

RCW 74.08A.280 Program goal—Collaboration to develop work programs—Contracts—Service areas—Regional plans.

(1) The legislature finds that moving those eligible for assistance to self-sustaining employment is a goal of the WorkFirst program. It is the intent of WorkFirst to aid a participant's progress to self-sufficiency by allowing flexibility within the statewide program to reflect community resources, the local characteristics of the labor market, and the composition of the caseload. Program success will be enhanced through effective coordination at regional and local levels, involving employers, labor representatives, educators, community leaders, local governments, and social service providers.

(2) The department, through its regional offices, shall collaborate with employers, recipients, frontline workers, educational institutions, labor, private industry councils, the workforce training and education coordinating board, community rehabilitation employment programs, employment and training agencies, local governments, the employment security department, and community action agencies to develop work programs that are effective and work in their communities. For planning purposes, the department shall collect and make accessible to regional offices successful work program models from around the United States, including the employment partnership program, apprenticeship programs, microcredit, microenterprise, self-employment, and W-2 Wisconsin works. Work programs shall incorporate local volunteer citizens in their planning and implementation phases to ensure community relevance and success.

(3) To reduce administrative costs and to ensure equal statewide access to services, the department may develop contracts for statewide welfare-to-work services. These statewide contracts shall support regional flexibility and ensure that resources follow local labor market opportunities and recipients' needs.

(4) The secretary shall establish WorkFirst service areas for purposes of planning WorkFirst programs and for distributing WorkFirst resources. Service areas shall reflect department regions.

(5) By July 31st of each odd-numbered year, a plan for the WorkFirst program shall be developed for each region. The plan shall be prepared in consultation with local and regional sources, adapting the statewide WorkFirst program to achieve maximum effect for the participants and the communities within which they reside. Local consultation shall include to the greatest extent possible input from local and regional planning bodies for social services and workforce development. The regional and local administrator shall consult with employers of various sizes, labor representatives, training and education providers, program participants, economic development organizations, community organizations, tribes, and local governments in the preparation of the service area plan.

(6) The secretary has final authority in plan approval or modification. Regional program implementation may deviate from the statewide program if specified in a service area plan, as approved by the secretary. [1997 c 58 § 315.]