
Appropriations Subcommittee on Education

HB 2763

Brief Description: Creating a pilot program to provide educational stability for homeless children.

Sponsors: Representatives Kagi, Walsh, Fey, Stonier and Gregerson.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Creates a two-year pilot program in the Department of Commerce that provides homeless children and their families with housing support in the homeless student's school district.
- Appropriates \$300,000 in fiscal year 2014.

Hearing Date: 2/6/14

Staff: Jessica Harrell (786-7349).

Background:

The State Homeless Housing Program.

The Legislature enacted the Homeless Housing and Assistance Act in 2005, which directs the Department of Commerce (COM) to develop a statewide homeless housing program. The COM must implement the program through a 10-year strategic plan with the goal of reducing homelessness by 50 percent in the state and within each county by 2015. Local governments must develop their own 10-year homeless housing plans in coordination with the statewide plan.

Funding for Homeless Housing Programs.

Both the state and county homeless housing programs receive funding through a variety of sources including federal grants, state funding appropriated for homeless programs, and revenues from homeless housing and assistance surcharges collected by each county auditor when a document is recorded. Some of the funding is prioritized for specific sub-populations in

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accordance with requirements attached to the funding. Local homeless housing providers utilize these resources to provide a variety of services to homeless individuals and families including homeless shelters, rental assistance, security deposits, utility assistance, and other services that support housing stability.

Homeless Students.

The federal McKinney-Vento Act requires local school districts to identify homeless students and provide them with support. Specifically, local school districts must designate a homeless liaison to ensure that homeless children and youth are identified and served. The liaison must provide public notice to homeless families in the community and at the school, and must facilitate access to school services, including transportation. School districts are also required to track their homeless students and report that data annually to the OSPI. Washington school districts reported a total of 27,390 homeless students enrolled in school during the 2011-12 school year.

Summary of Bill:

The Department of Commerce (COM) is directed to administer a two-year pilot program in consultation with the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) that links homeless children and their families with stable housing in the homeless student's school district. A one-time grant of \$300,000 is awarded through a competitive grant process to a school district.

The school district that receives the grant must partner with an eligible organization to provide assistance to homeless children and their families from a list of approved activities, including rental assistance, utility assistance, shelter services, and employment and educational support. The school district awarded the grant must report to COM the number of children and households served by the grant and the educational transportation costs of the served children, as well as any additional information requested by COM. The COM must submit a report to the Legislature indicating the changes in housing stability of homeless families, the pupil transportation costs for the homeless children, and any related policy recommendations.

An appropriation of \$300,000 is provided in fiscal year 2014.

Appropriation: The sum of \$300,000 from the State General Fund.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed. However, the bill is null and void unless funded in the budget.