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**HOUSE BILL 2282**

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**State of Washington 66th Legislature 2020 Regular Session**

**By** Representatives Walsh, Van Werven, Appleton, Gildon, Chambers, Griffey, Young, Eslick, Irwin, Corry, Dent, and Mosbrucker

AN ACT Relating to creating a grant program for converting unused public buildings to housing for homeless persons; adding a new section to chapter 43.330 RCW; and providing an expiration date.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 43.330 RCW to read as follows:

(1) The public building conversion grant program is created in the department. The purpose of this program is to encourage counties to convert unused, publicly owned buildings into housing for homeless persons. The department shall manage, oversee, and evaluate public building conversion grant program applications and shall, subject to appropriation, award grants annually. The department may establish criteria or guidelines to guide counties in the application process. Only counties with a population of one hundred thousand or less are eligible to apply to the department for public building conversion grants.

(2) Counties applying for public building conversion grants must submit an inventory of unused public buildings to the department prior to April 1, 2020. To remain eligible for public building conversion grants, counties must update and resubmit the inventory to the department on a quarterly basis.

(3) Public building conversion grants may be used only for costs related to rehabilitation, retrofitting, and conversion of unused, publicly owned buildings for use as housing for homeless persons. Eligible projects include, but are not limited to, rehabilitation of older buildings and conversion of commercial buildings to residential use or transitional housing.

(4)(a) Except as provided in (b) of this subsection, as a condition of receiving public building conversion grants, a county must certify to the department that it prohibits the illegal possession of controlled substances on the premises or grounds of any building that is converted to housing for homeless persons with grants awarded pursuant to this section.

(b) A county is not required to prohibit the illegal possession of controlled substances on the premises or grounds of temporary shelters providing housing during severe weather events.

(5) Public building conversion grants may not be used for staffing or maintaining buildings converted to housing for the homeless. Costs for staffing and maintenance must be borne by the county.

(6) The department shall adopt policies to ensure that the state's interest will be protected upon the sale or change of use of projects financed in whole or in part under this section, or upon a county's failure to comply with subsection (4) of this section or any other applicable conditions of grant funding. These policies may include, but are not limited to, requiring repayment of the grant upon the sale or change of use of the project or upon a county's failure to comply with the conditions of grant funding.

(7) For purposes of this section, "homeless person" has the same meaning as in RCW 43.185C.010.

(8) This section expires December 31, 2021.

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