**5256-S AMH WALJ H1910.1 - NOT FOR FLOOR USE**

**SSB 5256** - H AMD **603**

By Representative Walsh

**NOT ADOPTED 04/11/2023**

Strike everything after the enacting clause and insert the following:

"**Sec.**  RCW 74.13.802 and 2022 c 297 s 965 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) Beginning July 1, 2020, the department shall establish a child welfare housing assistance pilot program, which provides housing vouchers, rental assistance, navigation, and other support services to eligible families.

(a) The department shall operate or contract for the operation of the child welfare housing assistance pilot program under subsection (3) of this section in one county west of the crest of the Cascade mountain range and one county east of the crest of the Cascade mountain range.

(b) The child welfare housing assistance pilot program is intended to shorten the time that children remain in out-of-home care.

(2) A parent with a child who is dependent pursuant to chapter 13.34 RCW and whose primary remaining barrier to reunification is the lack of appropriate housing is eligible for the child welfare housing assistance pilot program.

(3) The department shall contract with an outside entity or entities to operate the child welfare housing assistance pilot program. If no outside entity or entities are available to operate the program or specific parts of the program, the department may operate the program or the specific parts that are not operated by an outside entity.

(4) Families may be referred to the child welfare housing assistance pilot program by a caseworker, an attorney, a guardian ad litem as defined in chapter 13.34 RCW, a parent ally as defined in RCW 2.70.060, an office of public defense social worker, or the court.

(5) The department shall consult with a stakeholder group that must include, but is not limited to, the following:

(a) Parent allies;

(b) Parent attorneys and social workers managed by the office of public defense parent representation program;

(c) The department of commerce;

(d) Housing experts;

(e) Community-based organizations;

(f) Advocates; and

(g) Behavioral health providers.

(6) The stakeholder group established in subsection (5) of this section shall begin meeting after July 28, 2019, and assist the department in design of the child welfare housing assistance pilot program in areas including, but not limited to:

(a) Equitable racial, geographic, ethnic, and gender distribution of program support;

(b) Eligibility criteria;

(c) Creating a definition of homeless for purposes of eligibility for the program; and

(d) Options for program design that include outside entities operating the entire program or specific parts of the program.

(7) By ((~~December~~)) November 1, ((~~2021~~)) 2024, the department shall report outcomes for the child welfare housing assistance pilot program to the ((~~oversight board for children, youth, and families established pursuant to RCW 43.216.015. The~~)) legislature. At a minimum, the report must include ((~~racial, geographic, ethnic, and gender distribution of program support~~)):

(a) The number of families anticipated to be served by the expansion of the program provided in section 2, chapter . . ., Laws of 2023 (section 2 of this act); and

(b) The estimated cost savings provided through expansion of the program provided in section 2, chapter . . ., Laws of 2023 (section 2 of this act).

(8) The child welfare housing assistance pilot program established in this section is subject to the availability of funds appropriated for this purpose.

((~~(9) This section expires June 30, 2023.~~))

**Sec.**  RCW 74.13.802 and 2023 c ... s 1 (section 1 of this act) are each amended to read as follows:

(1) ((~~Beginning July 1, 2020~~)) Within funds appropriated for this specific purpose, the department shall ((~~establish~~)) administer a child welfare housing assistance ((~~pilot~~)) program, which provides housing vouchers, rental assistance, navigation, and other support services to eligible families.

(a) The department shall operate or contract for the operation of the child welfare housing assistance ((~~pilot~~)) program under subsection (3) of this section in one ((~~county~~)) or more counties west of the crest of the Cascade mountain range and one ((~~county~~)) or more counties east of the crest of the Cascade mountain range.

(b) The child welfare housing assistance ((~~pilot~~)) program is intended to reduce the need for foster care placement and to shorten the time that children remain in out-of-home care when placement is necessary.

(2) ((~~A parent with a child who is dependent pursuant to chapter 13.34 RCW and whose primary remaining barrier to reunification is the lack of appropriate housing is eligible for the child welfare housing assistance pilot program.~~)) The following families are eligible for assistance from the child welfare housing assistance program:

(a) A parent with a child who is dependent pursuant to chapter 13.34 RCW and a lack of appropriate housing is a remaining barrier to reunification; and

(b) A parent of a child who is a candidate for foster care as defined in RCW 26.44.020 and whose housing instability is a barrier to the child remaining in the home.

(3) The department shall contract with an outside entity or entities, who must have a demonstrated understanding of the importance of stable housing for children and families involved or at risk of being involved with the child welfare system, to operate the child welfare housing assistance ((~~pilot~~)) program. If no outside entity or entities are available to operate the program or specific parts of the program, the department may operate the program or the specific parts that are not operated by an outside entity.

(4) Families may be referred to the child welfare housing assistance ((~~pilot~~)) program by a department caseworker, an attorney, a guardian ad litem as defined in chapter 13.34 RCW, a parent ally as defined in RCW 2.70.060, an office of public defense social worker, or the court.

(5) The department shall consult with a stakeholder group that must include, but is not limited to, the following:

(a) Parent allies;

(b) Parent attorneys and social workers managed by the office of public defense parent representation program;

(c) The department of commerce;

(d) Housing experts;

(e) Community-based organizations;

(f) Advocates; and

(g) Behavioral health providers.

(6) The stakeholder group established in subsection (5) of this section shall begin meeting after July 28, 2019, and assist the department in design of the child welfare housing assistance ((~~pilot~~)) program in areas including, but not limited to:

(a) Equitable racial, geographic, ethnic, and gender distribution of program support;

(b) Eligibility criteria;

(c) Creating a definition of homeless for purposes of eligibility for the program; and

(d) Options for program design that include outside entities operating the entire program or specific parts of the program.

(7) ((~~By~~)) Beginning November 1, 2024, the department shall annually report outcomes for the child welfare housing assistance pilot program to the legislature. At a minimum, when available, the report must include the following information:

(a) ((~~The number of families anticipated to be served by the expansion of the program provided in section 2, chapter . . ., Laws of 2023 (section 2 of this act)~~)) Distribution of the child welfare housing assistance program by race, geography, ethnicity, and gender including a discussion of whether this distribution was equitable; and

(b) ((~~The estimated cost savings provided through expansion of the program provided in section 2, chapter . . ., Laws of 2023 (section 2 of this act)~~)) Any recommendations for legislative changes to the child welfare housing assistance program.

((~~(8) The child welfare housing assistance pilot program established in this section is subject to the availability of funds appropriated for this purpose.~~))

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  Section 1 of this act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the state government and its existing public institutions, and takes effect June 30, 2023.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  Section 2 of this act takes effect July 1, 2025."

Correct the title.

EFFECT: Makes the following changes to the underlying bill:

Delays the current components of the bill that expand eligibility for the Child Welfare Housing Assistance Program and makes other changes to the Child Welfare Assistance Program until July 1, 2025.

Allows the Child Welfare Housing Pilot Program to continue beyond its current expiration date (June 30, 2023), but requires that the Department of Children, Youth, and Families provide a report to the Legislature by November 1, 2024, that includes: (a) The number of families anticipated to be served by the expansion of the program that will occur on July 1, 2025; and (b) the estimated cost savings provided through that expansion of the program.