

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SB 6335

As Reported by House Committee On:
Appropriations

Title: An act relating to the homeless families services fund.

Brief Description: Concerning the homeless families services fund.

Sponsors: Senators Prentice, Shin, Kohl-Welles and McAuliffe.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Appropriations: 1/29/08, 1/31/08 [DP].

<p>Brief Summary of Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Appropriates \$6 million from the State General Fund to the Homeless Families Services Fund.
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HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 25 members: Representatives Sommers, Chair; Dunshee, Vice Chair; Alexander, Ranking Minority Member; Cody, Conway, Darneille, Ericks, Fromhold, Grant, Green, Haigh, Hunt, Hunter, Kenney, Kessler, Linville, McIntire, Morrell, Pettigrew, Priest, Schmick, Schual-Berke, Seaquist, Sullivan and Walsh.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 6 members: Representatives Bailey, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Haler, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Anderson, Chandler, Hinkle and Ross.

Staff: Owen Rowe (786-7391).

Background:

In 2004 the Legislature created the Homeless Families Services Fund (Fund). Since then, \$6 million has been appropriated from the State General Fund to capitalize the Fund. The Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development (DCTED) administers the Fund. The Fund may be used to provide state matching funds for housing-based supportive services for homeless families. Activities eligible for funding include: case management,

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counseling, referrals to employment and job training, domestic violence services and programs, mental health services and programs, substance abuse services and programs, parenting skills education and training, transportation assistance, and child care.

Organizations authorized to receive funds include local housing authorities, nonprofit community or neighborhood-based organizations, public development authorities, federally recognized Indian tribes, and regional or statewide nonprofit housing assistance organizations.

To date, all appropriations to the Fund have been transferred to the Washington Families Fund, which is jointly administered by DCTED and Building Changes, a statewide nonprofit. The DCTED authorizes release of the funds as private matching funds are received.

Summary of Bill:

Six million dollars is appropriated from the State General Fund for expenditure in the Homeless Families Services Fund.

Appropriation: The sum of \$6 million State General Fund.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) The state's investment in the Washington Families Fund has been matched dollar for dollar by private contributions. The investment has built 28 partnerships across the state in a wide range of communities. The Fund has enabled a way to provide services over a period of at least 10 years and to keep families in stable housing. In Washington, 15 to 20 percent of homeless families do not function well in existing supportive housing programs because of long-term substance abuse or mental illness. For the first time case management services and employment services are linked.

On January 16 of this year, Building Changes awarded the balance of the funding to supportive housing programs; there are no resources currently in the Fund. An investment by the state offers an opportunity to partner with private philanthropic organizations to support homeless families. The majority of the families that have benefited from the supportive housing programs have moved into stable housing and employment. This public/private partnership has fostered a unique organization that attracts national attention.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: David Wertheimer, The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation; Ben Gitenstein, Washington Low Income Housing Alliance; and Betsy Lieberman, Washington Families Fund.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.