

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5578

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Human Services, Mental Health & Housing, February 5, 2015

Title: An act relating to giving preferences to housing trust fund projects that involve collaboration between local school districts and housing authorities or nonprofit housing providers to help children of low-income families succeed in school.

Brief Description: Giving preferences to housing trust fund projects that involve collaboration between local school districts and housing authorities or nonprofit housing providers to help children of low-income families succeed in school.

Sponsors: Senators Dammeier, Darneille, Conway, O'Ban, Keiser, Kohl-Welles, McAuliffe and Fraser.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Human Services, Mental Health & Housing: 2/02/15, 2/05/15 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES, MENTAL HEALTH & HOUSING

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators O'Ban, Chair; Miloscia, Vice Chair; Darneille, Ranking Minority Member; Hargrove.

Staff: Alison Mendiola (786-7444)

Background: Washington State Housing Trust Fund (Housing Trust Fund). Established at the Department of Commerce (Commerce) in 1987 and funded beginning in 1989, the Housing Trust Fund helps communities meet the housing needs of low-income and special needs populations. A majority of households served are below 50 percent and 30 percent of area median income in the county where the housing is located.

Capital Budget Appropriations for Housing 2003-05 through 2013-15 Biennium.

Biennium	2003-05	2005-07	2007-09	2009-11	2011-13	2013-15
Appropriations (millions)	\$81	\$121	\$200	\$130	\$117	\$51.5

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Housing Assistance Program. The Housing Assistance Program, administered by Commerce, uses the Housing Trust Fund and other appropriations to finance loans and grant projects that provide housing for households with special housing needs and with incomes at or below 50 percent of the project area's median family income. At least 30 percent of funds in any cycle must benefit projects located in rural parts of the state.

Organizations eligible to receive funding include the following: local governments; local housing authorities; regional support networks; nonprofit community or neighborhood-based organizations; federally recognized Indian tribes; and regional or statewide nonprofit housing assistance organizations.

Commerce must grant as many applications as available funding allows. In awarding funds, Commerce must provide for geographic distribution statewide. Commerce must give first priority to projects that use privately owned housing purchased by a public housing authority or nonprofit public development authority. A second priority must be given to projects that use publicly owned housing. Within these priorities, Commerce must give preference to projects based on some or all of the following criteria:

- the degree of leveraging of other funds;
- the degree of commitment from programs focusing on special needs populations that provide necessary habilitation and support services;
- contributions from recipients to total project costs, including allied contributions from other sources such as professional, craft and trade services, and lender interest rate subsidies;
- local government project contributions, including infrastructure improvements;
- projects that encourage ownership, management, and other project-related responsibility opportunities;
- projects that demonstrate a strong probability of serving the original target group or income level for a period of at least 25 years;
- an applicant's demonstrated ability, stability, and resources to implement the project;
- projects which demonstrate serving the greatest need;
- projects that provide housing for persons and families with the lowest incomes;
- projects serving special needs populations which are under statutory mandate to develop community housing;
- project location and access to employment centers in the region or area;
- projects that provide certain employment and training opportunities for disadvantaged youth; and
- project location and access to available public transportation services.

Applications for projects that serve persons with mental illnesses must be consistent with a regional support network six-year capital and operating plan.

Summary of Bill: Preference is given to Housing Trust Fund projects involving collaborative partnerships between local school districts and either public housing authorities or nonprofit housing providers that help low-income children succeed in school.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: This bill is based on what is happening out of McCarver Elementary School in Tacoma that works with the housing authority. The results have been great, including increased student attendance. The positive effects of the partnership have branched out into the community. Partnering with schools helps reduce the mobility rate. A child can't learn when the child keeps changing schools and it's disruptive to the class. The parents work on their own education or job training, they are involved with the school and their children. Each year their housing subsidy goes down and the family's earnings have increased, it's a win-win. Reading rates of students have increased. It would be great to replicate this successful model in other schools with similar issues.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Dammeier, prime sponsor; Maureen Fife, Habitat for Humanity of WA; Connie Brown, Tacoma Pierce County Affordable Housing Consortium.