



2019

Implementing HB 1406



Don't miss out on up to 20 years of shared revenue for affordable housing

In the 2019 legislative session, the state approved a local revenue sharing program for local governments by providing up to a 0.0146% local sales and use tax credited against the state sales tax for housing investments, available in increments of 0.0073%, depending on the imposition of other local taxes and whether cities within your county also take advantage. The tax credit is in place for up to 20 years and can be used for acquiring, rehabilitating, or constructing affordable housing; operations and maintenance of new affordable or supportive housing facilities; and, for smaller counties, rental assistance. The funding must be spent on projects that serve persons whose income is at or below sixty percent of the area median income. Counties can also issue bonds to finance the authorized projects.

This local sales tax authority is a credit against the state sales tax, so it does not increase the sales tax for the consumer. There are tight timelines that must be met to access this funding source – the first is January 31, 2020 to pass a resolution of intent. The tax ordinance must then be adopted by July 27, 2020 to qualify for a credit.

The following information is intended to assist you in evaluating your options and timelines. It is not intended as legal advice. Check with your legal counsel and/ or bond counsel for specific questions on project uses and deadlines for implementation.

Deadlines to participate:

- Resolution to levy tax credit:
July 28, 2019 – January 31, 2020
- Ordinance to levy the tax credit:
By July 27, 2020
- Adopt “qualifying local tax” (optional):
By July 31, 2020

Eligibility to receive shared revenues

The state is splitting the shared resources between cities and counties. However, cities can receive both shares if they have adopted a “qualifying local tax” by July 31, 2020. Qualifying taxes are detailed below. Cities that are levying a “qualifying local tax” by July 28, 2019, the effective date of the new law, will receive both shares immediately once they impose the new sales tax credit.

- If a city does not implement a qualifying local tax by the deadline, it can still participate in the program if it meets the other deadlines but will be eligible for a lower credit rate.
- Cities and counties can adopt the sales tax credit before designating how the funds will be used once collected.

Think of the “qualifying local tax” as a multiplier or “doubler.” It gives the city access to double the tax credit even when the county chooses to participate in the program.

Qualifying local taxes

The following are considered “qualifying local taxes” and, if levied, give a city access to both shares of the tax credit (i.e. 0.0146% rate instead of the single share rate of 0.0073%):

- Affordable housing levy (property tax) under RCW 84.52.105
- Sales and use tax for housing and related services under RCW 82.14.530. The city must have adopted at least half of the authorized maximum rate of 0.001%.
- Sales tax for chemical dependency and mental health (optional .1 MIDD) under RCW 82.14.460
- Levy (property tax) authorized under RCW 84.55.050, if used solely for affordable housing



Tax credit rate examples

Max tax credit rate under HB 1406	City with qualifying local tax	City without qualifying local tax	City doesn't levy a tax credit, county does participate	County doesn't participate, city participates but doesn't have a qualifying tax.*
City	0.0146%	0.0073%	0.0%	July 2020: 0.0%
County	0.0%	0.0073%	0.0146%	0.0%

*We believe that this was an error in bill drafting.

Eligible uses of the funds:

1. Projects must serve those at or below 60% AMI.
2. Acquiring, rehabilitating, or constructing affordable housing, which may include new units of affordable housing within an existing structure or facilities providing supportive housing services. In addition to investing in traditional subsidized housing projects, this authority could potentially be used to provide for land acquisition, down payment assistance, and home repair so long as recipients meet the income guidelines.
3. Funding the operations and maintenance costs of new units of affordable or supportive housing.
4. For counties with a population of under 400,000, the funds can also be used for rental assistance to tenants.

Additional timelines to keep in mind:

1. Department of Revenue (DOR) requires 30-days-notice of adoption of sales tax credits. The credit will then take effect on the first day of the month following the 30-day period.
2. If your city is adopting a “qualifying local tax”, DOR requires 75-days-notice of adoption of sales tax increases. Local sales tax increases may only take effect on the first day of the first, second, or third quarter – not the fourth (April 1, July 1, or October 1).
3. If you are intending to bond the revenues for a project under this authority, check with your legal counsel and bond counsel about other deadlines that may apply.

Frequently asked questions:

1. **This program sounds very familiar. Didn't a local option, affordable housing sales tax law pass a few years ago?** Yes, but the new law has important differences. The Legislature passed HB 2263 in 2015 that authorized counties to levy up to a 0.1%

sales tax for affordable housing—but, importantly, only after voter approval. This sales tax levy implementing HB 1406 is considered a “qualifying local tax” under HB 1406. Another important distinction is that the affordable housing sales tax from 2015 is an additional tax on the consumer, and not a credit on an existing state-imposed tax.

2. **If our county participates, do we get all of the 1406 revenue?** It depends. If adopted, a county will get the full .0146% for the unincorporated areas of the county. However, a county's tax credit rate could potentially be half that or zero in incorporated areas of the county depending on whether a city participates, and whether that city has imposed a “qualifying local tax.” See Tax credit rate examples in the chart.
3. **Can a city still receive 1406 funds if the county in which it is located declines to participate?** It depends. A city can participate, and receive funds, even if the county in which it is located participates. Unfortunately, if a city does not impose a “qualifying local tax” by the deadline and the county in which it is located declines to participate, then that city will not have access to 1406 funds after the first year, due to a drafting error in the bill. In all cases you must meet the program deadlines to participate. See Deadlines to participate.
4. **How is “rental assistance” defined? Does that include rent vouchers?** The term “rental assistance” is not defined in the chapter 82.14 RCW; however, both federal and state housing programs use the term “rental assistance” to mean providing rent, security deposits, or utility payment assistance to tenants.
5. **Can we pool our revenue with another entity?** Can we issue bonds or use the money to repay bonds? Yes! Counties can enter into an interlocal agreement with other local governments or a public housing authority to pool tax receipts, pledge tax collections to bonds, allocating collected taxes to authorized affordable housing expenditures, or other agreements authorized under chapter 39.34 RCW. Counties may also use the tax credit revenue to issue or repay bonds in order to carry out the projects authorized under the new law.
6. **Is the amount of tax credit we receive limited only by the amount of sales tax collected per year?** No. The maximum amount will be based on state fiscal year 2019 sales.
7. **Does the tax credit program expire?** Yes, the tax expires 20 years after the date on which the tax is first levied.

