

RCW 74.09.885 Apple health and homes program—Definitions. The definitions in this section apply throughout RCW 74.09.886 and 74.09.888 unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

(1) "Community support services" means active search and promotion of access to, and choice of, appropriate, safe, and affordable housing and ongoing supports to assure ongoing successful tenancy. The term includes, but is not limited to, services to medical assistance clients who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless through outreach, engagement, and coordination of services with shelter and housing. The term includes benefits offered through the foundational community supports program established pursuant to the authority's federal waiver, entitled "medicaid transformation project," as amended and reauthorized.

(2) "Community support services provider" means a local entity that contracts with a coordinating entity to provide community support services. A community support services provider may also separately perform the functions of a housing provider.

(3) "Coordinating entity" means one or more organizations, including medicaid managed care organizations, under contract with the authority to coordinate community support services as required under RCW 74.09.886 and 74.09.888. There may only be one coordinating entity per regional service area.

(4) "Department" means the department of commerce.

(5) "Homeless person" has the same meaning as in RCW 43.185C.010.

(6) "Housing provider" means a public or private organization that supplies permanent supportive housing units consistent with RCW 36.70A.030 to meet the housing needs of homeless persons. A housing provider may supply permanent supportive housing in a site-based or scattered site arrangement using a variety of public, private, philanthropic, or tenant-based sources of funds to cover operating costs or rent. A housing provider may also perform the functions of a community support services provider.

(7) "Office" means the office of apple health and homes created in RCW 43.330.181.

(8) "Program" means the apple health and homes program established in RCW 74.09.886.

(9) "Permanent supportive housing" has the same meaning as in RCW 36.70A.030. [2022 c 216 s 2.]

Findings—Intent—2022 c 216: "(1) The legislature finds that:

(a) The epidemic of homelessness apparent in communities throughout Washington is creating immense suffering. It is threatening the health of homeless families and individuals, sapping their human potential, eroding public confidence, and undermining the shared values that have driven our state's prosperity, including public safety and access to public streets, parks, and facilities;

(b) In seeking to identify the causes of this epidemic, a large proportion of those unsheltered also suffer from serious behavioral health or physical health conditions that will inevitably grow worse without timely and effective health care;

(c) Housing is an indispensable element of effective health care. Stable housing is a prerequisite to addressing behavioral health needs and lack of housing is a precursor to poor health outcomes;

(d) A home, health care, and wellness are fundamental for Washington residents;

(e) Reducing homelessness is a priority of the people of Washington state and that reducing homelessness through policy alignment and reform lessens fiscal impact to the state and improves the economic vitality of our businesses;

(f) The impact of this epidemic is falling most heavily on those communities that already suffer the most serious health disparities: Black, indigenous, people of color, and historically marginalized and underserved communities. It is a moral imperative to shelter chronically homeless populations; and

(g) Washington state has many of the tools needed to address this challenge, including a network of safety net health and behavioral health care providers in both urban and rural areas, an effective system of health care coverage through apple health, and excellent public and nonprofit affordable housing providers. Yet far too many homeless families and individuals are going without the housing and health care resources they need because these tools have yet to be combined in an effective way across the state.

(2) It is the intent of the legislature to treat chronic homelessness as a medical condition and that the apple health and homes act address the needs of chronically homeless populations by pairing a health care problem with a health care solution." [2022 c 216 s 1.]

Short title—2022 c 216: "This act may be known and cited as the apple health and homes act." [2022 c 216 s 10.]