DATE: January 30, 2019

TO: House Committee on Human Services and Housing

FROM: Dan Haun, Deputy Director Self-Sufficiency Programs

SUBJECT: HB 2032, DHS Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Bill

INTRODUCTION

House Bill 2032 was introduced by Governor Brown, on behalf of the Department of Human Services (DHS). The bill continues to suspend provisions of the TANF statute that were passed in 2007 and have been suspended since 2008. The bill proposes to broaden the program requirements to align with a person-centered approach to working with TANF families.

Background

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) is a federally funded, cash assistance and employment program that serves over 20,000 families and 50,000 individuals each month (October 2018 data). Its purpose is to help families with children living in extreme poverty pay for basic needs such as shelter, utilities, and daily necessities. TANF also provides services to help parents increase their skills, enter training programs, find jobs, and stay employed. The program offers support services such as help paying for childcare, transportation, training needs, and interview clothing while parents engage in activities to help them meet their employment goals. TANF offers a variety of other services such as help to apply for Supplemental Security Income or grants to escape domestic violence in an effort to help families stabilize their lives, so they can find and sustain employment, and end their need for public assistance. Once a family is over income for the TANF program, temporary services are available to assist with this transition.

What This Bill Does

The bill removes statutory language that required more prescriptive programmatic requirements and adopts new language that brings greater flexibility for TANF participants. Since the 2015 session, the Self Sufficiency Program (SSP) has

implemented a family engagement model which works more closely with families and their individual goals.

SSP utilizes a family engagement model which connects participants seeking services to a meaningful case plan with achievable goals. The family focused, strength-based, assessment tool, covers basic assessment questions and allows a full assessment to be offered during the first 90 days. This allows for a more relationship-based assessment at a time when families are not operating in crisis but rather are engaged with their family coach and taking steps toward self-sufficiency.

In prior years the department has agreed to provide more guidance in rule and remove prescriptive language and program requirements from statute. This has now gone through the full rule making process and the bill reflects the agreed upon direction.

We have asked for some of the previously suspended language to be included in active statute as it is very helpful to the program moving forward its current practice.

The bill also continues suspension of provisions that have been statutorily suspended since 2008. During the 2007 Session, HB 2469 passed which enhanced the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) Program; however, the very next year the Legislature suspended parts of the TANF program in response to economic changes during the recession.

DHS proposes to suspend the same areas that were introduced in 2007's HB 2469 and most recently continued in suspension in 2017's HB 3470, through the end of 2021. Failure to continue to suspend these provisions would result in increased cost to the program.

There are two technical amendments needed in the bill and we have made the appropriate request to Legislative Counsel:

- Page 4, Section 4, line 10, change "and" to "or".
- Page 8, Section 15, Line 9, the date needs to be changed to July 1, 2021 to suspend this language and ensure that no additional fiscal impact is created.

SUMMARY

This bill continues suspension of portions of the TANF statute that have been suspended since 2008. The bill proposes to broaden program requirements through rule to align with a person-centered approach while working with TANF families.