

AMENDED IN SENATE JUNE 26, 2014

AMENDED IN SENATE JUNE 10, 2014

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MAY 23, 2014

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MARCH 28, 2014

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2013–14 REGULAR SESSION

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 2061

Introduced by Assembly Member Chau

February 20, 2014

An act to add Section 18262 to the Welfare and Institutions Code, relating to public social services.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 2061, as amended, Chau. Child welfare services: families experiencing homelessness.

Existing law establishes the Aid to Families with Dependent Children-Foster Care (AFDC-FC) program, under which counties provide payments to foster care providers on behalf of qualified children in foster care. The program is funded by a combination of federal, state, and county funds, with moneys from the General Fund being continuously appropriated to pay for the state's share of AFDC-FC costs.

Existing law authorizes the State Department of Social Services to conduct a demonstration project in up to 20 counties, to allow flexible use of federal and state foster care funds by utilizing a federal capped allocation model over a 5-year period, based on the terms and conditions of the federal Title IV-E waiver.

Existing law provides for child welfare services, which are public social services directed toward, among other purposes, protecting and promoting the welfare of all children, including those in foster care placement.

This bill would require the department, ~~subject to federal approval, to include~~ *department to encourage counties participating in the demonstration project to consider use of innovative, evidence-based strategies in the with the optional portion of their federal Title IV-E waiver capped allocation demonstration project to achieve supportive housing, rapid rehousing, and permanent housing, as described, for families that include a child placed in foster care, who are receiving child welfare services, and who are experiencing homelessness.* The bill would also provide that the continuous appropriation for the state’s share of the AFDC-FC costs would not be made for purposes of implementing the bill.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes.
 State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

- 1 SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares all of the
- 2 following:
- 3 (a) A correlation exists between family homelessness and foster
- 4 care placement. Though homelessness alone is not a basis for
- 5 removing a child from a home, almost one-half of children in foster
- 6 care have birth parents with a history of homelessness. Foster
- 7 children with homeless birth parents are less likely to live with
- 8 relative caregivers than children of families with stable housing,
- 9 and these children remain separated from their families for longer
- 10 than children of families with stable housing.
- 11 (b) Homelessness and housing instability interfere with the
- 12 reunification of children in foster care with birth families. As many
- 13 as 30 percent of children in foster care who cannot be reunited
- 14 with birth families could be reunited if the family were able to
- 15 access a safe place to live.
- 16 (c) Like children of homeless families, children involved with
- 17 a child welfare system experience elevated school dropout rates,
- 18 learning difficulties, worsening mental health conditions, and high
- 19 levels of aggravation.

1 (d) A study of child-welfare-involved families experiencing
2 long-term homelessness with at least one parent with a substance
3 use disorder showed supportive housing allowed the majority of
4 families' child welfare cases to be resolved by reuniting families
5 within 10 months. The study showed supportive housing reduced
6 actual and potential use of foster care services by an average of
7 187 days.

8 (e) Studies have shown that providing low-cost short- and
9 medium-term housing and services interventions, known as "rapid
10 rehousing services," to families experiencing brief episodes of
11 homelessness results in housing stability, with families becoming
12 4.7 times less likely to return to homelessness than shelter
13 interventions.

14 (f) A child's experience with foster care perpetuates a cycle of
15 homelessness. Data shows that 25 percent of children placed in
16 foster care become homeless within four years of aging out.

17 (g) Jurisdictions are using evidence-based strategies to
18 implement federal demonstration waivers that grant states
19 flexibility in the use of federal foster care payment funds. These
20 waivers allow child welfare agencies to use alternative services
21 and supports that promote safety, permanency, and well-being for
22 children.

23 (h) It is the intent of the Legislature to promote the use of
24 innovative, evidence-based models to assess the housing needs of
25 families who are receiving child welfare services and who are
26 experiencing homelessness, and to coordinate and access resources
27 available for rapid rehousing, supportive housing, and services
28 that promote housing stability, with the goals of preventing foster
29 care placement and reuniting children in foster care with their birth
30 parents.

31 SEC. 2. Section 18262 is added to the Welfare and Institutions
32 Code, to read:

33 ~~18262. The department, subject to federal approval, shall~~
34 ~~include~~ *department shall encourage participating counties to*
35 *consider the use of* innovative, evidence-based strategies ~~in the~~
36 *with the optional portion of their* federal Title IV-E waiver capped
37 allocation demonstration project pursuant to Section 18260 to
38 assist families that include a child placed in foster care, who are
39 receiving child welfare services, and who are experiencing
40 homelessness to achieve the following:

1 (a) Supportive housing, including housing with no limit on
2 length of stay, that is occupied by the target population, and that
3 is linked to onsite or offsite services that assist the supportive
4 housing resident in retaining the housing, improving his or her
5 health status, and maximizing his or her ability to live and, when
6 possible, work in the community.

7 (b) Rapid rehousing, including assistance that enables an
8 individual or family experiencing homelessness to be quickly
9 stabilized and housed in permanent housing affordable to the
10 individual or family.

11 (c) Permanent housing, including housing without a limit on
12 the length of stay that meets the affirmative standard characteristics
13 of Section 1941.1 of the Civil Code.

14 SEC. 3. No appropriation pursuant to Section 15200 of the
15 Welfare and Institutions Code shall be made for purposes of
16 implementing this act.