



Legislation Text

File #: 151382, **Version:** 0

151382
ORIGINAL
ALD. BOHL

Resolution urging the Secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Health Services to request a waiver from the FoodShare Employment and Training Program.

This resolution urges Secretary Kitty Rhoades of the Wisconsin Department of Health Services to consider the statistics of the Milwaukee County's FoodShare Employment Training Program administered by ResCare and to request a waiver from the U.S. Department of Agriculture to exempt Milwaukee County from compulsory participation in the program.

Whereas, The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program for the state of Wisconsin is known as the FoodShare Wisconsin program, which was created to stop hunger and improve nutrition and health; and

Whereas, The individuals or families who use FoodShare include people of all ages who are employed but have low incomes, are living on small or fixed incomes, have lost their jobs, or have disabilities and are unable to work; and

Whereas, In 2013, Governor Scott Walker announced Wisconsin's intention to require work for food assistance and the Legislature approved \$24.5 million in State tax funds for 2015-16 plus an additional \$27.4 million in federal funding to implement statewide work requirements for the poor; and

Whereas, Since April 1, 2015, the FoodShare program has required all nonexempt able-bodied adults without dependents on FoodShare to comply with a work requirement by enrolling in employment and worker training programs offered by the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, Department of Children and Families or Department of Workforce Development, or face a 3-month time limitation on their FoodShare benefits; and

Whereas, In Milwaukee County, the FoodShare Employment and Training Program is a free program that offers services to help FoodShare members build their job skills and find job opportunities; and

Whereas, The company ResCare coordinates and administers the FoodShare Employment and Training Program by providing services such as employability plans and work experience in Milwaukee County; and

Whereas, The FoodShare Employment and Training Program is compulsory for able-bodied adults without dependents; and

Whereas, If able-bodied adults without dependent children enrolled in FoodShare choose not to meet the work requirement through employment or participation in a work program, they will be limited to 3 months of FoodShare benefits in a 36-month period until they meet the work requirement, meet an exemption, or the 36-month period has passed; and

Whereas, The work requirement can be met by any of the following:

1. Working at least 80 hours each month.
2. Participating in an allowable work program such as FoodShare Employment and Training, Wisconsin Works or certain programs under the Workforce Investment Act for a minimum of 80 hours each month.
3. Both working and participating in an allowable work program for a combined total of at least 80 hours

each month.
; and

Whereas, The Department of Health Services reported that 53% of the adults enrolled in the FoodShare Employment and Training Program through ResCare lost their benefits, and 7% of the adults received full or part-time jobs or a community service jobs; and

Whereas, On an average, 2,700 Milwaukee County residents lose their FoodShare benefits every month due to FoodShare Employment and Training case closure, which could result in 32,000 people in Milwaukee losing FoodShare by July 2016; and

Whereas, The FoodShare program offers an alternative from dependency upon food pantries and soup kitchens and lets individuals buy food from stores; and

Whereas, According to the Hunger Task Force, states with areas of high unemployment are allowed an option to implement voluntary FoodShare Employment and Training programs, free of time-limited benefits; and

Whereas, The State can request a waiver from the time limits for FoodShare in Milwaukee County and create a voluntary FoodShare Training and Employment Program; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, By the Common Council of the City of Milwaukee, that the City of Milwaukee urges the Secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Health Services to request, for Milwaukee County, a waiver from the U.S. Department of Agriculture for compulsory participation in the FoodShare Employment and Training Program; and, be it

Further Resolved, That the State is requested to cancel the contract with ResCare based on unsatisfactory employment outcomes; and, be it

Further Resolved, That Milwaukee County is urged to establish voluntary training programs and invest in the Wisconsin Technical College System and local companies to provide employment and training placement with employers in Milwaukee; and, be it

Further Resolved, That the City Clerk shall send copies of this resolution to Kitty Rhoades, Secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, and the Hunger Task Force.

LRB162076
La-Wanda G. Fletcher
12/22/2015