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**SENATE BILL 5082**

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**State of Washington**

**69th Legislature**

**2025 Regular Session**

**By** Senators C. Wilson, Bateman, Cleveland, Cortes, Frame, Hasegawa, Krishnadasan, Liias, Lovelett, Nobles, Orwall, Salomon, Trudeau, Valdez, and Wellman

Prefiled 12/19/24. Read first time 01/13/25. Referred to Committee on Human Services.

1 AN ACT Relating to creating a housing assistance program for  
2 youth enrolled in extended foster care; adding a new section to  
3 chapter 74.13 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 13.34 RCW; and  
4 creating a new section.

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

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that approximately  
7 13 percent of young people in extended foster care experienced  
8 homelessness in state fiscal year 2024. To obtain housing, many young  
9 people who are dependent at age 18 are required to exit extended  
10 foster care to access certain federal housing vouchers and thereby  
11 lose the support of extended foster care.

12 Accordingly, the state is unable to leverage existing resources,  
13 including federal benefits, as young people use up their eligibility  
14 for time-limited federal programs while they simultaneously decline  
15 other programs needed for long-term success. Statutory changes are  
16 required to ensure dependent young people in extended foster care are  
17 stably housed as they prepare for independence.

18 It is the intent of the legislature to create a housing program  
19 which provides a benefit to dependent young people in extended foster  
20 care that is equivalent to the benefit provided by the federal foster  
21 youth to independence program, such that young people in extended

1 foster care can receive housing assistance while they are dependent  
2 and still benefit from the federal program when they turn 21.

3 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 74.13  
4 RCW to read as follows:

5 (1) The extended foster care housing program is established to  
6 provide rental assistance and associated housing fees to eligible  
7 youth. The extended foster care housing program is intended to  
8 prevent and alleviate homelessness among youth enrolled in extended  
9 foster care.

10 (2) Youth are eligible for the extended foster care housing  
11 program if they are:

12 (a) Receiving extended foster care services pursuant to RCW  
13 13.34.267; and

14 (b) Experiencing homelessness or at imminent risk of experiencing  
15 homelessness as defined by RCW 13.34.030.

16 (3) The department shall conduct a competitive procurement  
17 process to identify an entity or entities to contract with for  
18 operation of the extended foster care housing program. The  
19 contractors must have a demonstrated understanding of the importance  
20 of stable housing for youth involved with the child welfare system.  
21 If no outside entity or entities are available to operate the program  
22 or specific parts of the program, the department may operate the  
23 program or the specific parts that are not operated by an outside  
24 entity.

25 (4) The extended foster care housing program shall provide rental  
26 assistance based on the following criteria:

27 (a) Rental assistance is provided to eligible dependent youth for  
28 up to 36 months not to extend for any young person beyond age 21;

29 (b) The amount of rental assistance must be based on the fair  
30 market rent in the eligible youth's location;

31 (c) Eligible youth shall pay no more than 30 percent of their  
32 adjusted gross income toward rent, including the extended foster care  
33 subsidy; and

34 (d) If the youth's rent and utilities exceed the fair market rent  
35 for that location, the youth's contribution may not exceed 40 percent  
36 of their monthly adjusted gross income, including the extended foster  
37 care subsidy.

38 (5) The department shall ensure that all eligible youth receive  
39 access to rental housing assistance.

1 (6) The department shall collect data on the housing status of  
2 youth in extended foster care on an annual basis.

3 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 13.34  
4 RCW to read as follows:

5 The department shall conduct a transition planning process with  
6 youth enrolled in extended foster care at least three months prior to  
7 their 21st birthday. The transition planning process must include,  
8 but is not limited to:

9 (1) Assessing the youth's continued housing and financial  
10 stability;

11 (2) Supporting the youth to apply to a federally funded housing  
12 voucher program, when available, and if applicable;

13 (3) Providing referrals to housing assistance; and

14 (4) Providing referrals to benefits and services that support the  
15 financial stability of the youth including education, employment,  
16 physical and behavioral health care, and other available public  
17 benefits.

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