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SB-1357 Housing Authority of the County of Alameda. (2023-2024)

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Senate Bill No. 1357

CHAPTER 795

An act to add Section 34335 to the Health and Safety Code, relating to housing.

[Approved by Governor September 27, 2024. Filed with Secretary of State September 27, 2024.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 1357, Wahab. Housing Authority of the County of Alameda.

Existing law, the Housing Authorities Law, establishes a housing authority within each county and city to undertake specified activities relating to housing for persons of low income, subject to the adoption of a resolution by the governing body of the county or city declaring the need for an authority.

Existing federal law provides housing assistance to low-income individuals and households in the form of vouchers, commonly known as Housing Choice Vouchers.

This bill would require the Housing Authority of the County of Alameda to, by January 1, 2026, conduct an evaluation and review of its internet website for the purpose of ensuring that the website is easily accessible and navigable, including for those that are non-English speakers. The bill would require the authority to, by March 31, 2025, publish Housing Choice Voucher program waitlist data on its internet website, as specified. The bill would require the authority to, by September 30 of each year, develop and publish on its internet website a report that includes certain information, including information regarding employment with the authority and data regarding the effectiveness of the programs administered by the authority, as specified. By requiring the authority to review its internet website, publish data, and develop an annual report, the bill would impose a state-mandated local program.

This bill would make legislative findings and declarations as to the necessity of a special statute for the Housing Authority of the County of Alameda.

The California Constitution requires the state to reimburse local agencies and school districts for certain costs mandated by the state. Statutory provisions establish procedures for making that reimbursement.

This bill would provide that, if the Commission on State Mandates determines that the bill contains costs mandated by the state, reimbursement for those costs shall be made pursuant to the statutory provisions noted above.

Vote: majority Appropriation: no Fiscal Committee: yes Local Program: yes

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. Section 34335 is added to the Health and Safety Code, to read:

34335. (a) For purposes of this section:

(1) "Authority" means the Housing Authority of the County of Alameda.

(2) "Family Self-Sufficiency program" means the Family Self-Sufficiency program established pursuant to Section 1437u of Title 42 of the United States Code.

(3) "HCV program" means the Housing Choice Voucher program established pursuant to Section 8 of the United States Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. Sec. 1437f).

(4) "HUD" means the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development.

(b) The authority shall, by January 1, 2026, conduct an evaluation and review of its internet website for the purpose of ensuring that the website is easily accessible and navigable, including for those that are non-English speakers. The review and evaluation shall ensure high visibility of all of the following:

(1) Audits.

(2) Budgets.

(3) Policies.

(4) Information regarding consumer rights, including any discrimination grievance procedures and public records disclosure.

(5) Financial information of the authority, including any audit reports, the authority's budget, employee classification plans, and employee salary schedule.

(6) Information regarding the administration of housing programs, including the authority's one- and five-year public agency plans and HCV program administration plan.

(7) The authority's meeting agendas.

(c) Beginning March 31, 2025, the authority shall publish HCV program waitlist data on its internet website, which, at a minimum, shall include all of the following:

(1) The number of households that are on the waitlist.

(2) Data regarding the configuration of households on the waitlist.

(3) The number of households that were selected from the waitlist in the preceding 12 months.

(d) (1) The authority, beginning September 30, 2025, and each year thereafter, shall develop a data-driven annual report for the preceding fiscal year that includes, at a minimum, information regarding employment with the authority, including all of the following:

(A) The total number of vacancies.

(B) The number of vacancies filled by promotion.

(C) The number of new hires.

(D) Trainings offered to staff.

(2) (A) The annual report developed pursuant to paragraph (1) shall include data regarding the effectiveness of the programs administered by the authority, including all of the following:

(i) The total number of individuals housed in the preceding four years.

(ii) The total number of households on the HCV program waitlist.

(iii) The average amount of time a household remains on the HCV program waitlist.

(iv) The progress and success of the authority in achieving the goals outlined in its five-year public agency plan.

(v) The total number of vouchers committed to homelessness.

(vi) The utilization percentage for homeless voucher programs.

(vii) The total number of rental vouchers allocated to each program, rental vouchers issued, and rental vouchers utilized.

(viii) The data regarding households participating in the Family Self-Sufficiency program, including the number of participants, the total amount in an interest-bearing escrow account, a description of the goals established in contracts with a participant, the rate of achieving the goals, and the number of participants who successfully graduated.

(B) The data included in the annual report pursuant to subparagraph (A) shall include all of the following:

(i) For the annual report developed by September 30, 2025, data for the preceding fiscal year.

(ii) For the annual report developed by September 30, 2026, data for the preceding two fiscal years.

(iii) For the annual report developed by September 30, 2027, data for the preceding three fiscal years.

(iv) For the annual report developed by September 30, 2028, and each year thereafter, data for the preceding four fiscal years.

(3) The annual report developed pursuant to this subdivision shall be posted on the authority's internet website.

(e) Nothing in this section requires the disclosure of the personal or sensitive information of authority program participants.

SEC. 2. The Legislature finds and declares that a special statute is necessary and that a general statute cannot be made applicable within the meaning of Section 16 of Article IV of the California Constitution because of the unique need of the Housing Authority of the County of Alameda to increase the accessibility of its internet website and to make program data publically available to the residents of Alameda County.

SEC. 3. If the Commission on State Mandates determines that this act contains costs mandated by the state, reimbursement to local agencies and school districts for those costs shall be made pursuant to Part 7 (commencing with Section 17500) of Division 4 of Title 2 of the Government Code.