

**Chapter 36.22 RCW
COUNTY AUDITOR**

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RCW 36.22.010 Duties of auditor. The county auditor:

(1) Shall be recorder of deeds and other instruments in writing which by law are to be filed and recorded in and for the county for which he or she is elected;

(2) Shall keep an account current with the county treasurer, charge all money received as shown by receipts issued and credit all disbursements paid out according to the record of settlement of the treasurer with the legislative authority;

(3) Shall make out and transmit to the state auditor a statement of the state fund account with the county in accordance with standards developed by the state auditor. The statement must be available to the public;

(4) Shall make available a complete exhibit of the prior-year finances of the county including, but not limited to, a statement of financial condition and financial operation in accordance with standards developed by the state auditor. This exhibit shall be made available after the financial records are closed for the prior year;

(5) Shall make out a register of all warrants legally authorized and directed to be issued by the legislative body at any regular or special meeting. The auditor shall make the data available to the county treasurer. The auditor shall retain the original of the register of warrants for future reference;

(6) As clerk of the board of county commissioners, shall:

Record all of the proceedings of the legislative authority;

Make full entries of all of their resolutions and decisions on all questions concerning the raising of money for and the allowance of accounts against the county;

Record the vote of each member on any question upon which there is a division or at the request of any member present;

Sign all orders made and warrants issued by order of the legislative authority for the payment of money;

Record the reports of the county treasurer of the receipts and disbursements of the county;

Preserve and file all accounts acted upon by the legislative authority;

Preserve and file all petitions and applications for franchises and record the action of the legislative authority thereon;

Record all orders levying taxes;

Perform all other duties required by any rule or order of the legislative authority. [2009 c 337 s 3; 1995 c 194 s 1; 1984 c 128 s 2; 1963 c 4 s 36.22.010. Prior: 1955 c 157 s 9; prior: (i) Code 1881 s 2707; 1869 p 310 ss 1, 2, 3; 1863 p 549 ss 1, 2, 3; 1854 p 424 ss 1, 2, 3; RRS s 4083. (ii) Code 1881 s 2709; RRS s 4085. (iii) Code 1881 s 2711; RRS s 4088. (iv) 1893 c 119 s 2; Code 1881 s 2712; 1869 p 311 s 6; 1863 p 550 s 6; 1854 p 425 s 6; RRS s 4089. (v) 1893 c 119 s 3; Code 1881 s 2571; RRS s 4090. (vi) 1893 c 119 s 4; Code 1881 s 2713;

1869 p 311 s 7; 1867 p 130 s 1; RRS s 4091. (vii) 1893 c 119 s 5; Code 1881 s 2714; 1869 p 311 s 8; 1867 p 131 s 2; RRS s 4092. (viii) 1893 c 119 s 7; Code 1881 s 2718; 1869 p 312 s 13; RRS s 4095. (ix) Code 1881 s 2719; RRS s 4098. (x) 1893 c 119 s 8; Code 1881 s 2720; RRS s 4099.]

RCW 36.22.020 Publisher of legislative authority proceedings—Custodian of commissioners' seal. It shall be the duty of the county auditor of each county, within fifteen days after the adjournment of each regular session, to publish a summary of the proceedings of the legislative authority at such term, in any newspaper published in the county or having a general circulation therein, or the auditor may post copies of such proceedings in three of the most public places in the county. The seal of the county commissioners for each county, used by the county auditor as clerk to attest the proceedings of the legislative authority, shall be and remain in the custody of the county auditor, and the auditor is hereby authorized to use such seal in attestation of all official acts, whether as clerk of the legislative authority, as auditor or recorder of deeds; and all certificates, exemplifications of records, or other acts performed as county auditor, certified under the seal of the county commissioners, pursuant to this section, in this state, shall be as valid and legally binding as though attested by a seal of office of the county auditor. [1995 c 194 s 2; 1963 c 4 s 36.22.020. Prior: Code 1881 s 2724; 1869 p 313 s 17; RRS ss 4102, 4103. Formerly RCW 36.16.080, 36.22.020, and 36.22.130.]

RCW 36.22.030 May administer oaths. Auditors and their deputies may administer oaths necessary in the performance of their duties and in all other cases where oaths are required by law to be administered and take acknowledgments of deeds and other instruments in writing: PROVIDED, That any deputy county auditor, in administering such oath or taking such acknowledgment, shall certify to the same in his or her own name as deputy, and not in the name of his or her principal, and shall attach thereto the seal of the office: PROVIDED, That all oaths administered or acknowledgments taken by any deputy of any county auditor certifying to the same in the name of his or her principal by himself or herself as such deputy, prior to the taking effect of chapter 119, Laws of 1893 be and the same are hereby legalized and made valid and binding. [2009 c 549 s 4023; 1963 c 4 s 36.22.030. Prior: 1893 c 119 s 6; Code 1881 s 2717; 1869 p 312 s 11; 1863 p 550 s 8; 1854 p 425 s 8; RRS s 4094.]

RCW 36.22.040 Duty to audit claims against county. The county auditor shall audit all claims, demands, and accounts against the county which by law are chargeable to the county, except such cost or fee bills as are by law to be examined or approved by some other judicial tribunal or officer. Such claims as it is his or her duty to audit shall be presented to the board of county commissioners for their examination and allowance. [2009 c 549 s 4024; 1963 c 4 s 36.22.040. Prior: 1893 c 119 s 1, part; Code 1881 s 2710, part; 1869 p 310 s 5, part; 1863 p 549 s 5, part; 1854 p 425 s 5, part; RRS s 4086, part.]

RCW 36.22.050 Issuance of warrants—Multiple warrants. For claims allowed by the county commissioners, and also for cost bills and other lawful claims duly approved by the competent tribunal designated by law for their allowance, he or she shall draw a warrant on the county treasurer, made payable to the claimant or his or her order, bearing date from the time of and regularly numbered in the order of their issue. If there is not sufficient cash in the county treasury to cover such claims or cost bills, or if a claimant requests, the auditor may issue a number of smaller warrants, the total principal amounts of which shall equal the amount of said claim or cost bill. [2009 c 549 s 4025; 1975 c 31 s 1; 1969 ex.s. c 87 s 1; 1963 c 4 s 36.22.050. Prior: (i) 1893 c 119 s 1, part; Code 1881 s 2710, part; 1869 p 310 s 5, part; 1863 p 549 s 5, part; 1854 p 425 s 5, part; RRS s 4086, part. (ii) 1893 c 48 s 2; RRS s 4087.]

RCW 36.22.060 Record of warrants. The auditor shall maintain a record of when a warrant is issued. The record shall include the warrant number, date, name of payee, amount, nature of claims, or services provided. [1995 c 194 s 3; 1963 c 4 s 36.22.060. Prior: 1893 c 119 s 1, part; Code 1881 s 2710, part; 1869 p 310 s 5, part; 1863 p 549 s 5, part; 1854 p 425 s 5, part; RRS s 4086, part.]

RCW 36.22.070 Original claims to be retained. (1) The auditor shall also retain all original bills and indorse thereon claimant's name, nature of claim, the action had, and if a warrant was issued, date and number the voucher or claim the same as the warrant.

(2) The auditor may retain all claims, bills, and associated records referenced in subsection (1) of this section in an electronic format sufficient for the conduct of official business.

(3) For the purposes of this section, "claims" shall exclude claims filed against the county in accordance with the provisions of chapter 4.96 RCW. [2003 c 72 s 1; 1963 c 4 s 36.22.070. Prior: 1893 c 119 s 1, part; Code 1881 s 2710, part; 1869 p 310 s 5, part; 1863 p 549 s 5, part; 1854 p 425 s 5, part; RRS s 4086, part.]

RCW 36.22.080 Claims of auditor. All claims of the county auditor against the county for services shall be audited and allowed by the board of county commissioners as other claims are audited and allowed. Such warrants shall in all respects be audited, approved, issued, numbered, registered, and paid the same as any other county warrant. [1963 c 4 s 36.22.080. Prior: 1893 c 119 s 1, part; Code 1881 s 2710, part; 1869 p 310 s 5, part; 1863 p 549 s 5, part; 1854 p 425 s 5, part; RRS s 4086, part.]

RCW 36.22.090 Warrants of political subdivisions. All warrants for the payment of claims against diking, ditch, drainage and irrigation districts and school districts of the second class, who do not issue their own warrants, as well as political subdivisions within the county for which no other provision is made by law, shall be drawn and issued by the county auditor of the county wherein such subdivision is located, upon proper approval by the governing body

thereof. [2009 c 337 s 4; 1975 c 43 s 31; 1973 c 111 s 4; 1963 c 4 s 36.22.090. Prior: 1915 c 74 s 1; RRS s 4096.]

Effective date—Severability—1975 c 43: See notes following RCW 28A.535.050.

Severability—1973 c 111: See note following RCW 28A.330.230.

RCW 36.22.100 Cancellation of unclaimed warrants. Registered or interest bearing county warrants not presented within one year of the date of their call, and all other county warrants not presented within one year of the date of their issue shall be canceled by the legislative authority of the county and the auditor and treasurer of the county shall cancel all record of such warrants, so as to leave the funds as if such warrants had never been drawn. [1971 ex.s. c 120 s 1; 1963 c 4 s 36.22.100. Prior: 1909 c 170 s 1; 1886 p 161 s 1; RRS s 4097.]

RCW 36.22.110 Auditor cannot act as attorney or lobbyist. The person holding the office of county auditor, or deputy, or performing its duties, shall not practice as an attorney or represent any person who is making any claim against the county, or who is seeking to procure any legislative or other action by the board of county commissioners. [2002 c 141 s 1; 1963 c 4 s 36.22.110. Prior: Code 1881 s 2722; 1869 p 312 s 12; 1863 p 550 s 9; 1854 p 425 s 9; RRS s 4100.]

RCW 36.22.120 Temporary clerk may be appointed. In case the auditor is unable to attend to the duties of his or her office during any session of the board of county commissioners, and has no deputy by him or her appointed in attendance, the board may temporarily appoint a suitable person not by law disqualified from acting as such to perform the auditor's duties. [2009 c 549 s 4026; 1963 c 4 s 36.22.120. Prior: Code 1881 s 2723; 1869 p 313 s 15; 1863 p 550 s 12; 1854 p 425 s 11; RRS s 4101.]

RCW 36.22.140 Auditor or charter county financial officer—Ex officio deputy state auditor. Each county auditor or financial officer designated in a charter county shall be ex officio deputy of the state auditor for the purpose of accounting and reporting on municipal corporations and in such capacity shall be under the direction of the state auditor, but he or she shall receive no additional salary or compensation by virtue thereof and shall perform no duties as such, except in connection with county business. [2006 c 280 s 1; 1995 c 301 s 61; 1963 c 4 s 36.22.140. Prior: 1909 c 76 s 12; RRS s 9962.]

RCW 36.22.150 Duty of retiring auditor or his or her representative in case of death. Each auditor, on retiring from office, shall deliver to his or her successor the seal of office and all the books, records, and instruments of writing belonging to the

office, and take his or her receipt therefor. In case of the death of the auditor, his or her legal representatives shall deliver over the seal, books, records and papers. [2009 c 549 s 4027; 1963 c 4 s 36.22.150. Prior: Code 1881 s 2725; 1869 p 314 s 22; RRS s 4104.]

RCW 36.22.160 Copying, preserving, and indexing documents. Each county auditor is hereby authorized to provide for the installation and thereafter for the maintenance of an improved system for copying, preserving, and indexing documents recorded in the county. Such a system may utilize the latest technology including, but not limited to, photomicrographic and computerized electronic digital storage methodology. The initial installation of the improved system shall include the following:

- (1) The acquisition, installation, operation, and maintenance of the equipment provided for in the definition above; and
- (2) The establishment of procedures for the continued preservation, indexing, and filing of all instruments and records that will, after the effective installation date, constitute a part of the improved system. [1989 c 204 s 2.]

Findings—1989 c 204: "The legislature, finding in this centennial year that many old documents recorded or filed with county officials are deteriorating due to age and environmental degradation and that such documents require preservation in the public interest before they are irreparably damaged, enacts the centennial document preservation act of 1989." [1989 c 204 s 1.]

RCW 36.22.170 Surcharge for preservation of historical documents—Distribution of revenue to county and state treasurer—Creation of account. (1)(a) Except as provided in (b) of this subsection, a surcharge of five dollars per instrument shall be charged by the county auditor for each document recorded, which will be in addition to any other charge authorized by law. One dollar of the surcharge shall be used at the discretion of the county commissioners to promote historical preservation or historical programs, which may include preservation of historic documents.

(b) A surcharge of two dollars per instrument shall be charged by the county auditor for each document presented for recording by the employment security department, which will be in addition to any other charge authorized by law.

(2) Of the remaining revenue generated through the surcharges under subsection (1) of this section:

(a) Fifty percent shall be transmitted monthly to the state treasurer who shall distribute such funds to each county treasurer within the state in July of each year in accordance with the formula described in RCW 36.22.190. The county treasurer shall place the funds received in a special account titled the auditor's centennial document preservation and modernization account to be used solely for ongoing preservation of historical documents of all county offices and departments and shall not be added to the county current expense fund; and

(b) Fifty percent shall be retained by the county and deposited in the auditor's operation and maintenance fund for ongoing

preservation of historical documents of all county offices and departments.

(3) The centennial document preservation and modernization account is hereby created in the custody of the state treasurer and shall be classified as a treasury trust account. State distributions from the centennial document preservation and modernization account shall be made without appropriation. [2009 c 337 s 5; 2005 c 442 s 1; 1993 c 37 s 1; 1989 c 204 s 3.]

Findings—1989 c 204: See note following RCW 36.22.160.

RCW 36.22.175 Surcharge for local government archives and records management—Records management training—Eastern Washington regional facility. (1)(a) In addition to any other charge authorized by law, the county auditor shall charge a surcharge of one dollar per instrument for each document recorded. Revenue generated through this surcharge shall be transmitted monthly to the state treasurer for deposit in the local government archives account under RCW 40.14.024. These funds shall be used solely for providing records scheduling, security microfilm inspection and storage, archival preservation, cataloging, and indexing for local government records and digital data and access to those records and data through the regional branch archives of the division of archives and records management.

(b) The division of archives and records management within the office of the secretary of state shall provide records management training for local governments and shall establish a competitive grant program to solicit and prioritize project proposals from local governments for potential funding to be paid for by funds from the auditor surcharge and tax warrant surcharge revenues. Application for specific projects may be made by local government agencies only. The state archivist in consultation with the advisory committee established under RCW 40.14.027 shall adopt rules governing project eligibility, evaluation, awarding of grants, and other criteria including requirements for records management training for grant recipients.

(2) The advisory committee established under RCW 40.14.027 shall review grant proposals and establish a prioritized list of projects to be considered for funding by January 1st of each even-numbered year, beginning in 2002. The evaluation of proposals and development of the prioritized list must be developed through open public meetings. Funding for projects shall be granted according to the ranking of each application on the prioritized list and projects will be funded only to the extent that funds are available. A grant award may have an effective date other than the date the project is placed on the prioritized list.

(3) In addition to any other surcharge authorized by law, the county auditor shall charge a surcharge of one dollar per instrument for every document recorded after January 1, 2002. Revenue generated through this surcharge shall be transmitted to the state treasurer monthly for deposit in the following accounts, fifty percent of the surcharge authorized by this subsection shall be reverted to the local government archives account as prescribed in RCW 40.14.024 for maintenance and operation of the specialized regional archive facility located in eastern Washington and fifty percent of the surcharge authorized by this section shall be reverted to the account created in

RCW 43.07.410 for payment of the financing contract entered into by the secretary of state for the Washington state library-archives building.

(4) In addition to any other surcharge authorized by law, the county auditor shall charge a surcharge of one dollar per instrument for every document recorded. Revenue generated through this surcharge shall be transmitted to the state treasurer monthly for deposit in the local government archives account under RCW 40.14.024 to be used exclusively for the competitive grant program in RCW 40.14.026 or, during the 2025-2027 fiscal biennium, the administrative costs of the state archives, and for the attorney general's consultation program and state archivist's training services authorized in RCW 42.56.570. [2025 c 424 s 932. Prior: 2019 c 448 s 5; (2019 c 448 s 4 expired June 30, 2020); 2019 c 372 s 3; (2017 c 303 s 7 expired June 30, 2020); 2011 1st sp.s. c 50 s 931; 2008 c 328 s 6006; 2003 c 163 s 5; 2001 2nd sp.s. c 13 s 1; 1996 c 245 s 1.]

Effective date—2025 c 424: See note following RCW 9.46.100.

Effective date—2019 c 448 s 5: "Section 5 of this act takes effect June 30, 2020." [2019 c 448 s 12.]

Expiration date—2019 c 448 s 4: "Section 4 of this act expires June 30, 2020." [2019 c 448 s 11.]

Findings—Intent—2019 c 448: See note following RCW 43.07.405.

Effective date—2019 c 372 s 3: "Section 3 of this act takes effect June 30, 2020." [2019 c 372 s 4.]

Expiration date—2017 c 303 s 7: "Section 7 of this act expires June 30, 2020." [2017 c 303 s 10.]

Effective dates—2011 1st sp.s. c 50: See note following RCW 15.76.115.

Part headings not law—Severability—Effective date—2008 c 328: See notes following RCW 43.155.050.

Effective date—2001 2nd sp.s. c 13: "This act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the state government and its existing public institutions, and takes effect June 30, 2001." [2001 2nd sp.s. c 13 s 3.]

Effective date—1996 c 245: See note following RCW 40.14.025.

RCW 36.22.181 Surcharge for prosecution of mortgage lending fraud—Transmittal to state treasurer. (Expires June 30, 2027.) (1) Except as provided in subsection (2) of this section, a surcharge of one dollar shall be charged by the county auditor at the time of recording of each deed of trust, which will be in addition to any other charge authorized by law. The auditor may retain up to five percent of the funds collected to administer collection. The remaining funds shall be transmitted monthly to the state treasurer who will deposit the funds into the mortgage lending fraud prosecution account

created in RCW 43.320.140. The department of financial institutions is responsible for the distribution of the funds in the account and shall, in consultation with the attorney general and local prosecutors, develop rules for the use of these funds to pursue criminal prosecution of fraudulent activities within the mortgage lending process.

(2) The surcharge imposed in this section does not apply to assignments or substitutions of previously recorded deeds of trust.

(3) This section expires June 30, 2027. [2021 c 31 s 1; 2016 c 7 s 2; 2011 c 129 s 2; 2006 c 21 s 1; 2003 c 289 s 1.]

Effective date—2021 c 31: "This act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the state government and its existing public institutions, and takes effect immediately [April 14, 2021]." [2021 c 31 s 3.]

Effective date—2011 c 129: See note following RCW 43.320.140.

RCW 36.22.185 Covenant homeownership program assessment. (1) Beginning January 1, 2024, except as provided in subsection (2) of this section, the county auditor must collect a covenant homeownership program assessment of \$100 for each document recorded, which is in addition to any other charge, surcharge, or assessment allowed by law. The county auditor may retain up to one percent of the moneys for collection of the assessment and must remit the remainder of the moneys to the state treasurer to be deposited in the covenant homeownership account created in RCW 43.181.020.

(2) The assessment imposed in this section does not apply to: (a) Documents recording a birth, marriage, divorce, or death; (b) any recorded documents otherwise exempted from a recording fee or additional assessments under state law; (c) marriage licenses issued by the county auditor; (d) documents recording a name change order under RCW 4.24.130; or (e) documents recording a federal, state, county, city, or water-sewer district, or wage lien or satisfaction of lien. [2025 c 100 s 1; 2023 c 340 s 2.]

Short title—Conflict with federal requirements—2023 c 340: See notes following RCW 43.181.040.

RCW 36.22.190 Distribution of funds. After deduction of those costs of the state treasurer that are described under *RCW 36.22.180, the balance of the funds will be distributed to the counties according to the following formula: One-half of the funds available shall be equally distributed among the thirty-nine counties; and the balance will be distributed among the counties in direct proportion to their population as it relates to the total state's population based on the most recent population statistics. [1989 c 204 s 5.]

***Reviser's note:** RCW 36.22.180 was repealed by 1991 sp.s. c 13 s 122, effective July 1, 1991.

Findings—1989 c 204: See note following RCW 36.22.160.

RCW 36.22.200 Action for change of name—Filing and recording.

Upon receipt of the fee and the name change order from the district court as provided in RCW 4.24.130, the county auditor shall file and record the name change order. [1992 c 30 s 2.]

RCW 36.22.210 Process servers—Registration—Fees. (1) Each county auditor shall develop a registration process to register process servers required to register under RCW 18.180.010.

(2) The county auditor may collect an annual registration fee from the process server not to exceed ten dollars.

(3) The county auditor shall use a form in the registration process for the purpose of identifying and locating the registrant, including the process server's name, birthdate, and social security number, and the process server's business name, business address, and business telephone number.

(4) The county auditor shall maintain a register of process servers and assign a number to each registrant. Upon renewal of the registration as required in RCW 18.180.020, the auditor shall continue to assign the same registration number. A successor entity composed of one or more registrants shall be permitted to transfer one or more registration numbers to the new entity. [1997 c 41 s 8; 1992 c 125 s 2.]

Construction—1992 c 125: See RCW 18.180.900.

RCW 36.22.215 Process servers—Social security numbers. (1) The legislature finds that the dissemination of social security numbers of process servers is not in the public interest.

(2) A county auditor collecting social security numbers from process servers required to register under RCW 18.180.010 shall not display or release a process server's social security number on any document or website issued or maintained by the auditor. Social security numbers of process servers required to register under RCW 18.180.010 are confidential, are exempt from public inspection and copying, and shall not be disclosed except as otherwise explicitly required to be disclosed under federal law. [2015 c 56 s 1.]

RCW 36.22.220 Election assistants, deputies—Appointment, qualifications. The county auditor of each county, as ex officio supervisor of all primaries and elections, general or special, within the county under Title 29A RCW, may appoint one or more well-qualified persons to act as assistants or deputies; however, not less than two persons of the auditor's office who conduct primaries and elections in the county shall be certified under chapter 29A.04 RCW as elections administrators. [2015 c 53 s 62; 1992 c 163 s 12.]

Effective date—1992 c 163 ss 5-13: See note following RCW 29A.04.530.

RCW 36.22.230 Election assistants, deputies—Additional qualifications. Each deputy or assistant appointed under RCW 36.22.220 shall have been graduated from an accredited high school or

shall have passed a high school equivalency examination. Each shall be knowledgeable in the rules and laws of conducting elections. [1992 c 163 s 13.]

Effective date—1992 c 163 ss 5-13: See note following RCW 29A.04.530.

RCW 36.22.240 Surcharge for growth management planning and review—Increasing residential building capacity. (1) Except as provided in subsection (2) of this section, a surcharge of two dollars and fifty cents shall be charged by the county auditor for each document recorded, which will be in addition to any other charge or surcharge allowed by law. The auditor shall remit the funds to the state treasurer to be deposited and used as follows:

(a) Through June 30, 2024, funds must be deposited into the growth management planning and environmental review fund created in RCW 36.70A.490 to be used first for grants for costs associated with RCW 36.70A.600 and for costs associated with RCW 36.70A.610, and thereafter for any allowable use of the fund.

(b) Beginning July 1, 2024, sufficient funds must be deposited into the growth management planning and environmental review fund created in RCW 36.70A.490 for costs associated with RCW 36.70A.610, and the remainder deposited into the home security fund account created in RCW 43.185C.060 to be used for maintenance and operation costs of: (i) Permanent supportive housing and (ii) affordable housing for very low-income and extremely low-income households. Funds may only be expended in cities that have taken action under RCW 36.70A.600.

(2) The surcharge imposed in this section does not apply to: (a) Assignments or substitutions of previously recorded deeds of trust; (b) documents recording a birth, marriage, divorce, or death; (c) any recorded documents otherwise exempted from a recording fee or additional surcharges under state law; (d) marriage licenses issued by the county auditor; or (e) documents recording a federal, state, county, city, or water-sewer district, or wage lien or satisfaction of lien.

(3) For purposes of this section, the terms "permanent supportive housing," "affordable housing," "very low-income households," and "extremely low-income households" have the same meaning as provided in RCW 36.70A.030. [2021 c 214 s 10; 2019 c 348 s 11.]

Findings—Intent—Department of commerce and William D. Ruckelshaus center examination of homelessness—Reports—2021 c 214: See note following RCW 43.185C.185.

Effective date—2019 c 348 s 11: "Section 11 of this act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the state government and its existing public institutions, and takes effect July 1, 2019." [2019 c 348 s 12.]

RCW 36.22.250 Document recording surcharge. (1) A surcharge of \$183 per instrument shall be charged by the county auditor for each document recorded, which will be in addition to any other charge authorized by law. The following are exempt from this surcharge:

(a) Documents recording a birth, marriage, divorce, or death;
(b) Any recorded documents otherwise exempted from a recording fee or additional surcharges under state law;
(c) Marriage licenses issued by the county auditor; and
(d) Documents recording a federal, state, county, city, or water-sewer district, or wage lien or satisfaction of lien.

(2) Funds collected pursuant to this section must be distributed and used as follows:

(a) One percent of the total funds collected shall be retained by the county auditor for its fee collection activities;

(b) 30 percent of the total funds collected shall be retained by the county and used by the county as provided in subsection (3) of this section;

(c) 54.1 percent of the total funds collected shall be transmitted to the state treasurer to be deposited in the home security fund account created in RCW 43.185C.060 and shall be used by the department of commerce as provided in subsection (4) of this section;

(d) 13.1 percent of the total funds collected shall be transmitted to the state treasurer to be deposited in the affordable housing for all account created in RCW 43.185C.190 and shall be used by the department of commerce as provided in subsection (5) of this section;

(e) 1.8 percent of the total funds collected shall be transmitted to the state treasurer to be deposited in the landlord mitigation program account created in RCW 43.31.615 and shall be used by the department of commerce as provided in subsection (6) of this section.

(3) The county shall use their portion of the collected funds as follows:

(a) Except as provided in (b) of this subsection, up to 10 percent for the county's administration and local distribution of the funds collected from the surcharge in this section, and administrative costs related to the county's homeless housing plan;

(b) (i) At least 75 percent will be retained and used by the county to accomplish the purposes of its local homeless housing plan pursuant to chapter 484, Laws of 2005, unless a city in the county elects, as authorized in RCW 43.185C.080, to operate its own local homeless housing program.

(ii) If a city in the county elects, as authorized in RCW 43.185C.080, to operate its own local homeless housing program, the 10 percent for administrative costs retained under (a) of this subsection and the 75 percent for local homeless housing plans retained under (b) of this subsection must be combined and distributed as follows: For each city in the county that elects as authorized in RCW 43.185C.080 to operate its own local homeless housing program, a percentage of the surcharge assessed under this subsection equal to the percentage of the city's local portion of the real estate excise tax collected by the county shall be transmitted at least quarterly to the city treasurer, without any deduction for county administrative costs, for use by the city for program costs which directly contribute to the goals of the city's local homeless housing plan. Each county or city receiving funds under this subsection (3) may use up to 10 percent of their share of the total funding retained or received under this subsection (3) after the completion of the required city distributions for costs related to:

(A) The county's administration and local distribution of the funds collected from the surcharge in this section;

(B) Administrative costs related to the county's homeless housing plan; and

(C) Administrative costs related to the city's homeless housing program;

(c) At least 15 percent will be retained and used by the county for eligible housing activities, as described in this subsection, that serve extremely low and very low-income households in the county and the cities within a county according to an interlocal agreement between the county and the cities within the county consistent with countywide and local housing needs and policies. A priority must be given to eligible housing activities that serve extremely low-income households with incomes at or below 30 percent of the area median income. Eligible housing activities to be funded are limited to:

(i) Acquisition, construction, or rehabilitation of housing projects or units within housing projects that are affordable to very low-income households with incomes at or below 50 percent of the area median income, including units for homeownership, rental units, seasonal and permanent farmworker housing units, units reserved for victims of human trafficking and their families, and single room occupancy units;

(ii) Supporting building operation and maintenance costs of housing projects or units within housing projects eligible to receive housing trust funds, that are affordable to very low-income households with incomes at or below 50 percent of the area median income, and that require a supplement to rent income to cover ongoing operating expenses;

(iii) Rental assistance vouchers for housing units that are affordable to very low-income households with incomes at or below 50 percent of the area median income, including rental housing vouchers for victims of human trafficking and their families, to be administered by a local public housing authority or other local organization that has an existing rental assistance voucher program, consistent with or similar to the United States department of housing and urban development's section 8 rental assistance voucher program standards; and

(iv) Operating costs for emergency shelters and licensed overnight youth shelters.

(4) The department of commerce shall use the funds from the document recording fee or other fund sources deposited in the home security fund account as follows, except that the department of commerce shall provide counties with the right of first refusal to receive grant funds distributed under (b) of this subsection (4). If a county refuses the funds or does not respond within a time frame established by the department, the department shall make good faith efforts to identify one or more suitable alternative grantees operating within that county. The alternative grantee shall distribute the funds in a manner that is in compliance with this chapter. Funding provided through the office of homeless youth prevention and protection programs created in RCW 43.330.705 is exempt from the county first refusal requirement.

(a) Up to 10 percent for administration of the programs established in chapter 43.185C RCW and in conformance with this subsection (4), including the costs of creating and implementing strategic plans, collecting and evaluating data, measuring and reporting performance, providing technical assistance to local governments, providing training to entities delivering services, and developing and maintaining stakeholder relationships;

(b) At least 90 percent for homelessness assistance grant programs administered by the department, including but not limited to: Temporary rental assistance; eviction prevention rental assistance per RCW 43.185C.185; emergency shelter and transitional housing operations and maintenance; outreach; diversion; HOPE and crisis residential centers; young adult housing; homeless services and case management for adult, family, youth, and young adult homeless populations and those at risk of homelessness; project-based vouchers for nonprofit housing providers or public housing authorities; tenant-based rent assistance; housing services; direct cash assistance as provided for in RCW 43.185C.220(5)(a); rapid rehousing; emergency housing; acquisition; operations; maintenance; and service costs for permanent supportive housing as defined in RCW 36.70A.030 for individuals with disabilities. Grantees may also use these funds in partnership with permanent supportive housing programs administered by the office of apple health and homes created in RCW 43.330.181. Priority for use must be given to purposes intended to house persons who are chronically homeless or to maintain housing for individuals with disabilities and prior experiences of homelessness, including families with children.

(5) The department of commerce shall use the funds from the document recording fee or other fund sources deposited in the affordable housing for all account as follows:

(a) Up to 10 percent for program administration and technical assistance necessary for the delivery programs and activities under this subsection (5);

(b) At least 90 percent for the following:

(i) Grants for building operation and maintenance costs of housing projects, or units within housing projects, that are in the state's housing trust fund portfolio, are affordable to extremely low-income households with incomes at or below 30 percent of the area median income, and require a supplement to rent income to cover ongoing operating expenses;

(ii) Grants to support the building operations, maintenance, and supportive service costs for permanent supportive housing projects, or units within housing projects, that have received or will receive funding from the housing trust fund or other public capital funding programs. The supported projects or units must be dedicated as permanent supportive housing as defined in RCW 36.70A.030, be occupied by extremely low-income households with incomes at or below 30 percent of the area median income, and require a supplement to rent income to cover ongoing property operations, maintenance, and supportive services expenses.

(6) The department of commerce shall use the funds from the document recording fee or other fund sources deposited in the landlord mitigation program account to administer the landlord mitigation program as established in RCW 43.31.605. The department of commerce may use up to 10 percent of these funds for program administration and the development and maintenance of a database necessary to administer the program. [2025 c 408 s 3; 2025 c 100 s 2; 2025 c 74 s 1; 2023 c 277 s 1.]

Reviser's note: This section was amended by 2025 c 74 s 1, 2025 c 100 s 2, and by 2025 c 408 s 3, without reference to one another. All amendments are incorporated in the publication of this section under RCW 1.12.025(2). For rule of construction, see RCW 1.12.025(1).