
SENATE BILL 6647

State of Washington

66th Legislature

2020 Regular Session

By Senator Zeiger

1 AN ACT Relating to department of commerce data on homeless
2 clients, spending, and performance; and creating new sections.

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

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that the department
5 of commerce maintains multiple systems to collect data on homeless
6 clients, spending, and performance. The department of commerce
7 supports a homeless management information system to collect and
8 manage data gathered by providers during the course of providing
9 assistance to people already experiencing homelessness and to
10 households at risk of losing their housing. The department of
11 commerce collects data on federal, state, local, and private spending
12 for the state's homeless housing strategic plan. The department of
13 commerce also maintains a Washington state homeless system
14 performance system to measure and evaluate the effectiveness of
15 homeless crisis response systems. The legislature finds that despite
16 the substantial amount of information and data being gathered on the
17 homeless population, spending, and performance, the information is
18 not easily accessible to policymakers and the public. Therefore, it
19 is the intent of the legislature to increase public confidence and
20 transparency in government spending on assistance provided to persons
21 who are homeless or at risk of being homeless through a review of

1 these data collection systems and the development of a web-based
2 public portal to provide one-stop information on homeless assistance,
3 spending, and performance.

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1) The joint legislative audit and review
5 committee must conduct a study of the reliability, accuracy, and
6 completeness of the following data and data collection systems at the
7 department of commerce:

8 (a) The Washington homeless client management information system
9 provided in RCW 43.185C.180;

10 (b) Federal, state, local, and private spending on assistance
11 reported by the department of commerce in the annual homeless housing
12 strategic plan required in RCW 43.185C.045; and

13 (c) The Washington state homeless system performance system and
14 other performance systems used to measure the effectiveness of
15 homeless assistance programs contained in chapter 43.185C RCW.

16 (2) The study shall include an assessment of the processes the
17 department of commerce uses to confirm information obtained from
18 local government agencies, community organizations, and providers of
19 homeless assistance is accurate and complete.

20 (3) The study shall also make recommendations for improvements to
21 these systems, including identifying gaps in information and
22 opportunities to streamline and consolidate these homeless data
23 collection systems.

24 (4) By September 1, 2022, the joint legislative audit and review
25 committee must report to the legislature on its findings from the
26 review, including recommendations on the improvement of the state's
27 homeless data collection systems.

28 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** (1) The legislative evaluation and
29 accountability program must implement and maintain an internet-based
30 portal that provides the public with accessible, interactive, and
31 informational access to government spending on assistance to persons
32 who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. The portal must use data
33 and information contained in the data collection systems in section
34 2(1) of this act to provide citizens the opportunity to view, for
35 each local jurisdiction and statewide, annual spending by fund source
36 and assistance type. The portal must also provide information, for
37 each local jurisdiction and statewide, on the number of clients
38 served, by provider and by assistance type. The legislative

1 evaluation and accountability program must continue to supplement the
2 portal with additional information as its workload can accommodate.

3 (2) The department of commerce must provide the legislative
4 evaluation and accountability program with immediate access to all
5 information and systems necessary to develop the portal and provide
6 any assistance the legislative evaluation and accountability program
7 may require. The legislative evaluation and accountability program
8 may contract, in whole or in part, the development of the portal.

9 (3) By September 1, 2021, the legislative evaluation and
10 accountability program must provide a project implementation plan
11 report to the legislature.

12 (4) By September 1, 2022, the legislative evaluation and
13 accountability program must make the portal available to the public.

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