
**Housing, Community Development &
Veterans Committee**

HB 2649

Brief Description: Concerning homeless shelter capacity.

Sponsors: Representatives Ryu, Doglio, Lekanoff, Ormsby and Pollet; by request of Office of the Governor.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires certain counties and cities to amend local homeless housing plans by December 1, 2020, to expand shelter or sanctioned camping capacity to serve at least 50 percent of the homeless people living within the jurisdiction.
- Redirects certain funds from the Homeless Housing and Assistance Surcharge due to a county or city without an amended local plan to the Department of Commerce (Department).
- Requires the Department to contract with an eligible entity or entities to execute a homeless sheltering plan in a county or city without an amended local plan.

Hearing Date: 1/28/20

Staff: Serena Dolly (786-7150).

Background:

State Homeless Housing Program.

The Homeless Housing and Assistance Act directs the Department of Commerce (Department) to develop a statewide homeless housing program and implement the program through a five-year strategic plan. As part of the plan, the Department manages a range of homeless assistance, prevention, and housing programs. The Department's programs include the Consolidated Homeless Grant Program, which provides grants for county governments and other designated entities for services to households who are homeless or at risk of being homeless.

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.

Local Homeless Housing Plans.

Unless it chooses not to participate, each county must coordinate with its local homeless housing task force to develop a five-year homeless housing plan that is consistent with the statewide plan. A county may decline to participate by forwarding a resolution to the Department, in which case the Department will contract with a non-profit entity to develop and execute the county's plan. Regardless of whether a county chooses to participate, a city may assert responsibility for homeless housing within its borders by forwarding a resolution of intent and commitment to the county. A local homeless housing plan may include a broad range of activities to address homelessness, such as temporary rental assistance and development of affordable housing.

The Homeless Housing and Assistance Surcharge.

Both the state and local homeless housing programs receive funding from the Homeless Housing and Assistance Surcharge (surcharge) collected by each county auditor when a document is recorded. The surcharge is \$62 per recorded document and applies to most recorded documents. Certain documents are exempt, including documents recording a birth, marriage, divorce, or death, and documents recording a federal, state, county, or city lien. An additional homeless housing and assistance surcharge of \$8 is also collected by each county auditor.

Ten dollars of the \$62 surcharge is distributed to counties to implement local homeless housing programs and plans. Of the remaining \$52, the county auditor retains 2 percent for administrative costs and the remaining amount is distributed 60 percent to the county and 40 percent to the state. Any city which assumes responsibility for reducing homelessness within its boundaries receives a percentage of the surcharge equal to the percentage of the city's portion of the local real estate excise tax. A city within a non-participating county may still assert its right to manage its own homeless housing program within its boundaries and receive its share of the local fund surcharge.

Home Security Fund Account.

The state's share of the \$62 surcharge is deposited into the Home Security Fund Account (Account), along with funds from the additional \$8 surcharge. The Department may only use the Account to fund homeless housing programs and primarily uses it for the Consolidated Housing Grant Program. Counties and cities that have adopted a local homeless housing plan are eligible to apply for programs funded through the Account.

Summary of Bill:

In counties with a population of more than 40,000, the county and each city with a population of more than 15,000 must amend its current local homeless housing plan by December 1, 2020.

The amended plan must include:

- a goal to expand shelter or sanctioned camping capacity to serve at least 50 percent of the people within the jurisdiction that are living outside or other places unfit for human habitation;
- an accounting of the law, policy, and resource changes that will be implemented to achieve the goal; and
- recommendations to the state regarding law, policy, and resource changes needed at the state level to achieve the goal.

All subsequent five-year local homeless housing plans must include a shelter or sanctioned camping strategy.

If a county or city does not adopt a complete local sheltering plan, certain funds due to the county or city from the surcharge must be deposited in the Account. The Department:

- must identify and contract with one or more entities to create a sheltering plan for the county or city;
- may award shelter expansion funds appropriated by the Legislature directly to organizations able to provide shelter in the county or city; and
- must expend all funds received from the county or city to fund activities eligible under a local housing plan within the county or city.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 27, 2020.

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