

**RCW 43.63A.305 Independent youth housing program—Created—
Collaboration with the department of social and health services—
Duties of subcontractor organizations.** (1) The independent youth housing program is created in the department to provide housing stipends to eligible youth to be used for independent housing. In developing a plan for the design, implementation, and operation of the independent youth housing program, the department shall:

(a) Adopt policies, requirements, and procedures necessary to administer the program;

(b) Contract with one or more eligible organizations described under RCW 43.185A.040 to provide services and conduct administrative activities as described in subsection (3) of this section;

(c) Establish eligibility criteria for youth to participate in the independent youth housing program, giving priority to youth who have been dependents of the state for at least one year;

(d) Refer interested youth to the designated subcontractor organization administering the program in the area in which the youth intends to reside;

(e) Develop a method for determining the amount of the housing stipend, first and last month's rent, and security deposit, where applicable, to be dedicated to participating youth. The method for determining a housing stipend must take into account a youth's age, the youth's total income from all sources, the fair market rent for the area in which the youth lives or intends to live, and a variety of possible living situations for the youth. The amount of housing stipends must be adjusted, by a method and formula established by the department, to promote the successful transition for youth to complete housing self-sufficiency over time;

(f) Ensure that the independent youth housing program is integrated and aligned with other state rental assistance and case management programs operated by the department, as well as case management and supportive services programs, including the independent living program, the transitional living program, and other related programs offered by the department of social and health services; and

(g) Consult with the department of social and health services and other stakeholders involved with dependent youth, homeless youth, and homeless young adults, as appropriate.

(2) The department of social and health services shall collaborate with the department in implementing and operating the independent youth housing program including, but not limited to, the following:

(a) Refer potential eligible youth to the department before the youth's eighteenth birthday, if feasible, to include an indication, if known, of where the youth plans to reside after aging out of foster care;

(b) Provide information to all youth aged fifteen or older, who are dependents of the state under chapter 13.34 RCW, about the independent youth housing program, encouraging dependents nearing their eighteenth birthday to consider applying for enrollment in the program;

(c) Encourage organizations participating in the independent living program and the transitional living program to collaborate with independent youth housing program providers whenever possible to capitalize on resources and provide the greatest amount and variety of services to eligible youth;

(d) Annually provide to the department data reflecting changes in the percentage of youth aging out of the state dependency system each year who are eligible for state assistance, as well as any other data and performance measures that may assist the department to measure program success; and

(e) Annually, beginning by December 31, 2007, provide to the appropriate committees of the legislature and the interagency council on homelessness as described under RCW 43.185C.170 recommendations of strategies to reach the goals described in RCW 43.63A.311(2)(g).

(3) Under the independent youth housing program, subcontractor organizations shall:

(a) Use moneys awarded to the organizations for housing stipends, security deposits, first and last month's rent stipends, case management program costs, and administrative costs. When subcontractor organizations determine that it is necessary to assist participating youth in accessing and maintaining independent housing, subcontractor organizations may also use moneys awarded to pay for professional mental health services and tuition costs for court-ordered classes and programs;

(i) Administrative costs for each subcontractor organization may not exceed twelve percent of the estimated total annual grant amount to the subcontractor organization;

(ii) All housing stipends, security deposits, and first and last month's rent stipends must be payable only to a landlord or housing manager of any type of independent housing;

(b) Enroll eligible youth who are referred by the department and who choose to reside in their assigned service area;

(c) Enter eligible youth program participants into the [Washington] homeless client management information system as described in RCW 43.185C.180;

(d) Monitor participating youth's housing status;

(e) Evaluate participating youth's eligibility and compliance with department policies and procedures at least twice a year;

(f) Assist participating youth to develop or update an independent living plan focused on obtaining and retaining independent housing or collaborate with a case manager with whom the youth is already involved to ensure that the youth has an independent living plan;

(g) Educate participating youth on tenant rights and responsibilities;

(h) Provide support to participating youth in the form of general case management and information and referral services, when necessary, or collaborate with a case manager with whom the youth is already involved to ensure that the youth is receiving the case management and information and referral services needed;

(i) Connect participating youth, when possible, with individual development account programs, other financial literacy programs, and other programs that are designed to help young people acquire economic independence and self-sufficiency, or collaborate with a case manager with whom the youth is already involved to ensure that the youth is receiving information and referrals to these programs, when appropriate;

(j) Submit expenditure and performance reports, including information related to the performance measures in RCW 43.63A.311, to the department on a time schedule determined by the department; and

(k) Provide recommendations to the department regarding program improvements and strategies that might assist the state to reach its

goals as described in RCW 43.63A.311(2)(g). [2009 c 148 § 1; 2007 c 316 § 3.]

Finding—2007 c 316: "(1) The legislature finds that providing needy youth aging out of the state dependency system with safe and viable options for housing to avoid homelessness confers a valuable benefit on the public that is intended to improve public health, safety, and welfare.

(2) It is the goal of this state to:

(a) Ensure that all youth aging out of the state dependency system have access to a decent, appropriate, and affordable home in a healthy safe environment to prevent such young people from experiencing homelessness; and

(b) Reduce each year the percentage of young people eligible for state assistance upon aging out of the state dependency system." [2007 c 316 § 1.]