
Housing Committee

HB 2684

Brief Description: Establishing a homeless families services program.

Sponsors: Representatives Barlow, Hasegawa and Santos.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Creates the Homeless Families Services Program (commonly referred to as the Washington Families Fund, or WFF) and establishes performance measures and reporting requirements.
- Appropriates \$6 million of the state General Fund to the Homeless Families Services Fund for fiscal year 2008.

Hearing Date: 1/31/08

Staff: Robyn Dupuis (786-7166).

Background:

The Homeless Families Services Fund account, commonly called the Washington Families Fund (WFF) was created by the 2004 Legislature. The 2004 Legislature also appropriated \$6 million from the General Fund into the account for the Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development (DCTED) to use as state matching funds for housing-based supportive services for homeless families. Fund recipients are obligated to use the funds over a period of at least 10 years.

Activities eligible for funding through the WFF include:

- (a) case management;
- (b) counseling;
- (c) referrals to employment support and job training;
- (d) domestic violence programs;
- (e) mental health programs;
- (f) substance abuse programs;

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- (g) parenting skills training;
- (h) transportation assistance; and
- (i) child care.

The DCTED makes grants to eligible organizations including nonprofit community organizations, housing authorities, public development authorities, and indian tribes.

The DCTED contracts with Building Changes, a state nonprofit organization to administer the WFF initiative and the DCTED authorizes release of funds within the account as private matching funds are received.

Summary of Bill:

Creation of the Homeless Families Services Program

The Homeless Families Services Program, commonly called the Washington Families Fund (WFF) is created. Priority for funding through the WFF must be given to organizations that demonstrate quality management practices and appropriate organizational capacity. Funds must be used over a period of at least five years.

Program Goals and Performance Measures

The DCTED is directed to establish goals for the program which must include preventing homelessness and moving families to self-sufficiency.

The DCTED must create performance measures to evaluate and improve the program. At a minimum the performance measures must measure:

- (a) increases in housing stability of participant families;
- (b) increases in economic self-sufficiency of participant families; and
- (c) the efficiency and effectiveness of the program.

The DCTED must annually report on program performance by January 15. The report must also include outcomes and performance of program activities as well as recommendations for changes to state policy to achieve the goal of ending homelessness.

Appropriation: The sum of \$6 million appropriation for FY ending June 30, 2008.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.