

SUCCESSFUL STRATEGY: WASHINGTON'S HOMELESS HOUSING AND ASSISTANCE ACT (HB 2163)¹

In April 2005 the Washington Legislature passed HB 2163 (codified at RCW 43.185C) to address homelessness statewide. The bill provides funding for housing and services for homeless persons throughout the state. Dedicated funding for the program was created by a \$10 surcharge on all documents recorded by the county auditor, with some exceptions. The surcharge will primarily affect the recording of deeds.

Highlights of HB 2163

- Provides an estimated \$12 million annually for housing and services for homeless persons
- State must develop a ten-year plan to address homelessness and report results annually
- Requires participating counties and cities to prepare ten-year plans to reduce homelessness
- Both state and local plans must aim to reduce homelessness by 50% in ten years
- A census of homeless persons must be done annually

Distribution of Funds

- Distribution of funds to local governments
 - Between 2% and 5% of the funds may be retained by the county auditor for administration and local distribution costs
 - 60% of the remaining funds are remitted to the participating county of origin
 - Any city which chooses to participate in the program receives a percentage of the surcharge equal to the percentage of the city's local portion of the real estate excise tax
 - 6% of local funds may be used for administrative purposes
 - The remaining funds must be used for programs directly related to accomplishing the goals outlined in the county's ten-year plan to reduce homelessness. Eligible programs include:
 - Shelter expansion
 - Homeless supportive services
 - Eviction prevention programs
 - Supportive and transitional housing
 - In addition to funds earmarked for local govts, participating cities/counties are eligible to apply for a portion of the state's share of the surcharge through the Homeless Housing Grant Program.
- Distribution of funds to the State
 - The remaining 40% of the surcharge funds will be remitted to the Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development (DCTED)
 - 12.5% of these funds may be used for administrative costs while the remaining 87.5% must be distributed through the Homeless Housing Grant Program
 - The DCTED's responsibilities include:
 - Creation of the state homeless housing strategic plan
 - Coordinating and implementing an annual statewide homeless census
 - Implementing and administering a data management and tracking system
 - Developing an online information and referral system for homeless housing
 - Funding and managing the Homeless Housing Grant Program
 - Providing technical assistance to cities/counties related to their homeless housing plan
 - Overseeing the statewide Homeless Housing Program and reporting on its progress annually to the Governor

¹ Adapted from Final House Bill Report E2SHB 2163