

# **WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE**

**2026 REGULAR SESSION**

**ENGROSSED**

**Committee Substitute**

**for**

**House Bill 5582**

By Delegates Chiarelli, Burkhammer, Foggin, and

Heckert

[Originating in the Standing Committee on Health and  
Human Resources; Reported on February 19, 2026]



1 A BILL to amend and reenact §9-3-6 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, relating to  
2 drug screening of TANF applicants; and extending the expiration date of the program.

*Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:*

**ARTICLE 3. APPLICATION FOR AND GRANTING OF ASSISTANCE.**

**§9-3-6. Program for drug screening of applicants for cash assistance.**

1 (a) As used in this section:

2 (1) "Applicant" means a person who is applying for benefits from the Temporary Assistance  
3 for Needy Families Program.

4 (2) "Board of Review" means the board established in §9-2-6(13) of this code.

5 (3) "Caseworker" means a person employed by the department with responsibility for  
6 making a reasonable suspicion determination during the application process for Temporary  
7 Assistance for Needy Families Program.

8 (4) "Child Protective Services" means the agency within the department responsible for  
9 investigating reports of child abuse and neglect as required in §49-2-802 of this code.

10 (5) "Department" means the Department of Human Services.

11 (6) "Drug screen" or "drug screening" means any analysis regarding substance abuse  
12 conducted by the Department of Human Services on applicants for assistance from the Temporary  
13 Assistance for Needy Families Program.

14 (7) "Drug test" or "drug testing" means a drug test which tests urine or an oral fluid rinse  
15 test for amphetamines (amphetamine and methamphetamine) cocaine, marijuana, opiates  
16 (codeine and morphine), phencyclidine, barbiturates, benzodiazepines, methadone,  
17 propoxyphene, and expanded opiates (oxycodone, hydromorphone, hydrocodone,  
18 oxymorphone).

19 (8) "Secretary" means the secretary of the department or his or her designee.

20 (9) "Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program" means assistance provided  
21 through ongoing cash benefits pursuant to 42 U. S. C. § 601 *et seq.* operated in West Virginia as  
22 the West Virginia Works Program pursuant to §9-9-1 *et seq.* of this code.

23 (b) Subject to federal approval, the secretary shall implement and administer a program to  
24 drug screen any adult applying for assistance from the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families  
25 Program. The secretary shall administer this program ~~until December 31, 2026~~ 2030.

26 (c) Reasonable suspicion exists if:

27 (1) A case worker determines, based upon the result of the drug screen, that the applicant  
28 demonstrates qualities indicative of substance abuse based upon the indicators of the drug  
29 screen; or

30 (2) An applicant has been convicted of a drug-related offense within the three years  
31 immediately prior to an application for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program and  
32 whose conviction becomes known as a result of a drug screen as set forth in this section.

33 (d) Presentation of a valid prescription for a detected substance that is prescribed by a  
34 health care provider authorized to prescribe a controlled substance is an absolute defense for  
35 failure of any drug test administered under the provisions of this section.

36 (e) Upon a determination by the case worker of reasonable suspicion as set forth in this  
37 section an applicant shall be required to complete a drug test. The cost of administering the drug  
38 test and initial substance abuse testing program is the responsibility of the Department of Human  
39 Services. Any applicant whose drug test results are positive may request that the drug test  
40 specimen be sent to an alternative drug-testing facility for additional drug testing. Any applicant  
41 who requests an additional drug test at an alternative drug-testing facility shall be required to pay  
42 the cost of the alternative drug test.

43 (f) Any applicant who has a positive drug test shall complete a substance abuse treatment  
44 and counseling program and a job skills program approved by the secretary. An applicant may  
45 continue to receive benefits from the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program while

46 participating in the substance abuse treatment and counseling program or job skills program.  
47 Upon completion of both a substance abuse treatment and counseling program and a job skills  
48 program, the applicant is subject to periodic drug screening and testing as determined by the  
49 secretary in rule. Subject to applicable federal laws, any applicant for Temporary Assistance for  
50 Needy Families Program who fails to complete, or refuses to participate in, the substance abuse  
51 treatment and counseling program or job skills program as required under this subsection is  
52 ineligible to receive Temporary Assistance for Needy Families benefits until he or she is  
53 successfully enrolled in substance abuse treatment and counseling and job skills programs. Upon  
54 a second positive drug test, an applicant shall be ordered to complete a second substance abuse  
55 treatment and counseling program and job skills program. He or she shall be suspended from the  
56 Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program for a period of 12 months, or until he or she  
57 completes both a substance abuse treatment and counseling program and a job skills program.  
58 Upon a third positive drug test an applicant shall be permanently terminated from the Temporary  
59 Assistance for Needy Families Program subject to applicable federal law.

60 (g) Any applicant who refuses a drug screen or a drug test is ineligible for assistance.

61 (h) The secretary shall order an investigation and home visit from Child Protective Services  
62 on any applicant whose benefits are suspended and who has not designated a protective payee or  
63 whose benefits are terminated due to failure to pass a drug test. This investigation and home visit  
64 may include a face-to-face interview with the child, if appropriate; the development of a protection  
65 plan; and, if necessary for the health and well-being of the child, may also involve law  
66 enforcement. This investigation and home visit shall be followed by a report detailing  
67 recommended action which Child Protective Services shall undertake. Child Protective Services is  
68 responsible for providing, directing, or coordinating the appropriate and timely delivery of services  
69 to any child who is the subject of any investigation and home visit conducted pursuant to this  
70 section. In cases where Child Protective Services determines that the best interests of the child  
71 require court action, it shall initiate the appropriate legal proceeding.

72 (i) Any other adult members of a household that includes a person declared ineligible for  
73 the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program pursuant to this section shall, if otherwise  
74 eligible, continue to receive Temporary Assistance for Needy Families benefits.

75 (j)(1) No dependent child's eligibility for benefits under the Temporary Assistance for  
76 Needy Families Program may be affected by a parent's failure to pass a drug test.

77 (2) If pursuant to this section a parent is deemed ineligible for the Temporary Assistance for  
78 Needy Families Program, the dependent child's eligibility is not affected and an appropriate  
79 protective payee shall be designated to receive benefits on behalf of the child.

80 (3) The parent may choose to designate another person as a protective payee to receive  
81 benefits for the minor child. The designated person shall be an immediate family member, or if an  
82 immediate family member is not available or declines the option, another person may be  
83 designated.

84 (4) The secretary shall screen and approve the designated person.

85 (k)(1) An applicant who is determined by the secretary to be ineligible to receive benefits  
86 pursuant to subsection (f) of this section due to a failure to participate in a substance abuse  
87 treatment and counseling program or a job skills program who can later document successful  
88 completion of a drug treatment program approved by the secretary may reapply for benefits six  
89 months after the completion of the substance abuse treatment and counseling program or job  
90 skills program. An applicant who has met the requirements of this subdivision and reapplies is  
91 also required to submit to a drug test and is subject to the provisions of subsection (f) of this  
92 section.

93 (2) An applicant may reapply only once pursuant to the exceptions contained in this  
94 subsection.

95 (3) The cost of any drug screen or test and drug treatment provided under this subsection  
96 is the responsibility of the individual being screened and receiving treatment.

97 (l) An applicant who is denied assistance under this section may request a review of the  
98 denial by the Board of Review. The results of a drug screen or test are admissible without further  
99 authentication or qualification in the review of denial by the Board of Review and in any appeal.  
100 The Board of Review shall provide a fair, impartial, and expeditious grievance and appeal process  
101 to applicants who have been denied Temporary Assistance for Needy Families benefits pursuant  
102 to the provisions of this section. The Board of Review shall make findings regarding the denial of  
103 benefits and issue a decision which either verifies the denial or reverses the decision to deny  
104 benefits. Any applicant adversely affected or aggrieved by a final decision or order of the Board of  
105 Review may seek judicial review of that decision.

106 (m) The secretary shall ensure the confidentiality of all drug screen and drug test results  
107 administered as part of this program. Drug screen and test results shall be used only for the  
108 purpose of determining eligibility for the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program. At no  
109 time may drug screen or test results be released to any public or private person or entity or any  
110 law-enforcement agency, except as otherwise authorized by this section.

111 (n) The secretary shall promulgate emergency rules pursuant to the provisions of §29A-3-1  
112 *et seq.* of this code to prescribe the design, operation, and standards for the implementation of this  
113 section.

114 (o) A person who intentionally misrepresents any material fact in an application filed under  
115 the provisions of this section is guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction thereof, shall be  
116 punished by a fine of not less than \$100 nor more than \$1,000 or by confinement in jail not to  
117 exceed six months, or by both fine and confinement.

118 (p) The secretary shall report to the Joint Committee on Government and Finance by  
119 ~~December 31, 2016, and annually after that until the conclusion of the program~~ on the status of the  
120 federal approval and program described in this section. The report shall include, but is not limited  
121 to:

122 (1) The total number of applicants who were deemed ineligible to receive benefits under  
123 the program due to a positive drug test for controlled substances;

124 (2) The number of applicants for whom there was a reasonable suspicion due to a  
125 conviction of a drug-related offense within the five years prior to an application for assistance;

126 (3) The number of those applicants that receive benefits after successful completion of a  
127 drug treatment program as specified in this section; and

128 (4) The total cost to operate the program.

129 (q) Should federal approval not be given for any portion of the program as set forth in this  
130 section, the secretary shall implement the program to meet the federal objections and continue to  
131 operate a program consistent with the purposes of this section.

132 (r) For the purposes of the program contained in this section, pursuant to the authority and  
133 option granted by 21 U. S. C. § 862a(d)(1)(A) to the states, West Virginia exempts all persons  
134 domiciled within the state from the application of 21 U. S. C. § 862a(a).