
SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 1922

State of Washington 60th Legislature 2007 Regular Session

By House Committee on Housing (originally sponsored by Representatives Pedersen, Pettigrew, Miloscia, McIntire, Walsh, Kagi, Appleton, Kenney, Hasegawa and Ormsby)

READ FIRST TIME 02/19/07.

1 AN ACT Relating to creating an independent youth housing program;
2 adding new sections to chapter 43.63A RCW; and creating new sections.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that:

5 (1) Protecting the public health, safety, and welfare by providing
6 housing resources to needy or vulnerable persons, such as young people
7 exiting the state dependency system, is a fundamental purpose of
8 government;

9 (2) Providing youth exiting the state dependency system with safe
10 and viable options for housing to avoid homelessness confers a valuable
11 benefit on the public that constitutes consideration for financial
12 assistance to such youth; and

13 (3) The state must establish goals regarding the self-sufficiency
14 status of youth exiting the state dependency system, which must
15 include:

16 (a) Ensuring that all youth exiting the state dependency system
17 have a decent, appropriate, and affordable home in a healthy safe
18 environment to prevent such young people from experiencing
19 homelessness;

1 (b) Reducing each year the percentage of young people eligible for
2 state assistance upon exiting from the state dependency system.

3 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 43.63A RCW
4 to read as follows:

5 (1) For the purposes of this section:

6 (a) "Department" means the department of community, trade, and
7 economic development;

8 (b) "Eligible youth" means an individual who:

9 (i) On or after September 1, 2006, is at least eighteen, was a
10 dependent of the state under chapter 13.34 RCW in the month before his
11 or her eighteenth birthday, and has not yet reached the age of twenty-
12 three;

13 (ii) Except as provided in subsection (3)(b)(ii) of this section,
14 has a total income from all sources, except for temporary sources that
15 include, but are not limited to, overtime wages, bonuses, or short-term
16 temporary assignments, that does not exceed fifty percent of the area
17 median income;

18 (iii) Is not receiving services under RCW 74.13.031(10)(b);

19 (iv) Complies with other eligibility requirements the department
20 may establish;

21 (c) "Independent housing" means a housing unit that is not owned by
22 or located within the home of the eligible youth's biological parents
23 or any of the eligible youth's former foster care families or
24 dependency guardians. "Independent housing" may include a unit in a
25 transitional or other supportive housing facility;

26 (d) "Fair market rent" means the fair market rent in each county of
27 the state, as determined by the United States department of housing and
28 urban development;

29 (e) "Individual development account" or "account" means an account
30 established by contract between a low-income individual and a
31 sponsoring organization for the benefit of the low-income individual
32 and funded through periodic contributions by the low-income individual
33 that are matched with contributions by or through the sponsoring
34 organization; and

35 (f) "Subcontractor organization" means an eligible organization
36 described under RCW 43.185A.040 that contracts with the department to
37 administer the independent youth housing program.

1 (2) The independent youth housing program is created in the
2 department to provide housing stipends to eligible youth to be used for
3 independent housing. The department must serve the maximum number of
4 eligible youth possible within the available funding for the program.
5 The department shall capitalize upon existing department administrative
6 resources by administering this program as a component of the
7 transitional housing operating, and rent program created in chapter
8 43.185C RCW by chapter . . . (House Bill No. 1921), Laws of 2007 or, if
9 chapter . . . (House Bill No. 1921), Laws of 2007 is not enacted, as a
10 component of any other similar department program that provides rental
11 assistance and case management services to low-income individuals or
12 families who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. The
13 department shall solicit input from a variety of stakeholders involved
14 with dependent youth, homeless youth, and homeless young adults to
15 develop a plan for the design, implementation, and operation of the
16 independent youth housing program. The department, in consultation
17 with the department of social and health services, shall:

18 (a) Develop, administer, supervise, and monitor the independent
19 youth housing program; and

20 (b) Ensure that the independent youth housing program is integrated
21 and aligned with other state rental assistance and case management
22 programs, such as the transitional housing operating and rent program
23 created in chapter 43.185C RCW by chapter . . . (House Bill No. 1921),
24 Laws of 2007, as well as all existing services and programs designed to
25 assist foster youth transition to independent living. Whenever
26 possible, the program must be aligned and collaborated with the
27 independent living program, the transitional living program, and other
28 related programs offered by the department of social and health
29 services to maximize resources and provide the greatest number and
30 variety of services to eligible youth. The program must also be
31 included in the state homeless housing strategic plan under RCW
32 43.185C.040 and any other state or local homeless or affordable housing
33 plans. The outcomes of the independent youth housing program must be
34 included in the measurement of any performance measures described in
35 chapter 43.185C RCW.

36 (3) To receive services under the independent youth housing
37 program, an eligible youth must:

1 (a) Sign a program compliance agreement stating that the youth
2 agrees to:

3 (i) Timely pay his or her portion of the independent housing cost;
4 (ii) Comply with an independent living plan; and
5 (iii) Comply with other program requirements and policies the
6 department may establish;

7 (b) Maintain his or her status as an eligible youth, except that if
8 the youth's total income exceeds fifty percent of the area median
9 income during the course of his or her participation in the program,
10 the department shall establish policies and procedures to allow the
11 youth to remain in the program and continue to receive a housing
12 stipend. The policies must require that the youth agrees to:

13 (i) Participate in the individual development account program
14 established under RCW 43.31.460 and invest a portion, to be determined
15 by the department, of his or her income that exceeds fifty percent of
16 the area median income in an individual development account; or
17 (ii) If the youth is unable to participate in the individual
18 development account program due to the program's capacity limits or
19 eligibility requirements, participate in an alternate supervised
20 savings program approved by the department, as long as the youth
21 qualifies for and may participate in this savings program.

22 (4) An eligible youth may participate in the independent youth
23 housing program for any duration of time and may apply to enroll in the
24 program with the department at any time.

25 (5)(a) A youth may be terminated from the independent youth housing
26 program for a violation of department policies.

27 (b) Youth who are terminated from the program may apply to the
28 department for reenrollment in the program through a procedure to be
29 developed by the department. The department shall establish criteria
30 to evaluate a reenrollment application and may accept or deny a
31 reenrollment application based on the department's evaluation.

32 (6) Under the independent youth housing program, the department of
33 social and health services shall:

34 (a) Refer a potential eligible youth to the department before the
35 youth's eighteenth birthday, if feasible, and indicate, if known, where
36 the youth plans to reside after exiting foster care;

37 (b) Collaborate with the department to provide information to all
38 youth aged fifteen or older, who are dependents of the state under

1 chapter 13.34 RCW, about the independent youth housing program, and
2 encourage all dependents of the state nearing their eighteenth birthday
3 to consider applying for enrollment in the program;

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

9 (d) Annually, beginning by December 31, 2007, provide to the
10 appropriate committees of the legislature recommendations of strategies
11 that may help the state reach its goal of reducing the percentage of
12 young people eligible for state assistance upon exiting from the state
13 dependency system.

14 (7) Under the independent youth housing program, the department
15 shall:

16 (a) Adopt policies, requirements, and procedures necessary for the
17 program;

18 (b) Contract with one or more eligible organizations described
19 under RCW 43.185A.040 to provide services and conduct administrative
20 activities as described in subsection (8) of this section. Moneys
21 awarded to these subcontractor organizations may be used for housing
22 stipends, security deposits, first and last month's rent stipends, case
23 management program costs, and administrative costs. Administrative
24 costs for each subcontractor organization may not exceed twelve percent
25 of the estimated total annual grant amount to the subcontractor
26 organization;

27 (c) Establish the eligibility criteria of youth for the independent
28 youth housing program;

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

32 (e) Develop a method for determining the amount of the housing
33 stipend, and first and last month's rent and security deposit where
34 applicable, to be dedicated to participating youth. The method for
35 determining a housing stipend must take into account a youth's age, the
36 fair market rent for the area in which the youth lives or intends to
37 live, and a variety of possible living situations, including when youth
38 are custodial parents of young children or two or more youth

1 participating in the program choose to live together. The amount of
2 housing stipends must be adjusted, by a method and formula established
3 by the department, to promote the successful transition for youth to
4 complete housing self-sufficiency over time. All housing stipends
5 under this section are payable only to a landlord or housing manager of
6 any type of independent housing; and

7 (f) Annually review and report on the performance of subcontractor
8 organizations, as well as the performance of the program as a whole, in
9 the state homeless housing strategic plan under RCW 43.185C.040 and any
10 other relevant state or local homeless or affordable housing plans,
11 beginning in 2007. The outcomes of the independent youth housing
12 program must be included in the measurement of any performance measures
13 described in chapter 43.185C RCW. The independent youth housing
14 program report must include, at a minimum:

15 (i) An update on the following program performance measures, as
16 well as any other performance measures the department may establish,
17 for enrolled youth, to be measured statewide and by county:

18 (A) Increases in housing stability;

19 (B) Increases in economic self-sufficiency;

20 (C) Increases in independent living skills;

21 (D) Increases in education and job training attainment;

22 (E) Decreases in the use of all state-funded services over time;

23 and

24 (F) Decreases in the percentage of youth exiting the state
25 dependency system each year who are eligible for state assistance; and

26 (ii) Recommendations to the legislature and to the interagency
27 council on homelessness as described under RCW 43.185C.170 on program
28 improvements and on departmental strategies to assist the state to
29 reach its goals of:

30 (A) Ensuring that all youth exiting the state dependency system
31 have a decent, appropriate, and affordable home in a healthy safe
32 environment to prevent these youth from experiencing homelessness; and

33 (B) Reducing each year the percentage of young people eligible for
34 state assistance upon exiting from the state dependency system.

35 (8) Under the independent youth housing program, subcontractor
36 organizations shall:

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

1 (b) Enter eligible youth program participants into the homeless
2 client management information system as described in RCW 43.185C.180;

3 (c) Issue housing stipends as well as security deposits and first
4 and last month's rent, where applicable;

5 (d) Monitor participating youth's housing status;

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

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

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

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

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

26 (j) Submit expenditure and performance reports, including
27 information related to the performance measures in subsection (7)(f)(i)
28 of this section, to the department on a time schedule determined by the
29 department; and

30 (k) Provide recommendations to the department regarding program
31 improvements and strategies to assist the state to reach its goals as
32 described in subsection (7)(f)(ii) of this section.

33 (9) This section does not create:

34 (a) An entitlement to services;

35 (b) Judicial authority to extend the jurisdiction of juvenile court
36 in a proceeding under chapter 13.34 RCW to a youth who has reached the
37 age of eighteen or to order the provision of services to the youth; or

1 (c) A private right of action or claim on the part of any
2 individual, entity, or agency against the department, the department of
3 social and health services, or any contractor of the departments.

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 43.63A RCW
5 to read as follows:

6 The independent youth housing account is created in the custody of
7 the state treasurer. All revenue directed to the independent youth
8 housing program must be deposited into this account. Expenditures from
9 the account may only be used for the independent youth housing program
10 as described in this act. Only the director of the department or the
11 director's designee may authorize expenditures from the account. The
12 account is subject to allotment procedures under chapter 43.88 RCW, but
13 an appropriation is not required for expenditures.

14 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** Beginning in September 2008, the Washington
15 state institute for public policy shall conduct a study measuring the
16 outcomes for youth who are participating or who have participated in
17 the independent youth housing program created in section 2 of this act.
18 The institute shall issue a report containing its preliminary findings
19 to the legislature by December 1, 2009, and a final report by December
20 1, 2010.

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