
HOUSE BILL 1987

State of Washington

67th Legislature

2022 Regular Session

By Representatives Morgan, Macri, Berry, Fitzgibbon, Gregerson, Ryu, Wicks, Santos, Pollet, Bateman, and Valdez

Read first time 01/14/22. Referred to Committee on Housing, Human Services & Veterans.

1 AN ACT Relating to a task force on creating a new state housing
2 and homelessness department; creating new sections; and providing an
3 expiration date.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that affordable
6 housing and homelessness are some of the most pressing issues facing
7 Washington state today. These issues are not isolated to any one part
8 of our state, rather they are challenges being faced by every
9 jurisdiction across the state.

10 The legislature finds a need for a more holistic approach to
11 housing and homelessness issues and a need to better align state
12 policies across agencies and in partnership with local jurisdictions
13 and community-based programs to achieve this.

14 Therefore, the legislature intends to establish a task force to
15 recommend an organizational structure for a new department focused
16 solely on issues of housing and homelessness. The task force will
17 create a blueprint for a new department to better align housing and
18 homelessness programs that currently span across multiple agencies
19 and partners.

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1) A legislative task force on creating a
2 new state housing and homelessness department is established to
3 consist of the following members:

4 (a) The president of the senate shall appoint one member from
5 each of the two largest caucuses of the senate;

6 (b) The speaker of the house of representatives shall appoint one
7 member from each of the two largest caucuses of the house of
8 representatives;

9 (c) A representative of the office of the governor;

10 (d) The director of the department of commerce or the director's
11 designee;

12 (e) The secretary of the department of social and health services
13 or the secretary's designee;

14 (f) The director of the health care authority or the director's
15 designee;

16 (g) The director of the office of equity or the director's
17 designee;

18 (h) The state treasurer or the state treasurer's designee;

19 (i) The attorney general or the attorney general's designee;

20 (j) The executive director of the housing finance commission or
21 the executive director's designee;

22 (k) One representative of the office of civil legal aid;

23 (l) One representative of the administrative office of the
24 courts; and

25 (m) The following members to be appointed jointly by the
26 president of the senate and the speaker of the house of
27 representatives:

28 (i) One representative of the nonprofit housing development
29 industry;

30 (ii) One representative of an organization that represents
31 tenants;

32 (iii) One representative of homeless shelter operators;

33 (iv) One representative of low-income persons;

34 (v) One representative of special needs populations;

35 (vi) One representative of public housing authorities as created
36 under chapter 35.82 RCW;

37 (vii) One representative of the for-profit housing development
38 industry;

39 (viii) One representative of for-profit rental housing owners;

1 (ix) Two representatives of the Washington state association of
2 counties, with one representative from a county that is located east
3 of the crest of the Cascade mountains; and

4 (x) Two representatives of the association of Washington cities,
5 with one representative from a city that is located east of the crest
6 of the Cascade mountains.

7 (2) The task force shall choose its chair from among the
8 legislative membership. The director of the department of commerce
9 shall convene the initial meeting of the task force.

10 (3) The task force shall review and make recommendations on the
11 following issues:

12 (a) A state organizational structure to best coordinate state
13 housing and homelessness policy and funding, including:

14 (i) A clear mission and vision for the new department;

15 (ii) The organizational structure for the new department,
16 including which agencies, administrations, commissions, or other
17 functions of state government should be included;

18 (iii) Estimated costs for the reorganization, including
19 information technology and capital;

20 (iv) A clear process for managing the reorganization; and

21 (v) Measurable benchmarks by which the effectiveness of the new
22 housing department would be assessed;

23 (b) The feasibility of the state building its own housing
24 portfolio and partnering with public housing authorities to operate
25 state housing stock;

26 (c) The need for a state eviction prevention office; and

27 (d) How the state may subsidize housing choice vouchers issued
28 under 42 U.S.C. Sec. 1437(f) when fair market rents calculated by the
29 federal department of housing and urban development do not keep pace
30 with rent.

31 (4) Staff support for the task force shall be provided by the
32 department of commerce. The department of commerce shall cooperate
33 with the task force and provide information as the chair may
34 reasonably request.

35 (5) The task force may meet virtually. Legislative members of the
36 task force are reimbursed for travel expenses in accordance with RCW
37 44.04.120. Nonlegislative members are not entitled to be reimbursed
38 for travel expenses if they are elected officials or are
39 participating on behalf of an employer, governmental entity, or other

1 organization. Any reimbursement for other nonlegislative members is
2 subject to chapter 43.03 RCW.

3 (6) The expenses of the task force shall be paid jointly by the
4 senate and the house of representatives. Task force expenditures are
5 subject to approval by the senate facilities and operations committee
6 and the house executive rules committee, or their successor
7 committees.

8 (7) The task force shall submit a preliminary report with its
9 findings and recommendations to the governor and the appropriate
10 committees of the legislature by November 10, 2022, and a final
11 report by November 10, 2023.

12 (8) This section expires December 31, 2023.

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