receive child support
 - Determining i ~~Determines if the person i~~s receiving or could receive unemployment insurance; compensation
- Offerings Medical and Basic Food assistance as a way of decreasing the need for WorkFirst/SFA;
- Completing ~~es~~ an Equal Access (EA) Screening.

Note: -If an EA screening was previously conducted, then reviews and updates the accommodation plan (See EA-Z Manual: Necessary Supplementary Accommodation for more details).

1.5.3 Can the participant apply or access Unemployment Insurance (UI)? Compensation?

During the WorkFirst application process, ~~DSHS workers~~ WorkFirst staff will:

- Review GUIDE to see if there is already a valid unemployment ~~insurance~~ (UI) compensation claim.

Note: ~~(GUIDE identifies available income and resources and helps meet and maintain Basic Food accuracy.)~~

- Require ~~parents~~ people who report working at least three of the past 18 months in the USA (and who have no unemployment compensation ~~UI~~ claim) to file an unemployment compensation ~~UI~~ claim and provide their ~~bring the resulting~~ determination back to ~~the DSHS worker~~ CSD.

~~A person~~ person can apply for and access unemployment compensation benefits in a number of ways (see ESD.wa.gov for more information). Community Services Offices must provide resources ~~which allow for~~ people applicants to apply for these benefits (e.g. have phones designated for this purpose in office). ~~A person can apply for and access UI benefits by telephone, computer, or kiosk. The Community Services Offices (CSOs) must provide resources for parents to access UI and will have phones that parents can use to apply for UI. DSHS worker should direct the parents to file a UI claim from home or by using the phone in the CSO designated for this purpose. It is preferable to have the parent apply for UI by telephone.~~

For ~~parents applicants~~ who worked in other states, the ESD Unemployment Compensation ~~UI~~ worker can support help the applicant in filing a claim with that other state. ~~either file the claim or direct them to a phone number for the state they are filing against. Also, the UI worker can help parents~~ They can also help applicants find missing ("lost") wages, and explain other options to maximize benefits ~~and eligibility for benefits. The UI determination will be mailed to the claimant the same day the UI claim is filed.~~

For ~~those parents applicants~~ who quit their last job, ~~who~~ were fired, or ~~who~~ have other issues that need to be ~~assessed~~ reviewed, unemployment compensation ~~a final~~ determination ~~on UI eligibility~~ will take longer. In ~~these~~ is cases, WorkFirst cash assistance determination should proceed, WorkFirst approval should take place as they ~~have customer~~ has met the requirement to provide proof of claim filing ~~they attempted to make the resource available. WorkFirst staff are to~~ However, they must ~~be~~ must inform the applicant of reporting requirements if the unemployment claim is later approved by ESD ~~UI income is approved at a later date.~~

WorkFirst applicants ~~who are~~ approved for unemployment compensation ~~UI~~ and found ineligible for WorkFirst due to that ~~UI~~ income, or who choose not to receive WorkFirst because they can support themselves with the unemployment compensation ~~UI~~ and other available resources, will be connected by ESD staff ~~to with~~ job search and job matching services available in the WorkSource Centers ~~by the UI worker.~~

1.5.4 Is Diversion Cash Assistance (DCA) an option?

The best outcome for ~~parents applicants~~ is to eliminate the need for WorkFirst/~~SFA~~ cash assistance when possible. DCA is designed for this purpose. One of the first items to discuss with the ~~person~~ applicant is whether DCA is an option (See EA-Z Manual - DCA).

If DCA is not appropriate and other benefits alone ~~will not~~ won't allow the family to support themselves without WorkFirst cash assistance, continue with the application process for monthly WorkFirst benefits.

The goal is to help the person and their family through their time of need as quickly as possible. If a family's situation ~~can~~ not be resolved without the aid of the WorkFirst program, then try to ensure that the time spent receiving monthly WorkFirst case assistance will be as brief as possible. This will help applicants save their limited WorkFirst TANF months.

1.5.5 Is child support a potential source of income?

When families receive other income (such as child support), they will have a better chance of exiting WorkFirst sooner.

During the screening process:

1. Determine if Child Support is a potential source of income by discussing this with the person and reviewing information from the Division of Child Support (DCS) using the SEMS Quick Cash screen.
2. Discuss the WorkFirst TANF requirement of assigning child support rights to the state. In some situations, the difference between available child support and the amount of a WorkFirst TANF grant is enough for a family to choose current child support ~~rather than WorkFirst~~ instead.
3. Inform families of their right to request good cause to not cooperate with child support collection and explain how the process works. It is important to ensure that families ~~do not~~ withdraw their request for ~~WorkFirst cash assistance~~ TANF because they are afraid of an absent parent.

For individuals who are deferred from receiving ~~WorkFirst TANF/SFA~~, a referral to DCS can be made and/or the family should be given information about DCS services and how to contact the appropriate office.

For families who need to continue with the TANF/WorkFirst application process: Refer to the EA-Z Manual for further details on child support, good cause for non-cooperation and the DCS referral process.

~~1.5.6 Who needs a Comprehensive Evaluation?~~

~~The Comprehensive Evaluation (CE) is for parents who are approved or likely to be approved, for WorkFirst/SFA. For more information, see WFHB 3.2.1. Likely to be approved applicants are referred to the CE to save time and quickly engage the parent quicker.~~

~~The WFPS will:~~

~~Schedule a CE appointment for the parent. Place the parent in the Appointment Pending (AP) component through the date of the scheduled CE appointment.~~

~~Make sure transportation and child care are in place.~~

~~Complete the CE using the Pathway Development Tool.~~

~~Write an IRP with the parent based on the CE, input from the parent, and the stacking strategy(See Section 3.3.2 Individual Responsibility Plan and Stacking Activities for stacking activities information).~~

~~If the CE results do not identify an appropriate pathway(s), a CAP may be conducted immediately.~~

~~Refer the parent to the appropriate employment pathway(s) identified by the CE using the appropriate code(s).~~

~~Refer for crisis intervention services, as needed, if issues are identified.~~