
SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 2275

State of Washington

68th Legislature

2024 Regular Session

By House Housing (originally sponsored by Representatives Reeves and Morgan)

1 AN ACT Relating to senior independent living facilities; adding a
2 new section to chapter 19.27 RCW; adding a new chapter to Title 70
3 RCW; and providing an expiration date.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** A new section is added to chapter 19.27
6 RCW to read as follows:

7 (1) The legislature finds that the unique needs of independent
8 senior citizens warrant residential building requirements for senior
9 independent housing that are different than those that apply to
10 traditional, nonage-restricted multifamily residential developments.

11 (2) The state building code council shall convene a technical
12 advisory group for the purpose of recommending amendments to the
13 rules or codes applicable to senior independent housing to enhance
14 building accessibility and safety for independent senior citizens and
15 persons with disabilities. The technical advisory group shall strive
16 to align the rules or codes applicable to senior independent housing
17 with the rules or codes applicable to assisted living facilities,
18 nursing homes, long-term care facilities, and other similar living
19 arrangements. When developing the recommendations, the technical
20 advisory group must consult with experts in public health, fire and
21 life safety, and building accessibility.

1 (3) The technical advisory group shall provide its
2 recommendations to the state building code council in time for the
3 council to adopt or amend rules or codes as necessary for
4 implementation in the 2024 code adoption cycle. The state building
5 code council shall take action to adopt additions and amendments to
6 rules or codes as necessary by July 1, 2026.

7 (4) For the purposes of this section, "senior independent
8 housing" means any residential housing that is advertised,
9 maintained, designed, or constructed for the express or implied
10 purpose of providing housing for persons 55 years of age or older who
11 are independent and do not require assistance with activities of
12 daily living. Senior independent housing is typically designed to
13 enable seniors to live on their own, but with the security and
14 convenience of community living, including recreational, educational,
15 and social activities. "Senior independent housing" does not include
16 facilities that provide medical care or assistance with activities of
17 daily living, such as assisted living facilities, nursing homes,
18 long-term care facilities, or other similar living arrangements.

19 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** The definitions in this section apply
20 throughout this chapter unless the context clearly requires
21 otherwise.

22 (1) "Department" means the department of commerce.

23 (2) "Resident" means any person who lives in a senior independent
24 housing establishment.

25 (3) "Senior independent housing" means any residential housing
26 that is advertised, maintained, designed, or constructed for the
27 express or implied purpose of providing housing for persons 55 years
28 of age or older who are independent and do not require assistance
29 with activities of daily living. Senior independent housing is
30 typically designed to enable seniors to live on their own, but with
31 the security and convenience of community living, including
32 recreational, educational, and social activities. "Senior independent
33 housing" does not include facilities that provide medical care or
34 assistance with activities of daily living, such as assisted living
35 facilities, nursing homes, long-term care facilities, or other
36 similar living arrangements.

37 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** (1) In addition to any other rights
38 provided by law, residents in senior independent housing have the

1 rights provided in this section. The rights provided in this section
2 are minimum rights guaranteed to all residents of senior independent
3 housing and are not intended to diminish any other rights provided in
4 local, state, or federal laws.

5 (2) A resident in a senior independent housing establishment has
6 the right to:

7 (a) Be free of interference, coercion, discrimination, and
8 reprisal from the housing establishment in exercising the resident's
9 rights;

10 (b) Be treated respectfully by management, employees, and staff
11 of the housing establishment;

12 (c) Install safety and security devices, including cameras, at
13 the entrance to the resident's individual living unit or within the
14 unit;

15 (d) Organize, attend, and hold meetings open to any and all
16 residents of the housing establishment at reasonable hours and times;

17 (e) Communicate with and receive a timely response from the
18 manager of the senior independent housing establishment or the
19 manager's designee at any time of day, including after hours and on
20 weekends, in case of emergencies; and

21 (f) Provide anonymous suggestions and feedback to the management,
22 employees, and staff of the senior independent housing establishment
23 through methods such as suggestion boxes in common areas.

24 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** (1) The department shall study and report
25 on the possibility of creating an office of senior housing within the
26 department as described in this section.

27 (2) The purpose of the office of senior housing will be to lead
28 and coordinate efforts related to providing oversight for senior
29 independent housing and help ensure that senior independent housing
30 establishments comply with any relevant local, state, and federal
31 laws and regulations related to building accessibility and safety,
32 reasonable accommodations, landlord-tenant duties, lease enforcement,
33 and any other relevant resident rights including, but not limited to,
34 the following:

35 (a) The residential landlord-tenant act in chapter 59.18 RCW;

36 (b) The law against discrimination in chapter 49.60 RCW;

37 (c) The state building code in chapter 19.27 RCW;

38 (d) The senior independent housing resident rights provided in
39 section 3 of this act;

1 (e) The federal fair housing act (42 U.S.C. 3601 et seq.);
2 (f) The federal Americans with disabilities act (42 U.S.C. 12101
3 et seq.); and
4 (g) Any other relevant state and federal laws and regulations.
5 (3) The office of senior housing should function as a single
6 point of contact for residents who have complaints about a senior
7 independent housing establishment or need assistance with enforcing
8 their rights.
9 (4) The office of senior housing should, at minimum, have the
10 duty and power to:
11 (a) Provide education to residents and potential residents about
12 their rights and responsibilities;
13 (b) Collect resident complaints and other relevant data, and
14 report this information to appropriate local, state, and federal
15 agencies on a regular basis; and
16 (c) Directly enforce or help coordinate enforcement of the
17 relevant local, state, and federal laws and regulations described in
18 subsection (2) of this section with the appropriate local, state, and
19 federal agencies.
20 (5) In studying the possibility of creating an office of senior
21 housing, the department shall consult with appropriate stakeholders
22 and any local, state, or federal agencies with responsibilities
23 related to senior housing and aging issues including, but not limited
24 to, the department of social and health services, the aging and long-
25 term support administration within the department of social and
26 health services, the department of health, the office of the state
27 long-term care ombuds, the Washington state human rights commission,
28 the consumer protection division of the attorney general's office,
29 the state council on aging, local area agencies on aging, the United
30 States department of housing and urban development, and the United
31 States department of justice.
32 (6) By July 1, 2025, and in compliance with RCW 43.01.036, the
33 department shall submit a report to the appropriate committees of the
34 legislature that includes information and recommendations about
35 options, benefits, risks, and costs associated with establishing an
36 office of senior housing within the department.
37 (7) This section expires July 1, 2026.

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** Sections 2 through 4 of this act
2 constitute a new chapter in Title 70 RCW.

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