
Human Services Committee

HB 2827

Brief Description: Expanding the department of community, trade, and economic development's housing pilot program.

Sponsors: Representatives Roberts, Kagi, Dickerson, Appleton, Darneille, Pedersen, Walsh, O'Brien, Sullivan and Goodman.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Expands the Department of Community, Trade, and Economic Development's housing assistance pilot program.

Hearing Date: 1/29/08

Staff: Jim Morishima (786-7191).

Background:

Last year, ESSB 6157 required the Department of Community, Trade, and Economic Development (DCTED) to establish a pilot program that would provide grants to organizations that provide housing assistance to offenders reentering the community. Organizations receiving funds under the pilot program must:

- Operate in collaboration with a community justice center existing in the same location as the pilot site;
- Offer transitional supportive housing that includes individual support and mentoring, life skills training, and close working relationships with community justice centers and community corrections officers;
- Give priority to offenders who are designated as high risk or high needs as well as those determined not to have a viable release plan by the Department of Corrections (DOC);
- Optimize available funding by utilizing cost-effective community-based shared housing arrangements or other non-institutional living arrangements; and
- Provide housing assistance for a period of time not to exceed 12 months for a participating offender.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

The DOC is required to collaborate with organizations receiving funds under the pilot program to:

- Help identify appropriate housing solutions in the community for offenders;
- Facilitate, where possible, an offender's application for housing;
- Identify training enhancements that may assist an offender to effectively transition into the community;
- Maintain communication between the organization, the housing provider, and corrections staff; and
- Assist the offender in accessing resources and services available through the DOC and a community justice center.

The DCTED was required to select at least two pilot sites by January 1, 2008. The DCTED selected four organizations to receive funding, one in King County, one in Pierce County, one in Spokane County, and one in Clark County.

The DCTED was authorized to use up to 20 percent of the funding appropriated for the pilot to support the development of additional supportive housing resources for offenders who are reentering the community. The DCTED has not exercised its authority to use 20 percent of the funds in this manner.

Summary of Bill:

The DCTED must expand the housing assistance pilot program to include sites in other counties. In addition to community justice centers, an organization receiving funds must collaborate with community transition coordination networks in the same location as the organization, if any. A county's lack of a community justice center or a community transition coordination network, by itself, does not make an organization ineligible for funding. The DCTED's authority to use 20 percent of the funds to support the development of additional housing resources is eliminated.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 18, 2008.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.