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**SENATE BILL 5999**

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**State of Washington 64th Legislature 2015 Regular Session**

**By** Senator Darneille

AN ACT Relating to the caseload forecast council; amending RCW 43.88C.010, 43.215.456, and 43.185C.220; and creating a new section.

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

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  The first forecast of children eligible to participate in the early childhood education and assistance program, as required by RCW 43.88C.010, shall be prepared by the caseload forecast council in time to facilitate the development of budget proposals by the governor for the 2016 legislative session.

**Sec.**  RCW 43.88C.010 and 2013 c 332 s 11 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) The caseload forecast council is hereby created. The council shall consist of two individuals appointed by the governor and four individuals, one of whom is appointed by the chairperson of each of the two largest political caucuses in the senate and house of representatives. The chair of the council shall be selected from among the four caucus appointees. The council may select such other officers as the members deem necessary.

(2) The council shall employ a caseload forecast supervisor to supervise the preparation of all caseload forecasts. As used in this chapter, "supervisor" means the caseload forecast supervisor.

(3) Approval by an affirmative vote of at least five members of the council is required for any decisions regarding employment of the supervisor. Employment of the supervisor shall terminate after each term of three years. At the end of the first year of each three-year term the council shall consider extension of the supervisor's term by one year. The council may fix the compensation of the supervisor. The supervisor shall employ staff sufficient to accomplish the purposes of this section.

(4) The caseload forecast council shall oversee the preparation of and approve, by an affirmative vote of at least four members, the official state caseload forecasts prepared under RCW 43.88C.020. If the council is unable to approve a forecast before a date required in RCW 43.88C.020, the supervisor shall submit the forecast without approval and the forecast shall have the same effect as if approved by the council.

(5) A councilmember who does not cast an affirmative vote for approval of the official caseload forecast may request, and the supervisor shall provide, an alternative forecast based on assumptions specified by the member.

(6) Members of the caseload forecast council shall serve without additional compensation but shall be reimbursed for travel expenses in accordance with RCW 44.04.120 while attending sessions of the council or on official business authorized by the council. Nonlegislative members of the council shall be reimbursed for travel expenses in accordance with RCW 43.03.050 and 43.03.060.

(7) "Caseload," as used in this chapter, means:

(a) The number of persons expected to meet entitlement requirements and require the services of public assistance programs, state correctional institutions, state correctional noninstitutional supervision, state institutions for juvenile offenders, the common school system, long-term care, medical assistance, foster care, and adoption support;

(b) The number of students who are eligible for the Washington college bound scholarship program and are expected to attend an institution of higher education as defined in RCW 28B.92.030;

(c) The number of children who are eligible, as defined in RCW 43.215.405, to participate in the early childhood education and assistance program.

(8) The caseload forecast council shall forecast the temporary assistance for needy families and the working connections child care programs as a courtesy.

(9) The caseload forecast council shall forecast youth participating in the extended foster care program pursuant to RCW 74.13.031 separately from other children who are residing in foster care and who are under eighteen years of age.

(10) Unless the context clearly requires otherwise, the definitions provided in RCW 43.88.020 apply to this chapter.

**Sec.**  RCW 43.215.456 and 2010 c 231 s 4 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) Funding for the program of early learning established under this chapter must be appropriated to the department. Allocations must be made on the basis of eligible children enrolled with eligible providers.

(2) The program shall be implemented in phases, so that full implementation is achieved in the 2018‑19 school year.

(3) For the initial phase of the early learning program in school years 2011-12 and 2012-13, the legislature shall appropriate funding to the department for implementation of the program in an amount not less than the 2009-2011 enacted budget for the early childhood education and assistance program. The appropriation shall be sufficient to fund an equivalent number of slots as funded in the 2009-2011 enacted budget.

(4) Beginning in the 2013-14 school year, additional funding for the program must be phased in beginning in school districts providing all-day kindergarten programs under RCW 28A.150.315.

(5) Funding shall continue to be phased in incrementally each year until full statewide implementation of the early learning program is achieved in the 2018-19 school year, at which time any eligible child shall be entitled to be enrolled in the program.

(6) ((~~The department and the office of financial management shall annually review the caseload forecasts for the program and, beginning December 1, 2012, and annually thereafter, report to the governor and the appropriate committees of the legislature with recommendations for phasing in additional funding necessary to achieve statewide implementation in the 2018-19 school year.~~

~~(7)~~)) School districts and approved community‑based early learning providers may contract with the department to provide services under the program. The department shall collaborate with school districts, community‑based providers, and educational service districts to promote an adequate supply of approved providers.

**Sec.**  RCW 43.185C.220 and 2013 2nd sp.s. c 10 s 4 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) The department shall distribute funds for the essential needs and housing support program established under this section in a manner consistent with the requirements of this section and the biennial operating budget. The first distribution of funds must be completed by September 1, 2011. Essential needs or housing support is only for persons found eligible for such services under RCW 74.04.805 and is not considered an entitlement.

(2) The department shall distribute funds appropriated for the essential needs and housing support program in the form of grants to designated essential needs support and housing support entities within each county. The department shall not distribute any funds until it approves the expenditure plan submitted by the designated essential needs support and housing support entities. The amount of funds to be distributed pursuant to this section shall be designated in the biennial operating budget. For the sole purpose of meeting the initial distribution of funds date, the department may distribute partial funds upon the department's approval of a preliminary expenditure plan. The department shall not distribute the remaining funds until it has approved a final expenditure plan.

(3)(a) During the 2011‑2013 biennium, in awarding housing support that is not funded through the contingency fund in this subsection, the designated housing support entity shall provide housing support to clients who are homeless persons as defined in RCW 43.185C.010. As provided in the biennial operating budget for the 2011-2013 biennium, a contingency fund shall be used solely for those clients who are at substantial risk of losing stable housing or at substantial risk of losing one of the other services defined in RCW 74.62.010(6). For purposes of this chapter, "substantial risk" means the client has provided documentation that he or she will lose his or her housing within the next thirty days or that the services will be discontinued within the next thirty days.

(b) After July 1, 2013, the designated housing support entity shall give first priority to clients who are homeless persons as defined in RCW 43.185C.010 and second priority to clients who would be at substantial risk of losing stable housing without housing support.

(4) For each county, the department shall designate an essential needs support entity and a housing support entity that will begin providing these supports to medical care services program recipients on November 1, 2011. Essential needs and housing support entities are not required to provide assistance to every person referred to the local entity or who meets the priority standards in subsection (3) of this section.

(a) Each designated entity must be a local government or community‑based organization, and may administer the funding for essential needs support, housing support, or both. Designated entities have the authority to subcontract with qualified entities. Upon request, and the approval of the department, two or more counties may combine resources to more effectively deliver services.

(b) The department's designation process must include a review of proficiency in managing housing or human services programs when designating housing support entities.

(c) Within a county, if the department directly awards separate grants to the designated housing support entity and the designated essential needs support entity, the department shall determine the amount allocated for essential needs support as directed in the biennial operating budget.

(5)(a) Essential needs and housing support entities must use funds distributed under this section as flexibly as is practicable to provide essential needs items and housing support to recipients of the essential needs and housing support program, subject to the requirements of this section.

(b) Benefits provided under the essential needs and housing support program shall not be provided to recipients in the form of cash assistance.

(c) ((~~The appropriations by the legislature for the purposes of the essential needs and housing support program established under this section shall be based on forecasted program caseloads. The caseload forecast council shall provide a courtesy forecast of the population eligible for a referral for essential needs and housing support that is homeless or is included in reporting under subsection (7)(c)(iii) of this section.~~)) The department may move funds between entities or between counties to reflect actual caseload changes. In doing so, the department must: (i) Develop a process for reviewing the caseload of designated essential needs and housing support entities, and for redistributing grant funds from those entities experiencing reduced actual caseloads to those with increased actual caseloads; and (ii) inform all designated entities of the redistribution process. Savings resulting from program caseload attrition from the essential needs and housing support program shall not result in increased per‑client expenditures.

(d) Essential needs and housing support entities must partner with other public and private organizations to maximize the beneficial impact of funds distributed under this section, and should attempt to leverage other sources of public and private funds to serve essential needs and housing support recipients. Funds appropriated in the operating budget for essential needs and housing support must be used only to serve persons eligible to receive services under that program.

(6) The department shall use no more than five percent of the funds for administration of the essential needs and housing support program. Each essential needs and housing support entity shall use no more than seven percent of the funds for administrative expenses.

(7) The department shall:

(a) Require housing support entities to enter data into the homeless client management information system;

(b) Require essential needs support entities to report on services provided under this section;

(c) In collaboration with the department of social and health services, submit a report annually to the relevant policy and fiscal committees of the legislature. A preliminary report shall be submitted by December 31, 2011, and must include (c)(i), (iii), and (v) of this subsection. Annual reports must be submitted beginning December 1, 2012, and must include:

(i) A description of the actions the department has taken to achieve the objectives of chapter 36, Laws of 2011 1st sp. sess.;

(ii) The amount of funds used by the department to administer the program;

(iii) Information on the housing status of essential needs and housing support recipients served by housing support entities, and individuals who have requested housing support but did not receive housing support;

(iv) Grantee expenditure data related to administration and services provided under this section; and

(v) Efforts made to partner with other entities and leverage sources or public and private funds;

(d) Review the data submitted by the designated entities, and make recommendations for program improvements and administrative efficiencies. The department has the authority to designate alternative entities as necessary due to performance or other significant issues. Such change must only be made after consultation with the department of social and health services and the impacted entity.

(8) The department, counties, and essential needs and housing support entities are not civilly or criminally liable and may not have any penalty or cause of action of any nature arise against them related to decisions regarding: (a) The provision or lack of provision of housing or essential needs support; or (b) the type of housing arrangement supported with funds allocated under this section, when the decision was made in good faith and in the performance of the powers and duties under this section. However, this section does not prohibit legal actions against the department, county, or essential needs or housing support entity to enforce contractual duties or obligations.

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