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**SENATE BILL 5722**

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

**By** Senator Fortunato

AN ACT Relating to the provision of homeless housing and assistance services to homeless persons; amending RCW 43.185C.010, 43.185C.090, 43.185C.150, 43.185C.210, and 43.185C.220; and adding a new section to chapter 43.185C RCW.

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

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 43.185C RCW to read as follows:

Any county, city, town, or other municipal corporation that provides services to homeless persons pursuant to this chapter must give priority to those homeless persons who establish proof of residency in the county, city, town, or other municipal corporation in which they are seeking services. A city, county, town, or other municipal corporation may provide any homeless person who seeks services but does not receive services due to a lack of both proof of residency and available services with free transportation to the appropriate municipal corporation in which the homeless person is eligible for the receipt of services provided under this chapter.

**Sec.**  RCW 43.185C.010 and 2018 c 85 s 8 are each amended to read as follows:

The definitions in this section apply throughout this chapter unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

(1) "Administrator" means the individual who has the daily administrative responsibility of a crisis residential center.

(2) "Child in need of services petition" means a petition filed in juvenile court by a parent, child, or the department of social and health services seeking adjudication of placement of the child.

(3) "Community action agency" means a nonprofit private or public organization established under the economic opportunity act of 1964.

(4) "Crisis residential center" means a secure or semi-secure facility established pursuant to chapter 74.13 RCW.

(5) "Department" means the department of commerce.

(6) "Director" means the director of the department of commerce.

(7) "Home security fund account" means the state treasury account receiving the state's portion of income from revenue from the sources established by RCW 36.22.179 and 36.22.1791, and all other sources directed to the homeless housing and assistance program.

(8) "Homeless housing grant program" means the vehicle by which competitive grants are awarded by the department, utilizing moneys from the home security fund account, to local governments for programs directly related to housing homeless individuals and families, addressing the root causes of homelessness, preventing homelessness, collecting data on homeless individuals, and other efforts directly related to housing homeless persons.

(9) "Homeless housing plan" means the five-year plan developed by the county or other local government to address housing for homeless persons.

(10) "Homeless housing program" means the program authorized under this chapter as administered by the department at the state level and by the local government or its designated subcontractor at the local level.

(11) "Homeless housing strategic plan" means the five-year plan developed by the department, in consultation with the interagency council on homelessness, the affordable housing advisory board, and the state advisory council on homelessness.

(12) "Homeless person" means an individual living outside or in a building not meant for human habitation or which they have no legal right to occupy, in an emergency shelter, or in a temporary housing program which may include a transitional and supportive housing program if habitation time limits exist. This definition includes substance abusers, people with mental illness, and sex offenders who are homeless.

(13) "HOPE center" means an agency licensed by the secretary of the department of social and health services to provide temporary residential placement and other services to street youth. A street youth may remain in a HOPE center for thirty days while services are arranged and permanent placement is coordinated. No street youth may stay longer than thirty days unless approved by the department and any additional days approved by the department must be based on the unavailability of a long-term placement option. A street youth whose parent wants him or her returned to home may remain in a HOPE center until his or her parent arranges return of the youth, not longer. All other street youth must have court approval under chapter 13.34 or 13.32A RCW to remain in a HOPE center up to thirty days.

(14) "Housing authority" means any of the public corporations created by chapter 35.82 RCW.

(15) "Housing continuum" means the progression of individuals along a housing-focused continuum with homelessness at one end and homeownership at the other.

(16) "Interagency council on homelessness" means a committee appointed by the governor and consisting of, at least, policy level representatives of the following entities: (a) The department of commerce; (b) the department of corrections; (c) the department of social and health services; (d) the department of veterans affairs; and (e) the department of health.

(17) "Local government" means a county government in the state of Washington or a city government, if the legislative authority of the city affirmatively elects to accept the responsibility for housing homeless persons within its borders.

(18) "Local homeless housing task force" means a voluntary local committee created to advise a local government on the creation of a local homeless housing plan and participate in a local homeless housing program. It must include a representative of the county, a representative of the largest city located within the county, at least one homeless or formerly homeless person, such other members as may be required to maintain eligibility for federal funding related to housing programs and services and if feasible, a representative of a private nonprofit organization with experience in low-income housing.

(19) "Long-term private or public housing" means subsidized and unsubsidized rental or owner-occupied housing in which there is no established time limit for habitation of less than two years.

(20) "Performance measurement" means the process of comparing specific measures of success against ultimate and interim goals.

(21) "Proof of residency" means a homeless person who provides evidence that he or she is receiving locally administered public assistance only within the jurisdiction that he or she is seeking services or provides one of the following:

(a) Documents from the United States social security administration addressed to the person at a residential address in the jurisdiction;

(b) Evidence that the person is attending school in the jurisdiction;

(c) A valid, unexpired driver's instruction permit, driver's license, or identicard in the name of the person with a listed residential address within the jurisdiction;

(d) A utility bill for water, gas, electric, oil, cable, or a landline telephone issued within the sixty days before the date of application for the receipt of services that contains the name and a residential address of the person in the jurisdiction;

(e) A personal income tax document issued within the last year that contains the name of the person and indicates a residential address in the jurisdiction;

(f) A pay stub issued within sixty days before the date of application for the receipt of services to the person and indicates a residential address in the jurisdiction;

(g) A valid voter registration card, military identification, or other identification issued by the federal government that contains the name of the person and indicates a residential address in the jurisdiction;

(h) An unemployment document or stub issued to the person that indicates a residential address in the jurisdiction;

(i) A current motor vehicle registration in the name of the person that indicates a residential address in the jurisdiction;

(j) An eviction notice from a residential property in the jurisdiction issued to the person within sixty days before the date of application for the receipt of services; or

(k) Any other document the department identifies as acceptable proof of residency.

(22) "Secure facility" means a crisis residential center, or portion thereof, that has locking doors, locking windows, or a secured perimeter, designed and operated to prevent a child from leaving without permission of the facility staff.

((~~(22)~~)) (23) "Semi-secure facility" means any facility including, but not limited to, crisis residential centers or specialized foster family homes, operated in a manner to reasonably assure that youth placed there will not run away. Pursuant to rules established by the facility administrator, the facility administrator shall establish reasonable hours for residents to come and go from the facility such that no residents are free to come and go at all hours of the day and night. To prevent residents from taking unreasonable actions, the facility administrator, where appropriate, may condition a resident's leaving the facility upon the resident being accompanied by the administrator or the administrator's designee and the resident may be required to notify the administrator or the administrator's designee of any intent to leave, his or her intended destination, and the probable time of his or her return to the center.

((~~(23)~~)) (24) "Staff secure facility" means a structured group care facility licensed under rules adopted by the department of social and health services with a ratio of at least one adult staff member to every two children.

((~~(24)~~)) (25) "Washington homeless census" means an annual statewide census conducted as a collaborative effort by towns, cities, counties, community-based organizations, and state agencies, with the technical support and coordination of the department, to count and collect data on all homeless individuals in Washington.

((~~(25)~~)) (26) "Washington homeless client management information system" means a database of information about homeless individuals in the state used to coordinate resources to assist homeless clients to obtain and retain housing and reach greater levels of self-sufficiency or economic independence when appropriate, depending upon their individual situations.

**Sec.**  RCW 43.185C.090 and 2005 c 484 s 13 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) The department shall allocate grant moneys from the ((~~homeless housing~~)) home security fund account to finance in whole or in part programs and projects in approved local homeless housing plans to assist homeless individuals and families gain access to adequate housing, prevent at-risk individuals from becoming homeless, address the root causes of homelessness, track and report on homeless-related data, and facilitate the movement of homeless or formerly homeless individuals along the housing continuum toward more stable and independent housing.

(2) Any county, city, town, or other municipal corporation that provides services to homeless persons using grant moneys under this section must give priority to those homeless persons who establish proof of residency in the county, city, town, or other municipal corporation in which they are seeking services.

(3) The department may issue criteria or guidelines to guide local governments in the application process.

**Sec.**  RCW 43.185C.150 and 2005 c 484 s 21 are each amended to read as follows:

This chapter does not require either the department or any local government to expend any funds to accomplish the goals of this chapter other than the revenues authorized in chapter 484, Laws of 2005. However, neither the department nor any local government may use any funds authorized in chapter 484, Laws of 2005 to supplant or reduce any existing expenditures of public money for the reduction or prevention of homelessness or services for homeless persons. Any local government that provides services to homeless persons using funds authorized under this chapter must give priority to those homeless persons who establish proof of residency in the jurisdiction of that local government.

**Sec.**  RCW 43.185C.210 and 2011 c 353 s 6 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) The transitional housing operating and rent program is created in the department to assist individuals and families who are homeless or who are at risk of becoming homeless to secure and retain safe, decent, and affordable housing. The department shall provide grants to eligible organizations, as described in RCW 43.185.060, to provide assistance to program participants with priority given to those participants who establish proof of residency in the county in which the eligible organization provides assistance under the program. The eligible organizations must use grant moneys for:

(a) Rental assistance, which includes security or utility deposits, first and last month's rent assistance, and eligible moving expenses to be determined by the department;

(b) Case management services designed to assist program participants to secure and retain immediate housing and to transition into permanent housing and greater levels of self-sufficiency;

(c) Operating expenses of transitional housing facilities that serve homeless families with children; and

(d) Administrative costs of the eligible organization, which must not exceed limits prescribed by the department.

(2) Eligible to receive assistance through the transitional housing operating and rent program are:

(a) Families with children who are homeless or who are at risk of becoming homeless and who have household incomes at or below fifty percent of the median household income for their county;

(b) Families with children who are homeless or who are at risk of becoming homeless and who are receiving services under chapter 13.34 RCW;

(c) Individuals or families without children who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless and who have household incomes at or below thirty percent of the median household income for their county;

(d) Individuals or families who are homeless or who are at risk of becoming homeless and who have a household with an adult member who has a mental health or chemical dependency disorder; and

(e) Individuals or families who are homeless or who are at risk of becoming homeless and who have a household with an adult member who is an offender released from confinement within the past eighteen months.

(3) All program participants must be willing to create and actively participate in a housing stability plan for achieving permanent housing and greater levels of self-sufficiency.

(4) Data on all program participants must be entered into and tracked through the Washington homeless client management information system as described in RCW 43.185C.180. For eligible organizations serving victims of domestic violence or sexual assault, compliance with this subsection must be accomplished in accordance with 42 U.S.C. Sec. 11383(a)(8).

(5)(a) Except as provided in (b) of this subsection, beginning in 2011, each eligible organization receiving over five hundred thousand dollars during the previous calendar year from the transitional housing operating and rent program and from sources including: (i) State housing-related funding sources; (ii) the affordable housing for all surcharge in RCW 36.22.178; (iii) the home security fund surcharges in RCW 36.22.179 and 36.22.1791; and (iv) any other surcharge imposed under chapter 36.22 RCW or ((~~43.185C RCW~~)) this chapter to fund homelessness programs or other housing programs, shall apply to the Washington state quality award program for an independent assessment of its quality management, accountability, and performance system, once every three years.

(b) Cities and counties are exempt from the provisions of (a) of this subsection until 2018.

(6) The department may develop rules, requirements, procedures, and guidelines as necessary to implement and operate the transitional housing operating and rent program.

(7) The department shall produce an annual transitional housing operating and rent program report that must be included in the department's homeless housing strategic plan as described in RCW 43.185C.040. The report must include performance measures to be determined by the department that address, at a minimum, the following issue areas:

(a) The success of the program in helping program participants transition into permanent affordable housing and achieve self-sufficiency or increase their levels of self‑sufficiency, which shall be defined by the department based upon the costs of living, including housing costs, needed to support: (i) One adult individual; and (ii) two adult individuals and one preschool-aged child and one school-aged child;

(b) The financial performance of the program related to efficient program administration by the department and program operation by selected eligible organizations, including an analysis of the costs per program participant served;

(c) The quality, completeness, and timeliness of the information on program participants provided to the Washington homeless client management information system database; and

(d) The satisfaction of program participants in the assistance provided through the program.

**Sec.**  RCW 43.185C.220 and 2015 c 128 s 5 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) The department shall distribute funds for the essential needs and housing support program established under this section in a manner consistent with the requirements of this section and the biennial operating budget. The first distribution of funds must be completed by September 1, 2011. Essential needs or housing support is only for persons found eligible for such services under RCW 74.04.805 and is not considered an entitlement.

(2) The department shall distribute funds appropriated for the essential needs and housing support program in the form of grants to designated essential needs support and housing support entities within each county. The department shall not distribute any funds until it approves the expenditure plan submitted by the designated essential needs support and housing support entities. The amount of funds to be distributed pursuant to this section shall be designated in the biennial operating budget. For the sole purpose of meeting the initial distribution of funds date, the department may distribute partial funds upon the department's approval of a preliminary expenditure plan. The department shall not distribute the remaining funds until it has approved a final expenditure plan.

(3)(a) During the 2011‑2013 biennium, in awarding housing support that is not funded through the contingency fund in this subsection, the designated housing support entity shall provide housing support to clients who are homeless persons as defined in RCW 43.185C.010. As provided in the biennial operating budget for the 2011-2013 biennium, a contingency fund shall be used solely for those clients who are at substantial risk of losing stable housing or at substantial risk of losing one of the other services defined in RCW 74.62.010(6). For purposes of this chapter, "substantial risk" means the client has provided documentation that he or she will lose his or her housing within the next thirty days or that the services will be discontinued within the next thirty days.

(b) After July 1, 2013, the designated housing support entity shall give first priority to clients who are homeless persons as defined in RCW 43.185C.010 and second priority to clients who would be at substantial risk of losing stable housing without housing support. Designated essential needs and housing support entities must also give priority to those homeless persons who establish proof of residency within the county in which the entity operates and provides services.

(4) For each county, the department shall designate an essential needs support entity and a housing support entity that will begin providing these supports to medical care services program recipients on November 1, 2011. Essential needs and housing support entities are not required to provide assistance to every person referred to the local entity or who meets the priority standards in subsection (3) of this section.

(a) Each designated entity must be a local government or community‑based organization, and may administer the funding for essential needs support, housing support, or both. Designated entities have the authority to subcontract with qualified entities. Upon request, and the approval of the department, two or more counties may combine resources to more effectively deliver services.

(b) The department's designation process must include a review of proficiency in managing housing or human services programs when designating housing support entities.

(c) Within a county, if the department directly awards separate grants to the designated housing support entity and the designated essential needs support entity, the department shall determine the amount allocated for essential needs support as directed in the biennial operating budget.

(5)(a) Essential needs and housing support entities must use funds distributed under this section as flexibly as is practicable to provide essential needs items and housing support to recipients of the essential needs and housing support program, subject to the requirements of this section.

(b) Benefits provided under the essential needs and housing support program shall not be provided to recipients in the form of cash assistance.

(c) The department may move funds between entities or between counties to reflect actual caseload changes. In doing so, the department must: (i) Develop a process for reviewing the caseload of designated essential needs and housing support entities, and for redistributing grant funds from those entities experiencing reduced actual caseloads to those with increased actual caseloads; and (ii) inform all designated entities of the redistribution process. Savings resulting from program caseload attrition from the essential needs and housing support program shall not result in increased per‑client expenditures.

(d) Essential needs and housing support entities must partner with other public and private organizations to maximize the beneficial impact of funds distributed under this section, and should attempt to leverage other sources of public and private funds to serve essential needs and housing support recipients. Funds appropriated in the operating budget for essential needs and housing support must be used only to serve persons eligible to receive services under that program.

(6) The department shall use no more than five percent of the funds for administration of the essential needs and housing support program. Each essential needs and housing support entity shall use no more than seven percent of the funds for administrative expenses.

(7) The department shall:

(a) Require housing support entities to enter data into the homeless client management information system;

(b) Require essential needs support entities to report on services provided under this section;

(c) In collaboration with the department of social and health services, submit a report annually to the relevant policy and fiscal committees of the legislature. A preliminary report shall be submitted by December 31, 2011, and must include (c)(i), (iii), and (v) of this subsection. Annual reports must be submitted beginning December 1, 2012, and must include:

(i) A description of the actions the department has taken to achieve the objectives of chapter 36, Laws of 2011 1st sp. sess.;

(ii) The amount of funds used by the department to administer the program;

(iii) Information on the housing status of essential needs and housing support recipients served by housing support entities, and individuals who have requested housing support but did not receive housing support;

(iv) Grantee expenditure data related to administration and services provided under this section; and

(v) Efforts made to partner with other entities and leverage sources or public and private funds;

(d) Review the data submitted by the designated entities, and make recommendations for program improvements and administrative efficiencies. The department has the authority to designate alternative entities as necessary due to performance or other significant issues. Such change must only be made after consultation with the department of social and health services and the impacted entity.

(8) The department, counties, and essential needs and housing support entities are not civilly or criminally liable and may not have any penalty or cause of action of any nature arise against them related to decisions regarding: (a) The provision or lack of provision of housing or essential needs support; or (b) the type of housing arrangement supported with funds allocated under this section, when the decision was made in good faith and in the performance of the powers and duties under this section. However, this section does not prohibit legal actions against the department, county, or essential needs or housing support entity to enforce contractual duties or obligations.

**--- END ---**