
Housing Committee

HB 1810

Brief Description: Ending homelessness in the state of Washington.

Sponsors: Representatives Miloscia, Hunt, Simpson, Darneille, Ormsby, O'Brien, Chase, Santos, Kagi, McDermott and Hasegawa.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Assigns the Department of Community, Trade, and Economic Development (DCTED) and each county government (or city government in some cases) with ending homelessness within 10 years.
- Creates the Homeless Housing Program to be administered by DCTED on the state level which includes a local county or city-based program funding component, the Homeless Housing Grant Program, and the coordination of the Washington Homeless Census Program.
- Creates a funding source for the Homeless Housing Program by charging a \$10 surcharge for each document recorded by the county auditor.

Hearing Date: 2/10/05

Staff: Robyn Dupuis (786-7166).

Background:

Although there are multiple efforts at the state and local levels to address homeless issues, there exists no coordinated statewide effort with the specific goal of ending homelessness. There is also no systematic means for calculating the total number of homeless individuals in the state, nor for tracking homeless individuals in relation to their housing status.

Summary of Bill:

Homeless Housing Program Overview

Ending homelessness in Washington within 10 years is the responsibility of the Department of Community, Trade, and Economic Development (DCTED) and individual county governments. City governments may choose to assume responsibility for ending homelessness within their boundaries. Such cities are held to the same strict accountability standards and reporting requirements as are Washington counties. The DCTED, as well as all counties and any

participating cities, prepare a strategic plan to end homelessness within 10 years and update that plan annually based upon annually updated homeless census figures and progress made to date.

Program Funding & Use of Funding

The Homeless Housing Program is funded by a \$10 surcharge for each document recorded by the county auditor.

Sixty percent of the funds remain within the county of origin to be used for local programs and projects directly related to the accomplishment of goals outlined in the county's 10 year strategic plan to end homelessness. Any city which assumes responsibility for ending homelessness within its boundaries receives a portion of the county funds proportional to the need within the city as identified by the homeless survey. Programs eligible to be funded by county and/or city revenue include, among others:

- homeless shelters;
- homeless supportive services;
- rental assistance programs;
- eviction prevention programs; and
- supportive and transitional housing.

The remaining 40 percent of the funds goes to DCTED to:

- Coordinate the annual Washington Homeless Census Program.
- Implement and administer a homeless data management and tracking system.
- Provide technical assistance to counties and cities in the preparation and implementation of strategic plans.
- Manage the Homeless Housing Grant Program, which is available to counties and participating cities to augment program funds.
- Oversee the statewide Homeless Housing Program and report on its progress annually to the Governor.

In addition to funds received through their 60 percent share of fees, all counties and participating cities are eligible to apply to DCTED for funding through the Homeless Housing Grant Program. Such funds are designed to "match" the local government's investments in homeless housing programs.

For the purposes of the Homeless Housing Program, each local government is guided by a Homeless Housing Advisory Council which is responsible for developing the 10 year strategic plan, updating that plan annually, choosing programs and projects to be funded through the county or city's share of the surcharge fee program, and reporting on performance outcomes to DCTED.

Specific performance measures are included in 10 year, as well as annually-updated, strategic plans created by DCTED and each county or city government. These performance measures include:

1. By the end of year one a comprehensive census shall be finalized and will report on all homeless individuals in the state of Washington.
2. By the end of year two, all individuals classified as homeless in the first Washington homeless census will be housed in at least temporary housing, which could include emergency shelters or other indoor facilities.

3. By the end of year four, 25 percent of all individuals classified as homeless in all Washington homeless census counts since the enactment of the homeless housing act will be housed in long-term private or public housing.
4. By the end of year six, 50 percent of all individuals classified as homeless in all Washington homeless census counts since the enactment of the homeless housing act will be housed in long-term private or public housing.
5. By the end of year eight, 75 percent of all individuals classified as homeless in all Washington homeless census counts since the enactment of the homeless housing act will be housed in long-term private or public housing.
6. By the end of year 10, and in each subsequent year, 100 percent of all individuals classified as homeless in all Washington homeless census counts since the enactment of the homeless housing act will be housed in long-term private or public housing.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 8, 2005.

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