
HOUSE BILL 1622

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2023 Regular Session

By Representatives Fey, Rude, Simmons, Schmidt, Cortes, Senn, Slatter, Alvarado, Ryu, Wylie, Bergquist, Paul, Gregerson, Morgan, Macri, Pollet, Doglio, Timmons, and Leavitt

Read first time 01/26/23. Referred to Committee on Education.

1 AN ACT Relating to supporting the needs of students experiencing
2 homelessness; amending RCW 28A.300.542; and reenacting and amending
3 RCW 43.185C.340.

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

5 **Sec. 1.** RCW 28A.300.542 and 2019 c 412 s 1 are each amended to
6 read as follows:

7 (1) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this
8 specific purpose, the office of the superintendent of public
9 instruction shall create a competitive grant process to evaluate and
10 award state-funded grants to school districts to increase
11 identification of students experiencing homelessness and the capacity
12 of the districts to provide support for students experiencing
13 homelessness. The goals of the grant process are to:

14 (a) Provide educational stability for students experiencing
15 homelessness by promoting housing stability; and

16 (b) Encourage the development of collaborative strategies between
17 education and housing partners.

18 (2)(a) Funds may be used in a manner that is complementary to
19 federal McKinney-Vento funds and consistent with allowable uses as
20 determined by the office of the superintendent of public instruction.
21 The process must complement any similar federal grant program or

1 programs in order to minimize agency overhead and administrative
2 costs for the superintendent of public instruction and school
3 districts.

4 (b) Examples of permitted student supports and activities
5 include, but are not limited to:

6 (i) Direct academic supports, including tutoring and additional
7 transportation costs;

8 (ii) Basic needs, including retail store cards, nutrition
9 supports, and hygiene items;

10 (iii) Wraparound supports, including contracting with community-
11 based providers, behavioral and physical health supports, and
12 housing-related supports, such as bedding and short-term hotel or
13 motel stays, that meet a student's emergent needs and allow the
14 student to fully participate in school;

15 (iv) Employment supports for students and families; and

16 (v) Out-of-school enrichment activities, such as an academic
17 tutor provided at a shelter.

18 (3) School districts may access both federal and state funding to
19 identify and support students experiencing homelessness and are
20 encouraged to use grant dollars to leverage community resources and
21 strengthen relationships with community-based partners.

22 ~~((+2))~~ (4) Award criteria for the state grants must be based on
23 the demonstrated need of the school district and may consider the
24 number or overall percentage, or both, of homeless children and
25 youths enrolled in preschool, elementary, and secondary schools in
26 the school district, and the ability of the local school district to
27 meet these needs. Award criteria for these must also be based on the
28 quality of the applications submitted. Selected grantees must reflect
29 geographic diversity across the state. Greater weight must be given
30 to districts that demonstrate a commitment to:

31 (a) Partnering with local ~~((housing—and))~~ community-based
32 organizations with experience in serving the needs of students
33 experiencing homelessness or students of color, with a preference for
34 organizations that focus on equitable housing and homeless
35 strategies;

36 (b) Serving the needs of unaccompanied youth; and

37 (c) Implementing evidence-informed strategies to address the
38 opportunity gap and other systemic inequities that negatively impact
39 students experiencing homelessness and students of color. Specific
40 strategies may include, but are not limited to:

1 (i) Enhancing the cultural responsiveness of current and future
2 staff;

3 (ii) Ensuring all staff, faculty, and school employees are
4 actively trained in trauma-informed care;

5 (iii) Providing inclusive programming by intentionally seeking
6 and utilizing input from the population being served;

7 (iv) Using a multidisciplinary approach when serving students
8 experiencing homelessness and their families;

9 (v) Intentionally seeking and utilizing input from the families
10 and students experiencing homelessness about how district policies,
11 services, and practices can be improved; and

12 (vi) Identifying data elements and systems needed to monitor
13 progress in eliminating disparities in academic outcomes for students
14 experiencing homelessness with their housed peers.

15 ~~((+3))~~ (5) At the end of each academic year, districts receiving
16 grants shall monitor and report on the academic outcomes for students
17 served by the grants. The academic outcomes are those recommended by
18 the office of the superintendent of public instruction. The office of
19 the superintendent of public instruction shall review the reports
20 submitted by the districts and assist school districts in using these
21 data to identify gaps and needs, and develop sustainable strategies
22 to improve academic outcomes for students experiencing homelessness.

23 ~~((+4))~~ (6) Students experiencing homelessness are defined as
24 students without a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence
25 in accordance with the definition of homeless children and youths in
26 the federal McKinney-Vento homeless assistance act, 42 U.S.C. Sec.
27 11431 through 11435.

28 ~~((+5))~~ (7) School districts may not use funds allocated under
29 this section to supplant existing federal, state, or local resources
30 for supports for students experiencing homelessness, which may
31 include education liaisons.

32 ~~((+6))~~ (8) Grants awarded to districts under this section may be
33 for two years.

34 (9) The office of the superintendent of public instruction and
35 the department of commerce shall:

36 (a) Collaborate on shared goals and outcomes under the grant
37 process established by this section and the grant program established
38 in RCW 43.185C.340; and

39 (b) Beginning in 2024, and every two years thereafter, jointly
40 produce and make publicly available a report on the goals and

1 outcomes of the grant process established by this section and the
2 grant program established in RCW 43.185C.340.

3 **Sec. 2.** RCW 43.185C.340 and 2019 c 412 s 2 and 2019 c 325 s 5015
4 are each reenacted and amended to read as follows:

5 (1) Subject to funds appropriated for this specific purpose, the
6 department shall administer a grant program that links students
7 experiencing homelessness and their families with stable housing
8 located in the student's school district. The goals of the program
9 are to:

10 (a) Provide educational stability for students experiencing
11 homelessness by promoting housing stability; and

12 (b) Encourage the development of collaborative strategies between
13 housing and education partners.

14 (2) To ensure that innovative strategies between housing and
15 education partners are developed and implemented, the department may
16 contract and consult with a designated vendor to provide technical
17 assistance and program evaluation, ~~((and))~~ assist with making grant
18 awards, and support collaboration between the department and the
19 office of the superintendent of public instruction. If the department
20 contracts with a vendor, the vendor must be selected by the director
21 and:

22 (a) Be a nonprofit vendor;

23 (b) Be located in Washington state; and

24 (c) Have a demonstrated record of working toward the housing and
25 educational stability of students and families experiencing
26 homelessness.

27 (3) In implementing the program, the department, or the
28 department in partnership with its designated vendor, shall consult
29 with the office of the superintendent of public instruction.

30 (4) (a) The department, or the designated vendor in consultation
31 with the department, shall develop a competitive grant process to
32 make grant awards to eligible organizations on implementation of the
33 proposal. For the purposes of this subsection, "eligible
34 organization" means any local government, local housing authority,
35 behavioral health administrative services organization established
36 under chapter 71.24 RCW, behavioral health organization, nonprofit
37 community or neighborhood-based organization, federally recognized
38 Indian tribe in the state of Washington, or regional or statewide
39 nonprofit housing assistance organization. Applications for the grant

1 program must include a letter of support from the applicable
2 education partners. Within 60 days of receiving a grant award under
3 this section, a memorandum of understanding must be established
4 between the housing providers and ~~((school districts))~~ education
5 partners defining the responsibilities and commitments of each party
6 to identify, house, and support students experiencing homelessness.
7 The memorandum must include:

8 ~~((a))~~ (i) How housing providers will partner with ~~((school~~
9 ~~districts))~~ education partners to address gaps and needs and develop
10 sustainable strategies to help students experiencing homelessness;
11 and

12 ~~((b))~~ (ii) How data on students experiencing homelessness and
13 their families will be collected and shared in accordance with
14 privacy protections under applicable federal and state laws.

15 (b) If a memorandum of understanding cannot be established as
16 required by (a) of this subsection, the housing provider and
17 education partners may work with the department on a case-by-case
18 basis to provide, in lieu of a memorandum of understanding, a
19 detailed accountability plan for a partnership between the housing
20 provider and the education partners.

21 (5) In determining which eligible organizations will receive
22 grants, the department must ensure that selected grantees reflect
23 geographic diversity across the state. Greater weight shall be given
24 to eligible organizations that demonstrate a commitment to:

25 (a) Partnering with local schools or school districts as
26 demonstrated by a letter of support; and

27 (b) Developing and implementing evidence-informed strategies to
28 address racial inequities. Specific strategies may include, but are
29 not limited to:

30 (i) Hiring direct service staff who reflect the racial, cultural,
31 and language demographics of the population being served;

32 (ii) Committing to inclusive programming by intentionally seeking
33 and utilizing input from the population being served;

34 (iii) Ensuring eligibility criteria does not unintentionally
35 screen out people of color and further racial inequity; and

36 (iv) Creating access points in locations frequented by parents,
37 guardians, and unaccompanied homeless youth of color.

38 (6) Activities eligible for assistance under this grant program
39 include but are not limited to:

1 (a) Rental assistance, which includes utilities, security and
2 utility deposits, first and last month's rent, rental application
3 fees, moving expenses, and other eligible expenses to be determined
4 by the department;

5 (b) Transportation assistance, including gasoline assistance for
6 students and families with vehicles and bus passes;

7 (c) Emergency shelter;

8 (d) Housing stability case management; and

9 (e) Other collaborative housing strategies, including prevention
10 and strength-based safety and housing approaches.

11 (7)(a) All beneficiaries of funds from the grant program must be
12 from households that include at least one student experiencing
13 homelessness as defined as a child or youth without a fixed, regular,
14 and adequate nighttime residence in accordance with the federal
15 McKinney-Vento homeless assistance act, 42 U.S.C. Sec. 11431 through
16 11435.

17 (b) For the purposes of this section, "student experiencing
18 homelessness" includes unaccompanied homeless youth not in the
19 physical custody of a parent or guardian. "Unaccompanied homeless
20 youth" includes students up to the age of twenty-one, in alignment
21 with the qualifications for school admissions under RCW
22 28A.225.160(1).

23 (8)(a) Grantee organizations must compile and report information
24 to the department. The department shall report to the legislature the
25 findings of the grantee, the housing stability of the homeless
26 families, and any related policy recommendations.

27 (b) Grantees must track and report on the following measures
28 including, but not limited to:

29 (i) Length of time enrolled in the grant program;

30 (ii) Housing destination at program exit;

31 (iii) Type of residence prior to enrollment in the grant program;

32 and

33 (iv) Number of times homeless in the past three years.

34 (c) Grantees must also include in their reports a narrative
35 description discussing its partnership with school districts as set
36 forth in the memorandum outlined in subsection (4) of this section.
37 Reports must also include the kinds of supports grantees are
38 providing students and families to support academic learning.

1 (d) Data on all program participants must be entered into and
2 tracked through the Washington homeless client management information
3 system as described in RCW 43.185C.180.

4 (9) In order to ensure that housing providers are meeting the
5 requirements of the grant program for students experiencing
6 homelessness, the department, or the department in partnership with
7 its designee, shall monitor the program at least once every two
8 years.

9 (10) Any program review and monitoring under this section may be
10 conducted concurrently with other program reviews and monitoring
11 conducted by the department. In its review, the department, or the
12 department in partnership with its designee, shall monitor program
13 components that include the process used by the eligible organization
14 to identify and reach out to students experiencing homelessness, and
15 other indicators to determine how well the eligible organization is
16 meeting the housing needs of students experiencing homelessness. The
17 department, or the department in partnership with its designee, shall
18 provide technical assistance and support to housing providers to
19 better implement the program.

20 (11) The department is subject to the requirements established in
21 RCW 28A.300.542(9).

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