

RCW 26.19.025 Quadrennial review of child support guidelines and child support review report—Work group membership—Report to legislature.

(1) Beginning in 2011 and every four years thereafter, the division of child support shall convene a work group to review the child support guidelines and the child support review report described in subsection (7) of this section, consider the data required under subsection (8) of this section, and determine if the application of the child support guidelines results in appropriate support orders. Membership of the work group shall be determined as provided in this subsection.

(a) The president of the senate shall appoint one member from each of the two largest caucuses of the senate;

(b) The speaker of the house of representatives shall appoint one member from each of the two largest caucuses of the house of representatives;

(c) The governor, in consultation with the division of child support, shall appoint the following members:

(i) The director of the division of child support;

(ii) A professor of law specializing in family law;

(iii) A representative from the Washington state bar association's family law executive committee;

(iv) An economist;

(v) A representative of the tribal community;

(vi) Two representatives from the superior court judges' association, including a superior court judge and a court commissioner who is familiar with child support issues;

(vii) A representative from the administrative office of the courts;

(viii) A prosecutor appointed by the Washington association of prosecuting attorneys;

(ix) A representative from legal services;

(x) Three noncustodial parents, each of whom may be a representative of an advocacy group, an attorney, or an individual, with at least one representing the interests of low-income, noncustodial parents;

(xi) Three custodial parents, each of whom may be a representative of an advocacy group, an attorney, or an individual, with at least one representing the interests of low-income, custodial parents; and

(xii) An administrative law judge appointed by the office of administrative hearings.

(2) Appointments to the work group shall be made by December 1, 2010, and every four years thereafter. The governor shall appoint the chair from among the work group membership.

(3) The division of child support shall provide staff support to the work group, and shall carefully consider all input received from interested organizations and individuals during the review process.

(4) The work group may form an executive committee, create subcommittees, designate alternative representatives, and define other procedures, as needed, for operation of the work group.

(5) Legislative members of the work group shall be reimbursed for travel expenses under RCW 44.04.120. Nonlegislative members, except those representing an employee or organization, are entitled to be reimbursed for travel expenses in accordance with RCW 43.03.050 and 43.03.060.

(6) By October 1, 2011, and every four years thereafter, the work group shall report its findings and recommendations to the legislature, including recommendations for legislative action, if necessary.

(7) The division of child support must prepare a child support review report for the use of each quadrennial work group. This report, along with the data described in subsection (8) of this section, must be used in the review of the child support guidelines to ensure that deviations from the guidelines are limited and guideline amounts are appropriate based on criteria established by the division of child support, as directed by relevant state and federal law.

(8) During the quadrennial review, the data considered by the work group must include:

(a) Economic data on the cost of raising children; labor market data by occupation and skill level for the state and local job markets including, but not limited to, unemployment rates, employment rates, hours worked, and earnings; the impact of the guidelines' policies and amounts on parents who have family incomes below two hundred percent of the federal poverty level; and factors that influence employment rates and compliance with child support orders among parents who are obligated to pay support; and

(b) Case data, gathered through sampling or other methods, on the application of, and deviations from, the child support guidelines, as well as the rates of default and imputed child support orders and orders determined using the low-income adjustment. The analysis must also include a comparison of payments on child support orders by case characteristics, including whether the order was entered by default, based on imputed income, or determined using the low-income adjustment. [2019 c 275 § 1; 2011 c 21 § 2; 2007 c 313 § 5; 1991 c 367 § 26.]

Findings—2007 c 313: "Federal law requires the states to periodically review and update their child support guidelines. Accurate and consistent reporting of the terms of child support orders entered by the courts or administrative agencies in Washington state is necessary in order to accomplish a review of the child support guidelines. In addition, a process for review of the guidelines should be established to ensure the integrity of any reviews undertaken to comply with federal law." [2007 c 313 § 1.]

Severability—Effective date—Captions not law—1991 c 367: See notes following RCW 26.09.015.