

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 1899

As of March 13, 2025

Title: An act relating to the homelessness point-in-time count.

Brief Description: Concerning the homelessness point-in-time count.

Sponsors: House Committee on Housing (originally sponsored by Representatives Zahn, Thomas, Parshley, Simmons, Cortes, Ormsby, Hill and Macri).

Brief History: Passed House: 3/4/25, 95-0.

Committee Activity: Housing: 3/19/25.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Makes changes related to the Washington homeless census or count requirements.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING

Staff: Melissa Van Gorkom (786-7491)

Background: The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires communities across the nation collect data on their homeless populations and report the data to the HUD in order to receive federal funds to support regional efforts to end homelessness. The data collection process is referred to as the Point-in-Time (PIT) Count. The PIT Count is an estimate of both sheltered and unsheltered populations experiencing homelessness on one night in the last ten calendar days of January or at such other time as required by the HUD. The sheltered homelessness count includes people who are staying in emergency shelters, transitional housing programs, or other temporary living arrangements on the night designated for the PIT Count. The unsheltered homelessness count includes people whose primary nighttime residence is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation on the night designated for the PIT Count, such as streets, cars, and parks.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

The PIT Count is administered by continuums of care (CoCs), which are local planning bodies responsible for coordinating efforts to address homelessness in specific geographic areas. Under the HUD regulations, CoCs are required to plan and conduct, at least biennially, a PIT Count of persons experiencing homelessness within their geographic area.

Under state law, the Department of Commerce (Commerce) is required to conduct an annual Washington homeless census or count consistent with the Homeless Client Management Information System (HMIS) requirements that must be coordinated with already existing homeless census projects, including those funded by the HUD. Commerce, in consultation with local governments, determines the data CoCs will collect and input it into the HMIS to get accurate counts of homeless clients. Commerce must make the summary of data by county available to the public each year and include the data, and its analysis, in the annual update on the state's homeless housing strategic plan.

Summary of Bill: The requirement that a Washington homeless census be conducted annually is removed. Instead, Commerce must conduct a Washington homeless census on a schedule created by Commerce.

Language related to certain tasks that Commerce was required to complete by the end of year four after the statute was originally enacted in 2005 is removed. The language removed includes the requirement that Commerce implement an online information and referral system to enable local governments and providers to identify available housing for a homeless person, work with local governments and their providers to develop a capacity for continuous case management to assist homeless persons, and implement an organizational quality management system.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.