

HB 1115-S2.E - DIGEST

(AS OF HOUSE 2ND READING 2/18/2008)

Establishes programs to end homelessness.

Creates within the department the ending homelessness program to develop and implement a statewide ending homelessness strategic plan, coordinate and monitor local government ending homelessness plans and programs, and implement and manage an ending homelessness grant program. The ending homelessness program has an established short-term goal of reducing the homeless population statewide and in each county by fifty percent by July 1, 2015, and an ultimate goal of ending homelessness. The ending homelessness program is developed and administered by the department with advice and input from the affordable housing advisory board established in RCW 43.185B.020.

Provides that program outcomes and performance measures and goals must be created by the department in consultation with the interagency council on homelessness and a task force established by the department consisting of the committee chairs of the appropriate committees of the legislature, representatives appointed by the director from a minimum of five local ending homelessness task forces representing both urban and rural areas and communities east and west of the Cascade mountains, and a representative from a statewide membership organization that advocates for ending homelessness. The task force must also produce guidelines for local governments regarding methods, techniques, and data suggested to measure each performance measure. Performance measures, yearly targets, and corresponding measurement guidelines must be established by December 31, 2007, and must be reviewed annually by the department and the interagency council on homelessness after soliciting feedback from all local ending homelessness task forces.

Authorizes the department to determine a timeline for implementation and measurement of each performance measure for the state and local ending homelessness plans, except that the state and all local governments must implement and respond to all performance measures by December 31, 2009, unless the department finds that a performance measure is not applicable to a specific local area according to parameters and thresholds established by the department.

Requires the employment security department to annually establish a self-sufficiency standard based upon the cost of living, including housing costs, which include mortgage or rent payments and utilities other than telephone, for each county and major city in the state. The first self-sufficiency standard must be presented to the legislature by December 31, 2008.

Requires the joint legislative audit and review committee to conduct a performance audit of the ending homelessness program every four years. The first audit must be conducted by December 31, 2009. Each audit must take no longer than six months or fifty thousand dollars to complete.

Requires the department of community, trade, and economic development to contract with the Washington institute for public policy to conduct a study to determine the most effective, accurate, and comprehensive way for counties and the state of Washington to measure and evaluate the societal cost of homelessness.