



Program Contact:

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For more information about Seasonal Child Care, visit:

www.del.wa.gov/help/seasonal.aspx

State Fiscal Year 2012 SCC budget:

- General Fund-State: \$1 million
- Federal Child Care and Development Fund: \$6.7 million
- Collective bargaining agreement: \$917,000

SCC statewide average monthly caseload (families served):

SFY11: 582

SFY10: 524

SFY09: 719

What is the Seasonal Child Care subsidy program?

The Seasonal Child Care (SCC) program pays child care subsidies to eligible seasonal workers who cultivate, harvest or process fruit trees and crops in Washington. The program's purpose is to help provide safe, licensed child care while parents work in agricultural settings. Eligible families must live in: Adams, Benton, Chelan, Douglas, Franklin, Grant, Kittitas, Okanogan, Skagit, Walla Walla, Whatcom or Yakima counties.

Recent changes to SCC

SCC historically was administered by the state through contracts with community-based organizations. The contractors were located within geographic regions where there is high agriculturally related employment. The contractors reached out to families, helped them apply, and determined whether they were eligible.

In Spring 2011, DEL and the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) made substantial changes to SCC to reduce program administrative costs and help preserve limited funding for services to eligible families.

DEL moved SCC administration from community-based organizations to DSHS beginning July 1, 2011, resulting in a net savings of more than \$1 million. Also, DEL changed family eligibility rules to comply with state and federal laws and to allow more flexibility for families:

- **Cooperation with support enforcement:** SB 5921, passed during the 2011 legislative session, requires that both Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) and SCC participants cooperate with support enforcement unless the family has a "good cause" exception.
- **Enforcement of federal citizenship and immigration rules:** Federal law requires that children who receive a federally funded child care subsidy legally reside in the United States. This requirement applies only to the child who receives the child care subsidy; the status of parents and other siblings is not considered when determining a child's eligibility.
- **Verification and determination of income:** DEL changed the income verification policy to align with WCCC income verification rules and to allow more flexibility for families. Previously, income was determined by averaging the family's income over a 12-month period, which required pay stubs from the previous year. Now, families have the option of providing three months of pay stubs, the previous year's W2 or an employer's statement.

Outreach to families about SCC

DEL and DSHS continue to work to help ensure eligible families are aware of and have access to SCC. Over the summer and into fall, DSHS deployed its mobile community services office (CSO) to provide outreach and face-to-face interaction with potential clients. The mobile CSO is staffed with bilingual workers who provide one-on-one application assistance. Bilingual media outreach and use of social media has helped ensure widespread awareness of these opportunities for application assistance in:

- Mount Vernon
- Kennewick
- Pasco
- Wenatchee
- Mattawa
- Sunnyside
- Omak
- Oroville
- Moses Lake

DEL also has dedicated funding to a current DSHS contract with nonprofit WithinReach, which conducts Basic Food outreach for the agency. DEL's funding allows WithinReach to conduct culturally appropriate outreach and application assistance to families.

Challenges in implementing changes to SCC

Two main challenges arose when DEL moved SCC administration to DSHS on July 1:

Issue: All DSHS call center staff were trained on the SCC eligibility process; however, after the training, an error was discovered in DEL's policy manual, which stated that a family was ineligible for SCC if they had received Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) during the previous 12 months. This was a remnant of an outdated emergency WAC. The correct policy states that families are not eligible for SCC if they are currently receiving TANF benefits. This policy error resulted in the inappropriate denial of some applications.

Solution: The policy manual has been updated and applications are being correctly processed. DSHS reviewed all SCC denials between July 1 and the discovery of this error in the policy manual to help ensure eligible families have access to SCC.

Issue: There was some confusion by DSHS child care workers and local seasonal employers regarding the employment and income verification. Some employers created an income verification template that included all of their employees and a salary range. When determining the income, the child care workers used the high end of the salary range instead of an average, which resulted in many families being determined ineligible based on salary.

Solution: DEL and DSHS have worked to help ensure workers and employers understand the income verification process.