
SENATE BILL 5940

State of Washington

69th Legislature

2026 Regular Session

By Senators C. Wilson, Alvarado, Cleveland, Dhingra, Hasegawa, Nobles, Riccelli, Shewmake, Slatter, Valdez, and Wellman

Prefiled 12/24/25. Read first time 01/12/26. Referred to Committee on Human Services.

1 AN ACT Relating to creating a housing assistance pilot program
2 for youth enrolled in extended foster care; adding a new section to
3 chapter 74.13 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 13.34 RCW; and
4 creating a new section.

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

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that approximately
7 13 percent of young people in extended foster care experienced
8 homelessness in state fiscal year 2024. To obtain housing, many young
9 people who are dependent at age 18 are required to exit extended
10 foster care to access certain federal housing vouchers and thereby
11 lose the support of extended foster care.

12 Accordingly, the state is unable to leverage existing resources,
13 including federal benefits, as young people use up their eligibility
14 for time-limited federal programs while they simultaneously decline
15 other programs needed for long-term success. Statutory changes are
16 required to ensure dependent young people in extended foster care are
17 stably housed as they prepare for independence.

18 It is the intent of the legislature to create a housing pilot
19 program which provides a benefit to dependent young people in
20 extended foster care that is equivalent to the benefit provided by
21 the federal foster youth to independence program, such that young

1 people in extended foster care can receive housing assistance while
2 they are dependent and still benefit from the federal program when
3 they turn 21.

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 74.13
5 RCW to read as follows:

6 (1) The extended foster care housing pilot program is established
7 for a period of two years, effective January 1, 2027, to provide
8 rental assistance and associated housing fees to eligible youth. The
9 extended foster care housing pilot program is intended to prevent and
10 alleviate homelessness among youth enrolled in extended foster care.

11 (2) Up to 50 youth are eligible for the extended foster care
12 housing pilot program if they are:

13 (a) Receiving extended foster care services pursuant to RCW
14 13.34.267; and

15 (b) (i) Experiencing homelessness as defined in RCW 13.34.030; or

16 (ii) Subject to appropriations, at imminent risk of experiencing
17 homelessness.

18 (3) The department shall conduct a competitive procurement
19 process to identify an entity or entities to contract with for
20 operation of the extended foster care housing pilot program. The
21 contractors must have a demonstrated understanding of the importance
22 of stable housing for youth involved with the child welfare system.
23 If no outside entity or entities are available to operate the pilot
24 program or specific parts of the pilot program, the department may
25 operate the pilot program or the specific parts that are not operated
26 by an outside entity.

27 (4) The extended foster care housing pilot program shall provide
28 rental assistance based on the following criteria:

29 (a) Rental assistance is provided to eligible dependent youth for
30 up to 24 months not to extend for any young person beyond age 21;

31 (b) The amount of rental assistance must be based on the fair
32 market rent in the eligible youth's location;

33 (c) Eligible youth shall pay no more than 30 percent of their
34 adjusted gross income toward rent, including the extended foster care
35 subsidy; and

36 (d) If the youth's rent and utilities exceed the fair market rent
37 for that location, the youth's contribution may not exceed 40 percent
38 of their monthly adjusted gross income, including the extended foster
39 care subsidy.

1 (5) The department shall ensure that the 50 eligible youth
2 identified in subsection (2) of this section receive access to rental
3 housing assistance.

4 (6) By June 30, 2029, in compliance with RCW 43.01.036, the
5 department shall provide a report to the appropriate committees of
6 the legislature that includes the following information:

7 (a) The number of youth served by the extended foster care
8 housing pilot program;

9 (b) The number of months each youth received assistance from the
10 pilot program;

11 (c) The total amount of assistance provided to each youth;

12 (d) The age of the youth assisted by the pilot program;

13 (e) The gender and race or ethnicity of youth assisted by the
14 pilot program;

15 (f) The cost of the rental assistance provided to each youth, by
16 county;

17 (g) The counties represented by the pilot program participants;

18 (h) The number of youth on the waitlist for the pilot program, if
19 any; and

20 (i) Any other information the department deems useful for the
21 legislature's consideration.

22 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 13.34
23 RCW to read as follows:

24 The department shall conduct a transition planning process with
25 youth enrolled in extended foster care at least three months prior to
26 their 21st birthday. The transition planning process must include,
27 but is not limited to:

28 (1) Assessing the youth's continued housing and financial
29 stability;

30 (2) Supporting the youth to apply to a federally funded housing
31 voucher program, when available, and if applicable;

32 (3) Providing referrals to housing assistance; and

33 (4) Providing referrals to benefits and services that support the
34 financial stability of the youth including education, employment,
35 physical and behavioral health care, and other available public
36 benefits.

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