

Performance Evaluation Fact Sheet  
SJ 26 and Other Committee Priorities

**THE OFFICES OF PUBLIC ASSISTANCE AND ECONOMIC SECURITY  
PROGRAMS IN THE 2013 SESSION**

**ISSUE STATEMENT**

SJ 26 reflects legislative interest related to DPHHS and the state-wide management and funding of programs impacted by the economic recession, budget reductions, and Medicaid changes.

During the 2011 session, legislators voiced concerns about:

- The economic recession - impact on staff workloads due to caseload increases and continuing re-evaluations of current clients
- Budget reductions - lowered funding available for staff resources
- Medicaid - eligibility expansion and determination

The goal of this issue is to enable the legislature to address and establish appropriations for the next biennium that impact: 1) Workload, primarily at the Offices of Public Assistance (OPA) throughout the state, with a focus on staffing levels, efficient administration, and technology; and 2) the major economic security programs such as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP/food stamps) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and Medicaid.<sup>1</sup>

**History and Purpose of Program or Item**

Legislators addressed the economic downturn as well as the present state of the economy during the past session and at more recent legislative interim committee meetings. They voiced concern about the three broad issues mentioned above as well as staffing for the OPA eligibility units serving clients applying for the major support programs: SNAP; TANF; and Medicaid. Legislators voiced concern about:

- The recession as it relates to OPA staff workload due to increasing caseload numbers as well as the cost of benefit services
- The launch of two technology projects that increased OPA workload due to:
  - The dual entry required by OPA staff during the implementation of the Combined Healthcare Information and Montana Eligibility System (CHIMES) which, combined with the increase of applications at many OPAs, caused workloads for field staff to increase
  - The implementation of the Document Management System, which also created additional workload
- The possible impact of Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010 (ACA) and health exchanges on DPHHS eligibility staff workload as well as any need/changes in technology (Note footnote #1)

***Funding***

There are programs that are funded via a combination of federal revenue, state special revenue, and general fund. Some benefits, such as SNAP, are funded entirely with federal revenue. For example, the 2013 biennium legislative

<sup>1</sup> While the focus of this issue is the impact of workload, caseload, and federal changes on the OPAs and selected benefits, LFD staff also has a related issue paper addressing Medicaid eligibility expansion relative to ACA and Healthy Montana Kids (HMK). See the SJ 26 fact sheet for Impact of Medicaid Eligibility Expansion.

appropriation for the OPAs is about \$42.4 million, of which about \$18.9 million is general fund and \$21.7 is federal revenue. The balance is state special revenue of about \$1.8 million.

The legislature appropriated SNAP benefits at about \$220.0 million federal funds each year of the 2013 biennium based on a projected average monthly caseload estimate of nearly 75,000 for FY 2013. At the end of FY 2011, there were over \$204.0 million in expenditures and an average of 60,928 for monthly caseload.

## **MEASURES FOR DETERMINING OUTCOMES AND EFFECTIVENESS**

### Outcomes and Tasks

The outcome of this issue is to prepare helpful information to enable the 2013 Legislature to make appropriation decisions relevant to the OPAs and the clients they serve.

Tasks include provision of:

- Historic and current caseload information for major support programs and/or benefits as selected by the LFC
  - Possibilities include SNAP, Medicaid, LIEAP, foster care, child care, and TANF
- Personal services costs for OPA or other programs as selected
  - Possibilities include application data, the number of authorized FTE compared to positions filled, and overtime paid
- Current information on technology systems
- Updates on eligibility integration with the Montana health insurance exchange and/or ACA (Footnote #1)

## **CURRENT STATUS**

LFC reviews this submission and provides feedback.

## **POTENTIAL OPTIONS OR DECISION POINTS**

Potential options for LFD consideration for this meeting are:

1. Decide whether to continue to review this issue as a committee or a workgroup
2. Decide if a review would include all or certain components
3. Change or add to outcomes or tasks
4. Take no action