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**HOUSE BILL 1456**

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**State of Washington 67th Legislature 2021 Regular Session**

**By** Representatives Rule, Ramel, Robertson, Lekanoff, Shewmake, and Harris-Talley

AN ACT Relating to minimum staffing levels for Washington main street programs; amending RCW 43.360.030; adding new sections to chapter 43.360 RCW; and providing an expiration date.

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

**Sec.**  RCW 43.360.030 and 2005 c 514 s 910 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) The department shall adopt criteria for the designation of local downtown or neighborhood commercial district revitalization programs and official local main street programs. In establishing the criteria, the department shall consider:

(a) The degree of interest and commitment to comprehensive downtown or neighborhood commercial district revitalization and, where applicable, historic preservation by both the public and private sectors;

(b) The evidence of potential private sector investment in the downtown or neighborhood commercial district;

(c) Where applicable, a downtown or neighborhood commercial district with sufficient historic fabric to become a foundation for an enhanced community image;

(d) The capacity of the organization to undertake a comprehensive program and the financial commitment to implement a long-term downtown or neighborhood commercial district revitalization program that includes a commitment to employ a professional program manager, maintain a minimum level of staffing according to section 2 of this act, and maintain a sufficient operating budget;

(e) The department's existing downtown revitalization program's tier system;

(f) The national main street center's criteria for designating official main street cities; and

(g) Other factors the department deems necessary for the designation of a local program.

(2) The department shall designate local downtown or neighborhood commercial district revitalization programs and official local main street programs. The programs shall be limited to three categories of designation, one of which shall be the main street level.

(3) RCW ((~~82.73.010~~)) 43.360.020 does not apply to any local downtown or neighborhood commercial district revitalization program unless the boundaries of the program have been identified and approved by the department. The boundaries of a local downtown or neighborhood commercial district revitalization program are typically defined using the pedestrian core of a traditional commercial district.

(4) The department may not designate a local downtown or neighborhood commercial district revitalization program or official local main street program if the program is undertaken by a local government with a population of one hundred ninety thousand persons or more.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 43.360 RCW to read as follows:

(1) Each application for designation as an official local main street program must include information demonstrating that the applicant can maintain a minimum level of staffing to achieve the applicant's mission, goals, and annual work plan.

(2) The minimum level of staffing required by subsection (1) of this section is determined according to the population of the local jurisdiction as follows:

(a) A jurisdiction with a population of 5,000 or fewer must maintain at least a part-time, volunteer executive director;

(b) A jurisdiction with a population of greater than 5,000 but fewer than 10,000 must maintain at least a half-time, paid executive director; and

(c) A jurisdiction with a population of 10,000 or greater must maintain at least a full-time, paid executive director.

(3) The minimum staffing level requirements in this section apply only to programs created after the effective date of this section.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 43.360 RCW to read as follows:

(1) The department must establish a pilot project grant program to award grants to programs applying for designation as an official local main street program. The purpose of the grant program is to assist with costs related to establishing a minimum level of staffing as required by section 2 of this act.

(2) In order to be eligible for a grant under this section, the program applying for designation as an official local main street program must:

(a) Be located within a city with a population of fewer than 20,000;

(b) Establish, to the satisfaction of the department, that financial inability to meet minimum staffing level requirements under section 2 of this act is a significant factor that is preventing the program from qualifying for designation as an official local main street program; and

(c) Report to the department on the diversity of the program's overseeing board.

(3) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, the department must employ additional staff as needed to administer the grant program created in this section.

(4) This section expires June 30, 2025.

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