**Washington State**
**House of Representatives**
**Office of Program Research**

# BILL ANALYSIS

# Community & Economic Development Committee

# HB 1456

**Brief Description:** Concerning minimum staffing levels for Washington main street programs.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Rule, Ramel, Robertson, Lekanoff, Shewmake and Harris-Talley.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Modifies the required minimum staffing levels for local Main Street Programs.
- Creates a pilot grant program to assist with costs related to establishing the required minimum levels of staffing for a local Main Street Programs.

**Hearing Date:** 2/9/21

**Staff:** Cassie Jones (786-7303).

**Background:**

The state Main Street Program provides technical assistance for local comprehensive downtown or neighborhood commercial district revitalization initiatives. The Department of Archeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP) operates the Main Street Program through a contract with the Washington Trust for Historic Preservation. The DAHP provides initial site evaluations by technical specialists, training for local programs and staff, and design and implementation assistance to local governments, businesses, organizations, and property owners undertaking revitalization initiatives. The DAHP also may provide financial assistance for initial start-up costs for a local program.

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

The DAHP may designate local downtown or neighborhood commercial district revitalization programs and official local Main Street Programs for such assistance based on certain criteria including:

- the degree of interest and commitment to comprehensive downtown or neighborhood commercial district revitalization and historic preservation by both the public and private sectors;
- the evidence of potential private sector investment in the downtown or neighborhood commercial district;
- a downtown or neighborhood commercial district with sufficient historic fabric to become a foundation for an enhanced community image;
- the capacity of the organization to undertake a comprehensive program and the financial commitment to implement a long-term downtown or neighborhood commercial district revitalization program that includes a commitment to employ a professional program manager and maintain a sufficient operating budget;
- the DAHP's existing downtown revitalization program's tier system; and
- the National Main Street Center's criteria for designating official Main Street cities.

The DAHP's rules relating to eligibility criteria include a requirement that an application for designation as a Washington Main Street community include information demonstrating that the applicant can maintain a minimum level of staffing to achieve its mission, goals, and annual work plan. According to the rule, a jurisdiction's population determines the required level of minimum staffing as follows:

- a jurisdiction with a population of 2,500 or less must maintain a part-time volunteer executive director;
- a jurisdiction with a population of 2,501 to 5,000 must maintain a half-time, paid executive director; and
- a jurisdiction with a population of 5,001 or greater must maintain a full-time, paid executive director.

**Summary of Bill:**

In developing criteria for designation of local downtown or neighborhood commercial district revitalization programs and official local Main Street Programs, the DAHP must consider the capacity of the Program to maintain a minimum staffing level.

Each application for designation as an official local Main Street must include information demonstrating that the applicant can maintain a minimum level of staffing to achieve the applicant's mission, goals, and annual work plan. The minimum staffing level required is determined according to the population of the local jurisdiction as follows:

- a jurisdiction with a population of 5,000 or fewer must maintain at least a part-time, volunteer executive director;
- a jurisdiction with a population of greater than 5,000 but fewer than 10,000 must maintain at least a half-time, paid executive director; and
- a jurisdiction with a population of 10,000 or greater must maintain at least a full-time, paid

executive director.

The minimum staffing level requirements apply only to programs created after the effective date of the act.

The DAHP must establish a pilot project grant program to award grants to programs applying for designation as an official local main street program. The purpose of the grant program is to assist with costs related to establishing a minimum level of staffing. In order to be eligible for a grant, the program applying for designation as an official local main street program must:

- be located within a city with a population of fewer than 20,000;
- establish, to the satisfaction of the DAHP, that financial inability to meet minimum staffing level requirements is a significant factor that is preventing the program from qualifying for designation as an official local main street program; and
- report to the DAHP on the diversity of the program's overseeing board.

Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, the DAHP must employ additional staff as needed to administer the grant program. The grant program expires June 30, 2025.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on February 5, 2021.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.