

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SB 6577

As Reported by House Committee On:
Children & Family Services

Title: An act relating to reporting requirements for community action agencies.

Brief Description: Ordering a study of reporting requirements for community action agencies.

Sponsors: Senators Hargrove, Schmidt, Poulsen, Esser, Stevens, Berkey, Eide, McAuliffe and Rasmussen.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Children & Family Services: 2/23/04, 2/26/04 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee to study the feasibility of establishing common data collection, grant distribution, accountability requirements, and management standards for state agencies that work with Community Action Agencies.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 8 members: Representatives Kagi, Chair; Darneille, Vice Chair; Boldt, Ranking Minority Member; Roach, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bailey, Dickerson, Pettigrew and Shabro.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 1 member: Representative Miloscia.

Staff: Cynthia Forland (786-7152).

Background:

Community Action Agencies (CAAs), which were initially established under the federal Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 and subsequently under the federal Community Services Block Grant Program of 1981, are intended to stimulate a better focusing of all available state, local, private, and federal resources upon the goal of enabling low-income

individuals and families to attain the skills, knowledge, and motivations and secure the opportunities needed for self-sufficiency.

Statewide, there are a total of 31 CAAs, 27 of which are community-based nonprofit organizations and four of which are local government entities. The array of services offered by individual CAAs varies from community to community. However, most CAAs provide some, if not all, of the following services:

- employment and training programs;
- transportation and child care for low-income workers;
- housing and weatherization services;
- energy assistance programs;
- nutrition programs;
- family development programs;
- senior services;
- programs for low-income youth;
- educational assistance;
- budgeting and money management training;
- micro-business development help for low-income entrepreneurs;
- a variety of crisis and emergency safety net services;
- local community and economic development projects; and
- community healthcare.

Summary of Bill:

The Legislature recognizes that uncoordinated and duplicative electronic reporting requirements are placing extraordinary burdens on CAAs. To alleviate these burdens, the Legislature finds that state agencies must coordinate and standardize the data collection and reporting systems that are used in the administration and distribution of contracts with CAAs.

The Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee (JLARC) is required to study the feasibility of establishing common data collection, grant distribution, accountability requirements, and management standards for state agencies that work with CAAs. The study must include the identification and potential uses of common data elements across state agencies. The JLARC is required to review the policies and practices of those state agencies that work with and provide funding to local CAAs, including, but not limited to, the Department of Community, Trade, and Economic Development, the Department of Social and Health Services, and the Employment Security Department. State agencies that work with CAAs must cooperate with the JLARC in this study.

The JLARC is required to submit a progress report to the appropriate policy committees of the Legislature by September 1, 2004, and a final report to the same committees by September 1, 2005.

The bill expires December 31, 2005.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: CAAs hold multiple contracts with the state that are tied to individual reporting requirements. There are different sets of standards for reporting, which results in statistics that cannot be compared. CAAs ought to be accountable for the money that they spend, but policies need to catch up with developing technology.

Testimony Against: None.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Dan Wollam, Olympic Community Action Programs.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.