

RCW 18.27.410 Homeowner recovery program. (Effective July 1, 2024.) (1) Subject to the availability of funds appropriated for this purpose, the homeowner recovery program is created and administered by the department. The department shall have such rule-making authority as the department deems necessary to administer the program.

(2) (a) Beginning July 1, 2026, a person is eligible to recover from the homeowner recovery program, provided that each of the following conditions is satisfied:

(i) The person is a claimant with a final judgment in a court of competent jurisdiction against a registered contractor for a claim brought under RCW 18.27.040(3) on his or her primary residence. For purposes of a claim brought on a multifamily dwelling consisting of more than one unit, only the unit in which the claimant actually resides is considered the claimant's primary residence;

(ii) The judgment specifies the actual damages suffered as a consequence of such a claim;

(iii) The claimant has proceeded against any existing bond covering the contractor;

(iv) The judgment has not been satisfied in full; and

(v) An application for recovery under (b) of this subsection is made within 90 days after the conclusion of the civil action brought under RCW 18.27.040(3).

(b) The department shall publish a form on its website for claimants to apply for payment from the account under this section. The department may determine by rule additional documentation required to complete an application under this section.

(3) (a) The priority of payment for eligible applicants must be by the order of receipt by the department, subject to the limitations in this subsection (3). Payment for an eligible application must be to the full extent of eligibility, without proration, before consideration of payment for a subsequent application in the order of receipt. Determinations regarding payments must be made by the department in its sole discretion.

(b) Payment from the account is limited to actual damages awarded in a final judgment, after recovery against the bond, for a claim brought under RCW 18.27.040(3). Payment from the account for other costs related to or pursuant to civil proceedings, such as attorneys' fees, court costs, or punitive damages, is prohibited.

(c) Payment from the account may not exceed \$25,000 per contractor per parcel, or the amount unpaid on the judgment, whichever is less.

(d) (i) Total payments under the homeowner recovery program for a fiscal year may not be greater than 80 percent of the account balance calculated at the end of the previous fiscal year.

(ii) The department shall create and maintain a waitlist for any eligible applications unpaid due to an insufficient account balance under (d)(i) of this subsection. The waitlist must preserve the order of receipt in accordance with (a) of this subsection.

(e) Eligibility for payment under subsection (2) of this section does not create a right to payment under this section. Payments under this section are discretionary. This section does not create an entitlement to payment or services. This section does not create a right of action.

(f) The department is not criminally or civilly liable and may not have any penalty or cause of action of any nature arise against it regarding the provision or lack of provision of funds for payments under this section.

(4) (a) At the time of payment from the account under this section, the claimant shall assign his or her right, title, and interest in any final judgment on his or her claim against the contractor to the department to the extent of such payment. The department shall be subrogated to the right, title, and interest of the claimant, and may pursue an insurer or other third party to recover amounts paid from the account. Any amount subsequently recovered on the judgment must be for the purpose of reimbursing the account.

(b) A claimant in receipt of payment from the account pursuant to an application under this section is prohibited from pursuing collection, or authorizing another entity to pursue collection on the claimant's behalf, of the damages attributable to the same claims to the extent of such payment.

(c) Upon any payment from the account, the department shall notify the contractor that a payment has been made and the claimant has made an assignment under this section. The department shall include any additional information about the process for reimbursing the account under subsection (5) of this section.

(5) (a) The department may pursue reimbursement to the account from the contractor for the amount paid from the account, as well as interest on that amount, in accordance with rules adopted by the department. The department may establish reimbursement payment plans up to 36 months. Any payment plan longer than 12 months must assess interest as provided in RCW 43.17.240. The department must deposit all moneys recovered in the account.

(b) Where a contractor defaults in payment of reimbursement, collection of amounts will be handled pursuant to the procedures in RCW 49.48.086.

(c) The department's duties with respect to obtaining reimbursement from the contractor to the account are limited to those specified within this subsection (5).

(6) Nothing contained herein limits the authority of the department to take action against a contractor for a violation under this chapter or the rules promulgated thereunder; nor does the reimbursement in full of all obligations to the account by a contractor effect any enforcement of a violation under this chapter or the rules promulgated thereunder.

(7) The definitions in this subsection apply throughout this section unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

(a) "Account" means the homeowner recovery account created in RCW 18.27.420.

(b) "Claimant" means the owner of an owner-occupied residential property in the state.

(c) "Residential property" means a single-family dwelling, or a multifamily dwelling consisting of four or fewer units, but does not include a condominium. [2023 c 213 § 6.]

Effective date—2023 c 213 §§ 3-9: See note following RCW 18.27.040.