

- *The purpose of Positive Prevention is to provide support to families while they pursue alternatives to WorkFirst.*
- *Alternative services include:*
 - *Child Support*
 - *Unemployment Benefits*
 - *Child Care*
 - *Basic Food*
 - *Medical Assistance*
 - *Diversion Cash Assistance*

What is Positive Prevention?

When a family applies for TANF, the department will conduct a thorough screening process to determine if the family has potential income or other resources that would reduce or eliminate their need for WorkFirst. The purpose is not to “prevent” families from receiving WorkFirst, but to provide support to families while they pursue alternatives.

What support is available?

Basic Food Benefits and Medical Assistance: The department will process the application for Basic Food and medical assistance as quickly as possible.

Diversion Cash Assistance: If the parent will get income from another source (such as Unemployment Insurance, child support, or from a job), but that income won’t start immediately, the department can authorize Diversion Cash Assistance (DCA) to help pay expenses until the income starts. DCA can be authorized one time during a 12-month period and the amount can be up to \$1500. The parent agrees that if they come on TANF during the 12-month DCA period, they will repay a proportionate share of the DCA amount. Results show that 75% of families who receive DCA do not enter WorkFirst within 12 months.

Child Care: When the parent has a job, the department can also set up Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) which, after a co-payment, will pay child care expenses while the parent works.

Child Support: During the interview, staff can access the Support Enforcement Management System (SEMS) to get information about child support income, and make a referral for non-assistance child support for those parents who do not pursue WorkFirst.

Unemployment Benefits: Referring parents to apply for Unemployment Insurance when their work history makes a referral appropriate.

The key to helping parents find alternatives to WorkFirst is to have a thorough discussion with them about options and possibilities. Letting the parent know that there are alternatives to WorkFirst will give them the information they need to make the best choice for their family. The department can provide the support the family needs while they wait for an alternative source of income, with the result that the family is better off financially.

Program contact:

Amber Gillum
(360) 902-7657
amber.gillum@ofm.wa.gov

For more information about the WorkFirst program, visit www.workfirst.wa.gov