

# Minutes

## Child Support Schedule Workgroup

Subcommittee: Self-Support Reserve

June 16, 2023 3:00 pm – 5:00 pm

Teams Webinar | [Miro Board](#)

## Attendance

### Members Appearing:

Amy Roark	Joy Moore	Kaha Arte
Raymond Allen		<i>Facilitator: Rachelle Jennings</i>
		<i>Notetaker: Lucas Camacho</i>

Public Attendees: None

## Agenda Details

### 1. Welcome

### 2. Review Draft Summary

#### a. Overview of Mission and Areas of Focus

- Recommending a Self-Support Reserve calculation that reflects actual cost of supporting a single-person household
- Adding proper deductions to the worksheets to more accurately assess income.
- Proposed adding a 3<sup>rd</sup> item: Consideration of a child support abatement framework (similar to incarceration), to aid recovery for those with court-ordered behavioral health and substance use disorders.
  - The subcommittee agrees to add this to the report.

#### b. Key Issues

- Recommending a Self-Support Reserve Calculation
  - Are the Federal Poverty Guidelines a consistently effective measure of what it costs to support a household?
  - What comprises basic needs?
- Deductions
  - What should be included as mandatory educational expenses?
  - Regarding spousal maintenance, the federal government counts it as income to the payer, whereas Washington counts it as income to the payee. Should we make a change to the worksheets to reflect federal policy?
- Abatement
  - Should relief be given to noncustodial parents who are unable to work (or need to work fewer hours) due to court-ordered substance abuse/mental health treatment?

#### c. Findings and Recommendations

- The subcommittee recommends increasing the Self-Support Reserve to 180% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines. The current threshold is 125%.
  - Should we change from 180% to 200% to line up more with the [10 year plan to dismantle poverty in WA?](#) (See page 15 of the linked document)

- a. Per this document, it takes 200% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines to meet the basic needs of most Washington families.
  - b. The current proposal of 180% works better with our supporting metrics. Furthermore, members indicated that increasing to 180% from 125% is already a large ask, so going up to 200% might not be feasible. The subcommittee agrees stay with the current 180% proposal.
- The subcommittee recommends amending [RCW 26.19.071 \(Standards for Determination of Income\)](#) to include state insurance premiums actually paid as an expense to be deducted from gross income.
  - The subcommittee recommends amending [26.19.011 \(Definitions\)](#) to define educational expenses.
  - The subcommittee recommends *not* changing the existing law so that spousal maintenance continues to be counted as income to the person actually receiving those payments.
  - The subcommittee recommends the creation of a new RCW to allow noncustodial parents undergoing court-ordered treatment for substance abuse/mental health to apply to have their support debt covered while in treatment.
- d. Finalize Draft Recommendation
    - All recommendations approved by the subcommittee.
- ### 3. Decisions, Tasks, and Next Steps
- a. Report Out for Next Friday
    - We will provide supplementary calculations/income imputation projections (ALICE, AZ model, University of WA study) to support the proposal to increase the Self-Support Reserve to 180% of the federal poverty guidelines.
      - Rachele will add the current Self-Support Reserve figures to this list to provide further context to other group members.
    - This subcommittee is no longer recommending creating a new RCW that mirrors [26.09.325 \(Abatement Based on Incarceration\)](#).
    - This subcommittee is now recommending a new RCW and/or program that would allow noncustodial parents to apply to have their ongoing child support obligation covered while in court-ordered substance use/mental health treatment.

Meeting adjourned at 3:47