

SENIOR INFORMATION & ASSISTANCE

Northwest Regional Council
600 Lakeway Drive
Bellingham, WA 98225
(360) 738-2500 (V/TDD) or (360) 380-8121

COPES (Community Options Program Entry System): How to Apply

COPES is a Medicaid program funded through the Washington Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) – Home and Community Services (HCS) office. COPES is intended to provide long term caregiver assistance to people who might otherwise be at risk of nursing home placement.

It includes the following:

- ❖ COPES personal care and services are provided in the home, congregate care or assisted living facilities, and adult family homes.
- ❖ COPES personal care services include help with activities of daily living such as ambulation, dressing, bathing, toileting, and certain household tasks.
- ❖ COPES recipients receive a Medicaid identification card, which may pay for other medical expenses including: physician services, home health services and Medicare premiums.
- ❖ COPES may also provide home delivered meals, Adult Day Health program, home safety improvements, and personal emergency response units.
- ❖ COPES recipients are assigned a case manager to help plan and monitor their care.

Below are the steps to applying for COPES

- ❶ Request a financial application by calling the HCS office at (360) 756-5750 or 1-800-239-8292 or pick up an application at the following location: 600 Lakeway Drive, Bellingham.
- ❷ If you have questions regarding the application and would like assistance, contact Senior Information & Assistance at (360) 738-2500 to make an appointment.
- ❸ Answer every question on the application by checking “yes” or “no” and filling in appropriate blanks. Sign the application in the two places required, at top and bottom of form.
- ❹ You will need to submit documentation to verify your answers; copies of bank statements, picture ID, Social Security Card, etc. Refer to the checklist included with the application for specifics.
- ❺ Mail or return the completed application to the HCS office at 600 Lakeway Dr. Bellingham.
- ❻ A financial worker will review your application and determine your financial eligibility. In some cases further documentation is requested.
- ❼ After this a functional assessment will be completed. You will be contacted by a social worker from HCS who will speak with you on the phone and assign a social worker to conduct the “CARE” assessment of the person needing care. This interview will take place in the home or facility. The interview will cover all the activities of daily living with which the person needs assistance, personal health information and more.
- ❽ Once the financial worker and the social worker determine eligibility, services are initiated. A service plan will be developed and approved by the recipient. The entire process may take 4 to 6 weeks from the time you submit an application.

This handout outlines the COPES program application process. For financial criteria please see the following Columbia Legal Services handouts available at www.washingtonlawhelp.org ⇒ Aging/Elder Law, or from Senior I&A:

- *Questions and Answers on the COPES Program*
- *Estate Recovery for Medical Services paid for by the State*