

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 1183

As of February 16, 2022

Title: An act relating to creating the home sharing support grant program.

Brief Description: Creating the home sharing support grant program.

Sponsors: Representatives Caldier and Johnson, J..

Brief History: Passed House: 1/28/22, 95-0.

Committee Activity: Housing & Local Government: 2/16/22.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Creates the Home Sharing Support Grant Program in the Department of Commerce, with program funding provided by the state's portion of local homeless housing and assistance surcharges.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING & LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Staff: Brandon Popovac (786-7465)

Background: Home Sharing Study. The 2019-21 state operating budget included a general fund appropriation for the University of Washington School of Public Health to study home sharing of privately owned residencies, provide an analysis of home share programs across the country and similar initiatives in Washington state, and make recommendations to establish and sustain home share programs in Washington State. One of the study recommendations in the final February 2021 report is to expand Department of Commerce (Commerce) grants to home sharing organizations.

Homeless Housing and Assistance Surcharges. The state and local homeless housing programs receive funding from the homeless housing and assistance surcharges collected by each county auditor when a document is recorded. The following two surcharges related to homeless services are collected by the county, with shares of the funds distributed to the

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county and to the state:

- \$62 Local Homeless Housing and Assistance surcharge; and
- \$8 additional Local Homeless Housing and Assistance surcharge.

Approximately 60 percent of the \$62 surcharge is retained by the county for local homeless housing and assistance. The remainder is distributed to the state for deposit in the Home Security Fund (HSF) and is used by Commerce to manage the state homeless housing program, issue private rental housing payments, and provide certain housing and shelter support.

Approximately 90 percent of the \$8 surcharge is retained by the county for local homeless housing and assistance and 10 percent is distributed to the state for deposit in the HSF. The funds distributed to the state may be used by Commerce for managing the state homeless housing program, including the costs of creating the statewide homeless housing strategic plan, measuring performance, providing technical assistance to local governments, and managing the homeless housing grant program.

Summary of Bill: Home Sharing Support Grant Program. The Home Sharing Support Grant Program is created in Commerce to provide financial support to nonprofit organizations that operate home sharing programs. Commerce must manage, oversee, and evaluate program applications and award grants annually. Commerce may establish application procedures and criteria for the receipt of grants. Grants may be used only for administrative costs of home sharing programs.

"Home sharing program" is defined as a program operated by a nonprofit organization in which the organization assists homeless persons, or persons at risk of becoming homeless, with locating individuals seeking to share their residences, and facilitates meetings between program applicants who may choose to enter into a home sharing arrangement on mutually agreeable terms. Services provided by home sharing programs may include, but are not limited to, screening of program applicants for compatibility, background checks of applicants, case management, and conflict resolution.

Homeless Housing and Assistance Surcharges. Commerce may use funds from the state's portion of the \$62 and \$8 local homeless housing and assistance surcharges to fund the program.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Home sharing programs are a symbiotic relationship to get people out of homelessness and into housing. Home sharing programs cost an average of \$1,000 per person housed per year, which is less expensive than other Commerce housing programs. In comparison, rapid rehousing costs are approximately \$14,000 per individual per year. Public funds for similar programs have not made it to the eastern side of the state. Home sharing is a relationship-based solution to assist certain individuals looking for affordable housing, including middle income households and those experiencing homelessness. Such programs help persons earning less than 50 percent of area median income and often provide the only housing option available.

OTHER: Home sharing programs are a helpful tool in efforts to house persons in need of stable and affordable housing, especially in preventing people from entering into homelessness. Home sharing programs are already an allowable use under the state portion of document recording fee revenue, and not a lot of counties have shared their document recording fee revenue for such programs. Commerce is capable of running the program along with any directed funding, and have done so recently, for example, as part of Office of Homeless Youth, municipal work, and diversion programs.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Michelle Caldier, Prime Sponsor; Mark Merrill, Associated Ministries.

OTHER: Dave Pringle, Dept. of Commerce.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.