

RCW 43.181.900 Findings. (1) The legislature finds that:

(a) Generations of systemic, racist, and discriminatory policies and practices have created barriers to credit and homeownership for black, indigenous, and people of color and other historically marginalized communities in Washington state. The legislature finds that these policies and practices include redlining, racially restrictive covenants, mortgage subsidies and incentives, and displacement and gentrification.

(b) The state government was both an active and passive participant in this discrimination. For example, the legislature recognizes the role of state courts in facilitating discrimination by property owners; the existence of mandatory recording statutes that required county auditors to record racially restrictive covenants; the passage of the urban renewal law authorizing the designation, regulation, and displacement of certain neighborhoods that were deemed to be blighted; and state funding and regulation of the real estate and banking industries in ways that facilitated or promoted private discrimination. The legislature finds that the specific discriminatory acts and omissions are well documented, including in numerous public and private studies, reports, and other publications.

(c) This discrimination and its impacts continue to exist in the present day. The legislature recognizes that the homeownership rate for black, indigenous, and people of color and other historically marginalized communities in Washington is 19 percent below that of non-Hispanic white households, and the homeownership rate for black households is even lower. The legislature recognizes that credit, including home mortgages, is harder and more expensive to obtain for black, indigenous, and people of color and other historically marginalized communities in Washington than for non-Hispanic white households. The legislature finds that the imbalance in supply and demand in Washington's housing market has only exacerbated these inequities.

(d) These negative impacts extend beyond homeownership and affect wealth generation, housing security, and other outcomes for black, indigenous, and people of color and other historically marginalized communities in Washington. The legislature finds that these impacts include higher rates of homelessness, rent burdening, substandard or otherwise unhealthy or unsafe housing, and predatory and discriminatory lending practices that lead to further displacement and gentrification.

(e) Existing state and federal programs and other race-neutral approaches are insufficient to remedy that discrimination and its impacts on access to credit and homeownership for black, indigenous, and people of color and other historically marginalized communities in Washington. The legislature finds that race-conscious programs, such as the special purpose credit programs authorized by RCW 43.181.040, are necessary to remedy the past discrimination in which the state was complicit and to remove the structural barriers that persist.

(2) The legislature declares that the state has a compelling interest in remedying past and ongoing discrimination and its impacts on access to credit and homeownership for black, indigenous, and people of color and other historically marginalized communities in Washington. [2023 c 340 s 1.]

Short title—Conflict with federal requirements—2023 c 340: See notes following RCW 43.181.040.