

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1136

As Reported By House Committee On:
Trade, Economic Development & Housing

Title: An act relating to home matching.

Brief Description: Encouraging home matching.

Sponsors: Representatives Reams, Wineberry, Leonard, Brough, Sommers, Forner, Ludwig, Wolfe, Springer, Chandler, Shin, Silver, Mielke, Ballard, Karahalios, Foreman, Miller, Brumsickle, Vance, Thibaudeau, Horn, Wood, Quall, Kremen, Morton, Talcott, Tate, Cooke and Ogden.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Trade, Economic Development & Housing, February 4, 1993,
DP.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRADE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & HOUSING

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 13 members:
Representatives Wineberry, Chair; Shin, Vice Chair; Forner,
Ranking Minority Member; Chandler, Assistant Ranking
Minority Member; Casada; Conway; Morris; Quall; Schoesler;
Sheldon; Springer; Valle; and Wood.

Staff: Kenny Pittman (786-7392).

Background: Lower-income households are faced with housing problems as a result of economic pressure from increased housing expenses. Many older people living on relatively limited financial resources pay a large proportion of their budgets for housing and housing-related expenses. Younger households are also facing severe housing problems due to incomes that have not kept pace with housing and housing-related expenses.

Home matching is an increasingly popular method to provide adequate, affordable housing for older people on relatively low, fixed incomes and lower-income households that can not afford market rents. Home matching programs are developed to meet a variety of housing needs. Some people want to reduce their living expenses, others may desire companionship and security, and still others may seek an exchange of services for housing.

Summary of Bill: The Home Matching Pilot Program is established in the state Department of Community Development. The Department of Community Development is directed to select up to five eligible organizations to implement home matching programs at the local level. The Department of Community Development is directed to provide grants and technical assistance to selected local home matching programs to facilitate: (a) intergenerational homesharing involving older homeowners sharing homes with younger persons; (b) homesharing arrangements that involve an exchange of services for room and board or some financial consideration such as rent; and (c) the more efficient use of available housing. Eligible organizations are defined as local governments, local housing authorities, regional support networks, nonprofit community or neighborhood-based organizations, and regional or statewide nonprofit housing assistance organizations.

In selecting eligible organizations for participation in the home matching pilot program, the Department of Community Development must consider, but not be limited to the eligible organization's: (a) ability, stability, and resources to implement the local home matching program; (b) efforts to coordinate other support services needed by the individual or family participating in the local home matching program; and (c) other factors the Department of Community Development deems appropriate.

The recipient eligible organization is required to establish criteria for participation in the local home matching program. The determination of eligibility must include, but is not limited to a verification of the individual or family's history of making rent payments in a consistent and timely manner.

The Department of Community Development is required to report, by January 1, 1995, on the progress and status of the home matching pilot program to the governor and the Legislature. The report must include a summary of the results of the selected local home matching programs, the number of persons served, and recommendations for improving the program.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Appropriation: \$250,000 from the Washington housing trust fund account.

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

Testimony For: The concept of home matching is evolving nationally. Finding affordable housing is a problem for all ages. However, the problem could be worse for seniors. By matching people with excess housing with those who need housing we are helping to solve a housing problem and in some cases providing needed companionship for seniors. This concept can also help keep seniors out of expensive nursing homes by having someone there to help. The other person has an affordable place to live. While we support the concept and program, we have concerns that funding it through the trust fund would remove monies that the department was planning on using to administer housing programs.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: Representative Reams, bill sponsor (supports); Representative Karahalios (supports); Margaret Strachan, Senior Services of Seattle-King County (supports); Evan Iverson and Arnold Livingston, Senior Lobby (supports); Jeff Robinson, Department of Community Development (supports, with concern over funding source); and Ron Main, King County (supports).