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**HOUSE BILL 2457**

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**State of Washington**

**68th Legislature**

**2024 Regular Session**

**By** Representatives Davis, Ryu, Rule, Santos, Chopp, Barkis, and Pollet

Read first time 01/23/24. Referred to Committee on Housing.

1 AN ACT Relating to emergency housing for domestic violence  
2 survivors; adding new sections to chapter 43.280 RCW; creating a new  
3 section; and providing an expiration date.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that domestic  
6 violence is one of the leading causes of homelessness for women and  
7 children. Among women who are unhoused, between 22 and 57 percent  
8 report that domestic violence was the immediate cause of their  
9 homelessness. In Washington state, domestic violence shelters are  
10 routinely full, leaving victims and children in serious danger with  
11 nowhere to go. Though domestic violence survivors are often fleeing  
12 life-threatening situations and face unique barriers to housing,  
13 there are no state housing programs targeted towards this population.  
14 Therefore, it is the intent of the legislature to create a domestic  
15 violence emergency housing voucher program, a domestic violence  
16 emergency housing program in the capital budget for acquisition of  
17 properties, and a time-limited task force to propose creative  
18 solutions to address immediate housing needs for survivors who have  
19 nowhere to turn.

1        NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 2.**    A new section is added to chapter 43.280  
2    RCW to read as follows:

3        (1) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this  
4    specific purpose, the domestic violence emergency housing voucher  
5    program is created within the office of crime victims advocacy to  
6    provide housing vouchers to assist in obtaining stable housing for  
7    persons who are fleeing or have recently fled intimate partner  
8    violence.

9        (2) Priority for the domestic violence emergency housing voucher  
10   program must be provided to survivors who face the greatest risk of  
11   serious violence and have the least access to housing resources.

12       NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 3.**    A new section is added to chapter 43.280  
13    RCW to read as follows:

14       (1) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for the  
15   specific purposes provided in this section, the department of  
16   commerce must establish a competitive grant program to award funding  
17   to community-based domestic violence programs as defined in RCW  
18   70.123.020 to acquire or renovate housing units for the purpose of  
19   providing emergency housing to individuals who are in immediate risk  
20   or imminent danger from intimate partner violence. When evaluating  
21   applications for this grant program, the department, in collaboration  
22   with the department of social and health services, must prioritize  
23   projects that demonstrate:

24       (a) A strong readiness to proceed to operation of the emergency  
25   housing;

26       (b) A commitment by the applicant to provide furnishings and  
27   other support services to the tenants; and

28       (c) The program has a high demand for emergency shelter services  
29   or hotel vouchers.

30       (2) In awarding funding for projects, the department of commerce  
31   must strive for geographic distribution.

32       (3) In contracts for grants authorized under this section, the  
33   department of commerce must include provisions that require that  
34   capital improvements be held by the grantee for a specified period of  
35   time appropriate to the amount of the grant and that facilities be  
36   used for the express purpose of the grant. If the grantee is found to  
37   be out of compliance with provisions of the contract, the grantee  
38   must repay to the state general fund the principal amount of the  
39   grant plus interest calculated at the rate of interest on state of

1 Washington general obligation bonds issued on the date most close in  
2 time to the date of authorization of the grant.

3 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** A new section is added to chapter 43.280  
4 RCW to read as follows:

5 (1) A task force on domestic violence emergency housing is  
6 established, with members as provided in this subsection (1). The  
7 office of crime victims advocacy shall appoint the following members:

8 (a) Four survivors who have experienced housing instability as a  
9 result of fleeing an intimate partner violence situation. At least  
10 two of these members must be survivors who fled with minor children;

11 (b) Four community-based domestic violence agencies;

12 (c) Two victim advocates embedded in law enforcement who work  
13 with survivors of intimate partner violence;

14 (d) Two victim advocates embedded in prosecutor's offices who  
15 work with survivors of intimate partner violence;

16 (e) The executive director, or the director's designee, of a  
17 nonprofit law firm in Washington that seeks to improve the legal  
18 response to survivors of sexual violence;

19 (f) A representative from a statewide nonprofit law firm which  
20 offers publicly funded legal aid programs that work with survivors of  
21 intimate partner violence;

22 (g) The director, or the director's designee, of an advocacy unit  
23 within the prosecutor's office of the most populous county in  
24 Washington that assists residents who are experiencing domestic  
25 violence by a current or former intimate partner as they navigate the  
26 protection order process; and

27 (h) The executive director, or the director's designee, of a  
28 coalition based in Washington which provides culturally specific  
29 technical assistance to tribes and tribal programs in the work of  
30 preventing and eliminating domestic violence, sexual assault,  
31 stalking, dating violence, and sex trafficking.

32 (2) The task force shall propose recommendations to increase the  
33 supply of immediate, short-term, secure housing options for survivors  
34 fleeing imminent danger due to intimate partner violence. In addition  
35 to other ideas, the task force shall consider:

36 (a) The feasibility and practical considerations involved in the  
37 following program concepts:

1 (i) Creating a network of trained volunteers who possess an  
2 accessory dwelling unit, detached accessory dwelling unit, or spare  
3 bedroom and are willing to take in survivors;

4 (ii) Launching a program wherein owners of short-term vacation  
5 rentals could lend their properties for a fixed number of nights per  
6 year for this purpose;

7 (iii) Creating a network of faith-based organizations that would  
8 allow an unused parsonage or other location on the property of a  
9 house of worship to be used for this purpose; and

10 (iv) Using fairgrounds for this purpose.

11 (b) Whether providing property tax incentives to the property  
12 owners who participate in these programs would be an effective means  
13 of encouraging their participation and, if so, how such an incentive  
14 program could be structured.

15 (c) The feasibility and practical considerations involved in  
16 launching a program patterned after the Los Angeles county fire safe  
17 house program, wherein domestic violence victims in immediate danger  
18 could seek temporary shelter at fire stations.

19 (3) Staff support for the task force must be provided by the  
20 office of crime victims advocacy.

21 (4) The task force shall report its findings and recommendations  
22 to the appropriate committees of the legislature by December 1, 2025.

23 (5) This section expires June 1, 2026.

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