
**Human Services, Youth, & Early
Learning Committee**

HB 1499

Brief Description: Concerning food assistance funding.

Sponsors: Representatives Shavers, Ramel, Santos, Leavitt, Gregerson, Bateman, Ormsby, Doglio, Pollet, Reed, Ortiz-Self, Stonier and Fosse.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Provides that the Washington State Department of Agriculture, in administering of food assistance program funding, may not restrict the amount of funding provided to food banks that may be used for essential nonfood items.

Hearing Date: 2/1/23

Staff: Omeara Harrington (786-7136).

Background:

The Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) administers funding for various food assistance programs. This includes the state Emergency Food Assistance Program (EFAP) and the federal Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), which provide support to food banks and food pantries.

In administering the TEFAP for the state, the WSDA receives food and operational funding from the United States Department of Agriculture for distribution to 19 lead contractors statewide. These contractors provide food to food banks, food pantries, shelters, and meal providers in Washington.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Through the EFAP, the WSDA awards funds to lead contractors in each county who work with local food banks and food pantries to distribute funding for local emergency food networks. Funding may pay for: administrative costs; operational costs such as rent, salaries, gasoline for vehicles and supplies; purchase of food; nutrition training for staff and clients; and equipment purchases and repairs. Listed essential nonfood items may be purchased with EFAP funds, but these purchases cannot exceed 10 percent of the allocation.

Summary of Bill:

In administering food assistance program funding, the WSDA may not restrict the amount of food assistance program funding provided to food banks that may be used for essential nonfood items, including diapers, feminine products, and hygiene products.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 27, 2023.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.