

2022 Policy Priority: A Diaper Subsidy Program for Washington Families

HB 1947

Representative Noel Frame
&
Representative Jesse Johnson

SB 5838

Senator T'wina Nobles
&
Senator Ann Rivers

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Diaper cash assistance: Addressing diaper need for Washington families

Unlike other essentials such as food or health insurance, no public assistance programs help families pay for diapers – and diapers can cost up to \$100 a month for a newborn. Low-income families spend nearly 14% of their monthly income on diapers.

When families cannot afford diapers, parents replace them with paper towels, plastic bags, or may re-use dirty diapers. Mothers in this situation are more likely to suffer from maternal depression and other mental health issues. Parents who cannot provide disposable diapers for their children are unable to access childcare, impeding their ability to go to work or attend school.

The Policy Solution

- All Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) households with children under the age of three will receive a \$125/month cash grant increase to help pay for diapers. The grant increase will cause a decrease in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, restricted to food purchasing, but will be offset by the overall increase of TANF funds.
- All TANF families with children under three will experience a positive net increase of unrestricted cash of \$40-\$60 a month to help pay for diapers.
- This is a per-household grant increase for 7,000 TANF households with an estimated cost of \$11 million per year.

Time is Now

Diaper need has dramatically intensified during the pandemic, and this policy is a way forward for families in Washington who are furthest from equitable access to basic needs. Before COVID-19, our social safety net had holes and one in three families were unable to access the essentials to keep children safe, warm, and thriving. As of June 2021, diaper prices have increased by 12% in less than two years. Supporting TANF households with increased funds to purchase diapers will address both the continued COVID-19 socio-economic crisis and health equity in our state.



WestSide Baby
basics for children in need

WestSide Baby, a diaper bank in King County, is working in collaboration with the WA Diaper Bank Coalition, representing 10 diaper banks around the state on this policy priority.

