H-1038.1

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**HOUSE BILL 1939**

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**State of Washington 66th Legislature 2019 Regular Session**

**By** Representatives Steele, Chapman, Reeves, and Valdez

AN ACT Relating to housing and supportive services for homeless and at-risk veterans in rural areas; and adding a new section to chapter 73.08 RCW.

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

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 73.08 RCW to read as follows:

(1) The department of veterans affairs must establish a program to provide outreach and resources for rural homeless and at-risk veterans in need of emergency or transitional housing and related resources that can assist the veteran in becoming self-sufficient. The program must include counties with significant populations in rural areas that are remotely located from access to emergency or transitional housing.

(2) The program must include the following services for homeless and at-risk veterans:

(a) Outreach services to identify and locate homeless or at-risk veteran populations within each county rural area;

(b) Transportation services to local or regional emergency or transitional housing programs;

(c) Housing at an emergency shelter or transitional housing program; and

(d) Supportive services and case management available in conjunction with emergency or transitional housing.

(3) The department of veterans affairs must work with each designated county's veterans' assistance program, other state and local agencies, and community groups, to develop and implement the services provided by the program. The department must identify available state, local, and private homeless housing resources within the county and determine which resources are available in the area, such as employment assistance and job training, health care, counseling, substance abuse treatment, and mental health treatment.

(4) The program outreach and transportation services must provide opportunities for identified homeless and at-risk veterans to access emergency or transitional housing. The program must also offer all related available services to promote well-being, stability, and self-sufficiency. The program must also work with the veterans to ensure access to all available federal veterans' benefits and reintegration services.

(5) The program may provide housing for a homeless and at-risk veteran for up to two years. Within program resources, the department of veterans affairs is authorized to issue vouchers or contract with an emergency shelter or transitional housing program to provide emergency or transitional housing. The program must coordinate with any available federal veteran homeless housing program.

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