Chapter 388-460 WAC

PAYEES ON BENEFIT ISSUANCES

WAC 388-460-0005 Can I choose someone to apply for Basic Food for my assistance unit? Your Basic Food assistance unit (AU) can choose an adult who is not a member of the AU to act on their behalf. This is called an authorized representative.

(1) A responsible member of the AU can name, in writing, an authorized representative. A responsible member of the AU is either:
   (a) The applicant;
   (b) The applicant's spouse;
   (c) Another member of the AU the applicant states is able to conduct business on behalf of all members in the AU.

(2) The AU's authorized representative has the authority to apply for Basic Food on the AU's behalf.

(3) If you receive Basic Food benefits in a qualified drug and alcohol treatment facility under WAC 388-408-0040, you must have an employee of the facility as your authorized representative for Basic Food.

(4) If the authorized representative provides information to the department that causes an AU to have an overpayment, the AU members are liable for the overpayment.

(5) An authorized representative may act on behalf of more than one Basic Food AU only if the community services office administrator approves.

WAC 388-460-0001 Who may be issued cash, child care, medical and Basic Food benefits? (1) Cash and child care assistance may be issued in the name of the following persons:

   (a) A client who is the recipient of the benefits;
   (b) An ineligible parent or other relative getting benefits on behalf of an eligible child;
   (c) A person, facility, organization, institution or agency acting as a protective payee or representative payee for a client;
   (d) A guardian or agent acting on behalf of a client; or
   (e) A vendor of goods or services supplied to an eligible client.

(2) Basic Food benefits are issued to the person named as the head of the assistance unit for Basic Food.

WAC 388-460-0010 Do I have an authorized representative for Basic Food if I live in a treatment center or group home? (1) If you live in a qualified developmental disabilities administration (DDA) group home under WAC 388-408-0040, you may choose to apply for Basic Food benefits:

   (a) On your own behalf;
   (b) Through an authorized representative of your choice; or
   (c) Through the DDA group home acting as your authorized representative.

(2) If you live in a qualified drug and alcohol treatment center under WAC 388-408-0040, you must have an employee of the facility as your authorized representative for Basic Food.

(3) The person acting as authorized representative for residents in a qualified drug and alcohol treatment facility or qualified DDA group home must:

   (a) Be aware of the resident's circumstances;
   (b) Notify the department of any changes in income, resources or circumstances within ten days of the change;
   (c) Use the resident's Basic Food benefits for meals served to the resident; and
(d) Keep enough benefits in the facility's account to transfer one-half of a client's monthly allotment to the client's own account. If the client leaves the facility on or before the fifteenth of the month, the facility must return one half of the client's Basic Food allotment for that month.

(4) When a facility assigns an employee as the authorized representative for residents, the facility accepts responsibility for:
   (a) Any misrepresentation or intentional program violation; and
   (b) Liability for Basic Food benefits held at the facility on behalf of the resident.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 74.04.050, 74.04.055, 74.04.057, 74.04.510. WSR 02-14-083, § 388-460-0030, filed 6/28/02, effective 7/1/02.]

WAC 388-460-0015 Who will the department not allow as an authorized representative for Basic Food? (1) If you are acting as an authorized representative for Basic Food, we disqualify you from being an authorized representative for one year if we determine that you:
   (a)Knowingly provided false information to the department;
   (b) Misrepresented the circumstances of the Basic Food assistance unit (AU); or
   (c) Misused the Basic Food benefits.

(2) If we disqualify you from being an authorized representative for Basic Food, we notify you and the head of the Basic Food AU thirty days before your disqualification starts.

(3) If you are a department employee, a retailer authorized to receive Basic Food benefits, or are disqualified from receiving Basic Food because of an intentional program violation under WAC 38-446-0015, you generally cannot be an authorized representative. If you are in any of these three categories and want to be an authorized representative for Basic Food:
   (a) The AU must have no one else available to be an authorized representative; and
   (b) You must have written approval from the community services office administrator to be the AU's authorized representative.

(4) A public or private nonprofit organization providing meals for homeless persons may not be an authorized representative under any conditions.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 74.04.050, 74.04.055, 74.04.057, 74.04.510. WSR 03-22-038, § 388-460-0015, filed 10/28/03, effective 12/1/03. Statutory Authority: RCW 74.04.050, 74.04.055, 74.04.057, 74.04.510. WSR 98-16-044, § 388-460-0015, filed 7/31/98, effective 9/1/98.]
(b) Repeated requests from the client for extra money for basic essentials such as food, utilities, clothing, and housing;
(c) A series of evictions or utility shut off notices within the last twelve months;
(d) Medical or psychological evaluations showing an inability to handle money;
(e) Persons having had a chemical dependency assessment and who are participating in chemical dependency treatment;
(f) A complaint from businesses showing a pattern of failure to pay bills or rent;
(g) Notice from the office of fraud and accountability that a client illegally used a public assistance electronic benefits transfer (EBT) card or cash obtained with an EBT card two or more times. Illegal use includes infractions, felonies, or violations referenced in WAC 388-412-0046 or 388-446-0020.

(2) A lack of money or a temporary shortage of money because of an emergency does not constitute mismanagement.

(3) When a client has a history of mismanaging money, benefits can be paid through a protective payee or directly to a vendor.

WAC 388-460-0040 When does the department assign a protective payee assigned to TANF/SFA or PWA pregnant or parenting minors? Pregnant or parenting minors who are not emancipated under court order must be assigned to protective payees if the clients are:

(1) Head of a household;
(2) Under age eighteen;
(3) Unmarried; and
(4) Pregnant or have a dependent child.

WAC 388-460-0050 When is a client transferred from a protective payee to guardianship? (1) In emergency cases where a person is physically or mentally unable to manage their own funds, the client is referred to other divisions of the department for full care, including guardianship.

(2) In cases where a child is eligible for TANF/SFA and the caretaker relative does not use the benefits for adequate care of the child, the case can be referred to the attorney general to establish a limited guardianship.

(3) Guardianships are used only if it appears there is a need for services that are expected to last longer than two years.

(4) These guardianships are limited to management of DSHS benefits.

(5) The protective payee plan is changed if a guardian is appointed. The guardian is designated as the payee.

WAC 388-460-0055 What are the protective payee's responsibilities? The protective payee's responsibilities are to:

(1) Manage client cash and child care assistance benefits to pay bills for basic needs, such as housing and utilities, or as directed in the protective payee plans;

(2) Provide money management for client if this item is included in the protective payee plans; and

(3) Provide reports to the department on client progress.

WAC 388-460-0060 When are protective payee plans done? A protective payee plan may be developed when a case is assigned to a protective payee.

(1) A copy of the plan is provided to the protective payee and the client.

(2) All cases must be reviewed:

(a) After an initial three-month period; and

(b) At least every six months beyond the initial period for ongoing cases.

(3) Reviews include evaluation of:

(a) The need for the client to continue in protective payee status;

(b) The need to change the plan; or

(c) The client's potential to assume control of their funds (or be removed from protective payee status); and

(d) Protective payee performance.

WAC 388-460-0065 When is the protective payee status ended and how is a protective payee changed? A client may be removed from a protective payee status when a:

(1) Protective payee requests the client be reassigned;

(2) The department assigns a different protective payee; or

(3) Protective payee is no longer required.

WAC 388-460-0070 What are your fair hearing rights regarding protective payments? You have the right for a fair hearing if you disagree with the department's decision to:

(1) Assign payment of benefits through a protective payee,

(2) Continue the assignment,

(3) Change the protective payee selected for you, or

(4) Change the contents of your protective payee plan.