
Early Learning & Human Services Committee

HB 2440

Brief Description: Concerning host home programs for youth.

Sponsors: Representatives Kagi, Smith, McBride, Hargrove, McCaslin, Dent, Clibborn, Walsh, Walkinshaw, Scott, Sawyer, Ortiz-Self, Caldier, Hudgins, Senn, Robinson, Ormsby, Cody, Jinkins, Fey, Zeiger, Frame, Kilduff, Bergquist and Goodman.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Creates an exemption from foster licensing for certain host home programs.
- Requires the Department of Social and Health Services to provide a report to the Governor and Legislature regarding the best practices for host home programs including any recommendations regarding licensing or certifying host home programs by July 1, 2017.

Hearing Date: 1/22/16

Staff: Luke Wickham (786-7146).

Background:

Foster Care Licensing.

Any person, group, or facility that receives children for control, care, or maintenance outside their own homes, or which places, arranges the placement of, or assists in the placement of children must have a license with the Division of Licensed Resources (DLR), a division within the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) Children's Administration. There are exceptions to this licensing requirement including for:

- certain relatives;
- adoptive parents and guardians;
- situations where parents agree to out of home placement and the placement is not receiving state payment for the placement;

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- exchange students;
- children entering the country with visas meeting the criteria for medical care;
- certain schools;
- certain hospitals;
- licensed physicians or lawyers;
- certain training centers for individuals with developmental disabilities;
- certain agencies in operation prior to 1957 not receiving governmental assistance;
- certain persons approved for placement by a court;
- certain agencies operated by governmental entities or Indian tribes;
- certain security programs for juvenile offenders; and
- agencies located on a federal military reservation.

In addition to applying for a foster license through the DLR, an individual may apply for a foster license through a Child Placing Agency (CPA) that has been licensed by the DLR to supervise foster homes. These CPAs are authorized to certify to the DLR that an individual meets the licensing requirements. The DLR has the final approval for licensing an individual who is certified by a CPA.

To be considered for a foster care license, an applicant must:

- be at least 21 years of age;
- have sufficient income to support themselves without relying on foster care payment;
- discipline children in a positive manner without the use of physical punishment;
- provide supervision appropriate to the age or specific behavior of the child as outlined by the social worker; and
- complete first aid/CPR training, blood borne pathogens training, licensing orientation, and pre-service training.

Any adult living in a potential foster home must:

- complete a criminal background check with the FBI and Washington State Patrol;
- complete a child abuse and neglect registry check from each state they lived in over the past 5 years; and
- submit tuberculosis tests dated within the last year.

Youth ages 16 to 18 in the household must complete a Washington State Patrol check. A DLR licensor will also assess an applicant's ability to provide a safe home and to provide the quality of care needed by children placed in the home.

All licensed family foster homes are required to complete the following ongoing training:

- 36 hours during their first three-year licensing period
- 30 hours during their second three-year licensing period
- 24 hours during all subsequent three-year licensing periods

Host Homes.

Host home programs recruit and train families to provide temporary homes to youth or families in crisis. These host homes and host home programs have not been licensed by the DLR. Host home programs for youth in Washington include Ryan's House for Youth, Olive Crest, the Mason County HOST Program, and Tacoma Shared Housing Services.

Summary of Bill:

Exempts from licensing host home programs that:

- do not serve children in the care and custody of the DSHS;
- are operated by a tax-exempt organization that recruits and screens potential host homes;
- perform background checks on individuals residing in the homes through the department's central background check unit and the Washington State Patrol or equivalent law enforcement agency, and perform physical inspections of the homes;
- provide case management services to youth in the program;
- obtain written and notarized permission or limited power of attorney from the parent or legal guardian of the youth authorizing the youth to participate in the program; and
- obtain insurance for the program.

By July 1, 2017, the DSHS shall provide a report to the Governor and the appropriate committees of the Legislature that includes the best practices for host home programs, including any recommendations regarding licensing or certifying host home programs.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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