
**Children & Family Services
Committee**

HB 2818

Brief Description: Creating the homeless families services fund.

Sponsors: Representatives Kagi, Boldt, Darneille, Pearson, Cooper, Linville, Hudgins, Kessler, Lantz, Conway, Simpson, G., Edwards, Sullivan, Kenney, Wood, Schual-Berke, Chase, Santos, Ormsby and Dickerson.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Creates the Homeless Families Services Fund Program within the Department of Community, Trade, and Economic Development.
- Creates the Homeless Families Services Fund (Fund) and appropriates \$15,000,000 to the Fund.
- Creates the Homeless Families Services Fund Advisory Board.

Hearing Date: 1/29/04

Staff: Cynthia Forland (786-7152).

Background:

In July 2001, the Sound Families Initiative (Initiative) began with a \$40 million commitment from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation for the purpose of developing new transitional housing and expanding support services for homeless families or families in danger of becoming homeless in King, Pierce, and Snohomish counties. The Initiative provides partial support for housing and housing-based supportive services for families in transition out of homelessness. Supportive services include on-site case management, job search and referral services, and tenant education.

The Sound Families Initiative consists of a private-public partnership, which combines the initial concept and resources of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation with the expertise of the seven public jurisdiction partners from the Puget Sound area. The public partners contribute their skill in underwriting complex housing projects that are funded with local, state, and federal funds, as well as their capacity for ongoing asset management of the projects, ensuring that Initiative-funded projects can be sustained.

Summary of Bill:

The Homeless Families Services Fund Program (Program) is created within the Department of Community, Trade, and Economic Development (CTED).

An account to be known as the Homeless Families Services Fund (Fund) is created in the custody of the State Treasurer. The Fund will include a one-time appropriation by the Legislature, private contributions, and all other sources. Expenditures from the Fund may only be used for the purposes of the Program, except for administrative expenses. Expenditures from the Fund are exempt from appropriations and the allotment provisions of state law. However, money used for Program administration by the CTED is subject to the allotment and budgetary controls of state law, and an appropriation is required for these expenditures.

The CTED is required to use funds from the Fund and other legislative appropriations to provide state matching funds for housing-based supportive services for homeless families over a period of at least ten years. It is provided that a homeless family is a family that is eligible for services funded through the Emergency Shelter Assistance Program carried out within the CTED. Services funded through the Fund must be coordinated with existing and available services and may not duplicate any other state-funded services available to homeless families assisted through the Fund. The Fund may not be used to supplant existing funding.

Activities eligible for funding through the Fund include, but are not limited to, the following:

- case management;
- counseling;
- referrals to employment support and job training services and direct employment support and job training services;
- domestic violence services and programs;
- mental health treatment, services, and programs;
- substance abuse treatment, services, and programs;
- parenting skills education and training;
- transportation assistance;
- child care; and
- other supportive services identified by the CTED to be an important link for housing stability.

Organizations that may receive funds from the Fund include local Housing Authorities, nonprofit community or neighborhood-based organizations, public development authorities, federally recognized Indian tribes in the state, and regional or statewide nonprofit housing assistance organizations.

The CTED is required to work with recipients of grants from the Fund to monitor the effectiveness of the Program. Areas of performance monitoring must include, but need not be limited to, the following:

- increases in housing stability for assisted homeless families;
- increases in economic self-sufficiency of assisted homeless families;
- increases in independent living skills of assisted homeless families; and
- decreases in costs of state-funded services and income support for assisted homeless families.

The Homeless Families Services Fund Advisory Board (Advisory Board) is established to advise the CTED in the design and administration of the Fund. The Director of the CTED (Director) is required to provide staff and administrative support to the Advisory Board.

The Advisory Board must consist of nine members to be appointed by the Governor, as follows:

- a representative of the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS);
- a representative of the Regional Support Networks (RSNs);
- a representative of a local Housing Authority that provides federal Section 8 vouchers to homeless families, and which primarily serves a rural population;
- a representative of a local Housing Authority that provides federal Section 8 vouchers to homeless families, and which primarily serves an urban population;
- an individual with expertise in the design or evaluation of service delivery to homeless families;
- an individual with expertise in the provision of supportive services to homeless families;
- an individual with expertise in the development and operation of low-income housing, including housing set-aside for homeless families; and
- two individuals with expertise in private philanthropy.

Members of the Advisory Board will serve terms of four years and may be appointed for successive terms of four years. The Governor may stagger the terms of the initial members of the Advisory Board so that approximately one-fourth of the members' terms expire each year. The Advisory Board must select a chair from among its members. Members of the Advisory Board must be reimbursed for travel expenses as provided in RCW 43.03.050 and 43.03.060.

Duties of the Advisory Board must include the following:

- recommending criteria for determination of grant allocations from the Fund, which include, but need not be limited to, the following:
 - guidelines for the amounts of allocations of grants from the Fund, taking into consideration the variation in housing market and services costs throughout the state;
 - guidelines for the minimum amount of matching funds that an applicant to the Fund must secure in order to qualify for a grant from the Fund;
 - criteria that an applicant to the Fund must meet in order to demonstrate that the proposed housing and services are financially viable and meet quality standards;
 - necessary qualifications and capacity of an applicant to the Fund; and
 - guidelines for geographic distribution of funds from the Fund in order to foster development of supportive housing statewide;
- reviewing applications to the Fund and making recommendations to the Director on the allocation of grants from the Fund;
- recommending performance and outcome measures for recipients of grants from the Fund;
- recommending an evaluation method for the Program; and
- working with housing authorities, community-based service and housing providers, or other applicants to the Fund to identify additional sources of revenue for the Fund.

The CTED is required to report to the appropriate policy and fiscal committees of the Legislature by December 1, 2004, with a preliminary plan for implementation of the Program. The CTED and the Advisory Board thereafter are required to report on an annual basis to the appropriate policy

and fiscal committees of the Legislature regarding the status of applications to, and grant allocations from, the Fund and performance of the Program.

The DSHS is required to coordinate with the CTED in supporting the work of the Program. As part of its coordination efforts, the DSHS is required to work with organizations receiving grants from the Fund to identify and coordinate the provision of services offered by the DSHS that meet the goals of the Program.

The Fund is added to the list of accounts and funds identified in state law as permitted to receive their proportionate share of earnings based upon each account's or fund's average daily balance for the period.

Appropriation: The sum of \$15,000,000.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 21, 2004.

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