
SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 5324

State of Washington

66th Legislature

2019 Regular Session

By Senate Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Frockt, Zeiger, Darneille, Walsh, Kuderer, Palumbo, Das, Hasegawa, Hunt, Wellman, Cleveland, Pedersen, Keiser, Nguyen, McCoy, Van De Wege, Dhingra, and Saldaña)

1 AN ACT Relating to support for students experiencing
2 homelessness; and amending RCW 28A.300.542, 43.185C.340, and
3 28A.320.142.

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

5 **Sec. 1.** RCW 28A.300.542 and 2016 c 157 s 2 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 ~~((homeless))~~ students experiencing homelessness and
12 the capacity of the districts to provide support ~~((, which may include~~
13 ~~education liaisons, for homeless students))~~ for students experiencing
14 homelessness. Funds may be used in a manner that is complementary to
15 federal McKinney-Vento funds and consistent with allowable uses as
16 determined by the office of the superintendent of public instruction.
17 The process must complement any similar federal grant program or
18 programs in order to minimize agency overhead and administrative
19 costs for the superintendent of public instruction and school
20 districts. School districts may access both federal and state funding
21 to identify and support homeless students.

1 (2) Award criteria for the state grants must be based on the
2 demonstrated need of the school district and may consider the number
3 or overall percentage, or both, of homeless children and youths
4 enrolled in preschool, elementary, and secondary schools in the
5 school district, and the ability of the local school district to meet
6 these needs. Award criteria for these must also be based on the
7 quality of the applications submitted. ((Preference)) Selected
8 grantees must reflect geographic diversity across the state. Greater
9 weight must be given to districts that demonstrate a commitment to:

10 (a) Partnering with local housing and community-based
11 organizations;

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

13 (c) Implementing strategies to address the opportunity gap and
14 other systemic inequities that negatively impact homeless students
15 and students of color. Specific strategies may include, but are not
16 limited to:

17 (i) Enhancing the cultural responsiveness of current and future
18 staff;

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

21 (iii) Providing inclusive programming and using a
22 multidisciplinary approach when serving students experiencing
23 homelessness and their families;

24 (iv) Intentionally seeking and utilizing input from the families
25 and students experiencing homelessness about how district policies,
26 services, and practices can be improved; and

27 (v) Identifying data elements and systems needed to monitor
28 progress in eliminating disparities in academic outcomes for students
29 experiencing homelessness with their housed peers.

30 (3) At the end of each academic year, districts receiving grants
31 ((must measure during the academic year how often each student
32 physically moves, what services families or unaccompanied youth could
33 access, and whether or not a family or unaccompanied youth received
34 stable housing by the end of the school year)) shall monitor and
35 report on the academic outcomes for students served by the grants.
36 The academic outcomes are those recommended by the office of the
37 superintendent of public instruction. The office of the
38 superintendent of public instruction shall review the reports
39 submitted by the districts and assist school districts in using these

1 data to identify gaps and needs, and develop sustainable strategies
2 to improve academic outcomes for students experiencing homelessness.

3 (4) Homeless students are defined as students without a fixed,
4 regular, and adequate nighttime residence as set forth in the federal
5 McKinney-Vento homeless ((education)) assistance act ((~~P.L. 100-77;~~
6 ~~101 Stat. 482~~)), 42 U.S.C. Sec. 11431 through 11435.

7 (5) School districts may not use funds allocated under this
8 section to supplant existing federal, state, or local resources for
9 homeless student supports, which may include education liaisons.

10 (6) Grants awarded to districts under this section shall be for
11 two years.

12 **Sec. 2.** RCW 43.185C.340 and 2016 c 157 s 3 are each amended to
13 read as follows:

14 (1) Subject to funds appropriated for this specific purpose, the
15 department(~~(, in consultation with the office of the superintendent~~
16 ~~of public instruction,)) shall administer a grant program that links
17 homeless students and their families with stable housing located in
18 the homeless student's school district. The goals of the program
19 ~~((is))~~ are to:~~

20 (a) Provide educational stability for homeless students by
21 promoting housing stability; and

22 (b) Encourage the development of collaborative strategies between
23 housing and education partners.

24 (2) In implementing the program, the department shall consult
25 with the office of the superintendent of public instruction.

26 (3) The department(~~(, working with the office of the~~
27 ~~superintendent of public instruction,)) shall develop a competitive~~
28 grant process to make grant awards ~~((of no more than one hundred~~
29 ~~thousand dollars per school, not to exceed five hundred thousand~~
30 ~~dollars per school district,)) to ~~((school districts partnered with))~~
31 eligible organizations on implementation of the proposal. For the
32 purposes of this subsection, "eligible organization" means any local
33 government, local housing authority, regional support network
34 established under chapter 71.24 RCW, behavioral health organization,
35 nonprofit community or neighborhood-based organization, federally
36 recognized Indian tribe in the state of Washington, or regional or
37 statewide nonprofit housing assistance organization. Applications for
38 the grant program must include ~~((contractual agreements))~~ a
39 memorandum of understanding between the housing providers and school~~

1 districts defining the responsibilities and commitments of each party
2 to identify, house, and support homeless students. The memorandum
3 must include:

4 (a) How housing providers will partner with school districts to
5 address gaps and needs and develop sustainable strategies to help
6 students experiencing homelessness; and

7 (b) How data on homeless students and their families will be
8 collected and shared in accordance with privacy protections under
9 applicable federal and state laws.

10 ~~((3) The grants awarded to school districts shall not exceed~~
11 ~~fifteen school districts per school year.))~~ (4) In determining which
12 ~~((partnerships))~~ eligible organizations will receive grants,
13 ~~((preference must))~~ the department must ensure that selected grantees
14 reflect geographic diversity across the state. Greater weight shall
15 be given to ~~((districts with a demonstrated commitment of partnership~~
16 ~~and history with))~~ eligible organizations that demonstrate a
17 commitment to:

18 (a) Partnering with local schools or school districts; and

19 (b) Developing and implementing strategies to address racial
20 inequities. Specific strategies may include, but are not limited to:

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

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

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

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

29 ~~((4))~~ (5) Activities eligible for assistance under this grant
30 program include but are not limited to:

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

35 (b) Transportation assistance, including gasoline assistance for
36 families with vehicles and bus passes;

37 (c) Emergency shelter; ~~((and))~~

38 (d) Housing stability case management; and

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

1 ~~((5))~~ (6)(a) All beneficiaries of funds from the grant program
2 must be ~~((unaccompanied youth or))~~ from ~~((very low income))~~
3 households ~~((For the purposes of this subsection, "very low income~~
4 ~~household" means an unaccompanied youth or family or unrelated~~
5 ~~persons living together whose adjusted income is less than fifty~~
6 ~~percent of the median family income, adjusted for household size, for~~
7 ~~the county where the grant recipient is located))~~ that include at
8 least one homeless student as defined as a child or youth without a
9 fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence as set forth in the
10 federal McKinney-Vento homeless assistance act, 42 U.S.C. Sec. 11431
11 through 11435.

12 (b) For the purposes of this section, "homeless student" includes
13 unaccompanied homeless youth not in the physical custody of a parent
14 or guardian. "Unaccompanied homeless youth" includes students up to
15 the age of twenty-one, in alignment with the qualifications for
16 school admissions under RCW 28A.225.160(1).

17 ~~((6))~~ (7)(a) Grantee ~~((school districts))~~ organizations must
18 compile and report information to the department. The department
19 shall report to the legislature the findings of the grantee, the
20 housing stability of the homeless families, ~~((the academic~~
21 ~~performance of the grantee population,))~~ and any related policy
22 recommendations.

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

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

26 (ii) Housing destination at program exit;

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

28 and

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

30 (c) Grantees must also include in their reports a narrative
31 description discussing its partnership with school districts as set
32 forth in the memorandum outlined in subsection (3) of this section.
33 Reports must also include the kinds of supports grantees are
34 providing students and families to support academic learning.

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

38 ~~((7))~~ (8) In order to ensure that ~~((school districts))~~ housing
39 providers are meeting the requirements of ~~((an approved))~~ the grant
40 program for homeless students, the ~~((office of the superintendent of~~

1 ~~public instruction))~~ department shall monitor the program((s)) at
2 least once every two years. ~~((Monitoring shall begin during the~~
3 ~~2016-17 school year.~~

4 ~~(8))~~ (9) Any program review and monitoring under this section
5 may be conducted concurrently with other program reviews and
6 monitoring conducted by the department. In its review, the ~~((office~~
7 ~~of the superintendent of public instruction))~~ department shall
8 monitor program components that include ~~((but need not be limited~~
9 ~~to))~~ the process used by the ~~((district))~~ eligible organization to
10 identify and reach out to homeless students, ~~((assessment data))~~ and
11 other indicators to determine how well the ~~((district))~~ eligible
12 organization is meeting the ~~((academic))~~ housing needs of homeless
13 students~~((, district expenditures used to expand opportunities for~~
14 ~~these students, and the academic progress of students under)).~~ The
15 department shall provide technical assistance and support to housing
16 providers to better implement the program.

17 **Sec. 3.** RCW 28A.320.142 and 2016 c 157 s 5 are each amended to
18 read as follows:

19 (1) Each ~~((school district that has identified more than ten~~
20 ~~unaccompanied youth))~~ K-12 public school in the state must establish
21 a building point of contact in each elementary school, middle school,
22 and high school. These points of contact must be appointed by the
23 principal of the designated school and are responsible for
24 identifying homeless and unaccompanied homeless youth and connecting
25 them with the school district's homeless student liaison. The school
26 district homeless student liaison is responsible for training
27 building points of contact.

28 (2) The office of the superintendent of public instruction shall
29 make available best practices for choosing and training building
30 points of contact to each school district.

--- END ---