

# ASSEMBLY, No. 3142

## STATE OF NEW JERSEY 220th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED MARCH 7, 2022

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**SYNOPSIS**

Authorizes grants to purchase and rehabilitate abandoned homes for homeless veterans.

**CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT**

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 1/8/2024)

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2

1 AN ACT authorizing grants to purchase and rehabilitate abandoned  
2 homes for homeless veterans and amending P.L.2017, c.258.

3

4 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State  
5 of New Jersey:

6

7 1. Section 2 of P.L.2017, c.258 (C.52:27D-517) is amended to  
8 read as follows:

9 2. As used in this act:

10 "Director" means the Director of the Division of Housing and  
11 Community Resources in the Department of Community Affairs.

12 **["Disabled"]** "Disability" means **[a person who fulfills the**  
13 **definition of having a "disability"]** the same as that term is defined  
14 pursuant to section 3 of the "Americans with Disabilities Act of  
15 1990," 42 U.S.C. s.12102.

16 "Division" means the Division of Housing and Community  
17 Resources in the Department of Community Affairs.

18 "Eligible veteran" means a **[disabled or low-income]** veteran  
19 who is low-income or has a disability, or both.

20 "Energy efficient features or equipment" means features or  
21 equipment within a primary residence that help to reduce the  
22 amount of electricity used to heat, cool, or ventilate the residence,  
23 including but not limited to insulation, weatherstripping, air sealing,  
24 repaired heating systems, or duct sealing.

25 "Family member" means a spouse, child, parent, sibling, aunt,  
26 uncle, niece, nephew, first cousin, grandparent, grandchild, father-  
27 in-law, mother-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, stepparent,  
28 stepchild, stepbrother, stepsister, half brother, or half sister, whether  
29 the individual is related by blood, marriage, or adoption.

30 "Homeless veteran" means a veteran who is living outside, or in  
31 a building not meant for human habitation or which the veteran has  
32 no legal right to occupy, in an emergency shelter, or in a temporary  
33 housing program which may include a transitional and supportive  
34 housing program if habitation time limits exist, or temporarily in  
35 the home of another household, or in a motel.

36 "Low-income veteran" means a veteran occupying a household  
37 with a gross household income equal to 50 percent or less of the  
38 median gross household income for households of the same size,  
39 and within the same housing region, as defined by subsection b. of  
40 section 4 of P.L.1985, c.222 (C.52:27D-304).

41 "Primary residence" means a dwelling unit that is owned by the  
42 eligible veteran or by a family member of the eligible veteran, and  
43 occupied by the eligible veteran as his or her principal residence.

**EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets [thus] in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.**

**Matter underlined thus is new matter.**

1 "Qualified organization" means a nonprofit veterans'  
2 organization that qualifies as a section 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(19) tax  
3 exempt organization under the Internal Revenue Code.

4 "Rehabilitation" means the repair, renovation, alteration, or  
5 reconstruction of any building or structure.

6 "Veteran" means any resident of the State now or hereafter who  
7 has been discharged honorably or under general honorable  
8 conditions in any branch of the Armed Forces of the United States,  
9 or a Reserve component thereof, or the National Guard of this State  
10 or another state as defined in section 1 of P.L.1963, c.109  
11 (C.38A:1-1), or any honorably discharged member of the American  
12 Merchant Marine who served during World War II and is declared  
13 by the United States Department of Defense to be eligible for  
14 federal veterans' benefits  
15 (cf: P.L.2019, c.500, s.12.)  
16

17 2. Section 3 of P.L.2017, c.258 (C.52:27D-518) is amended to  
18 read as follows:

19 3. The director shall establish a pilot program to award grants  
20 to qualified organizations to rehabilitate **【and modify】** the primary  
21 residences of eligible veterans, and to purchase and rehabilitate  
22 abandoned homes for occupancy by homeless veterans. The  
23 director shall manage the pilot program in consultation with the  
24 Adjutant General of the Department of Military and Veterans'  
25 Affairs to most effectively advance the needs of eligible veterans.  
26 The director shall administer the pilot program for five years  
27 following the operative date of P.L.2017, c.258 (C.52:27D-  
28 516 et seq.). Grant awards totaling \$1 million shall be awarded  
29 during each year the pilot program is in operation.

30 a. In addition to any additional information required by the  
31 director, a qualified organization seeking a grant under the pilot  
32 program shall submit an application to the division that shall  
33 include the following information:

34 (1) the approximate number of veterans the qualified  
35 organization has the capacity to serve through grant funding; and

36 (2) a description of the type of work to be completed, such as  
37 interior home modifications, energy efficiency improvements, and  
38 other similar categories of work.

39 b. In order to receive a grant award under the pilot program, a  
40 qualified organization shall:

41 (1) demonstrate expertise in providing housing rehabilitation  
42 **【and modification】** services for the purpose of making homes  
43 accessible, functional, and safe;

44 (2) have experience in successfully carrying out accountability  
45 and reporting requirements involved in the proper administration of  
46 grant funds; and

47 (3) commit to paying workers employed through the pilot  
48 program no less than the prevailing wage rate for the worker's craft

1 or trade, as determined by the Commissioner of Labor and  
2 Workforce Development pursuant to P.L.1963, c.150 (C.34:11-  
3 56.25 et seq.).

4 c. In awarding grants under the pilot program,

5 (1) the director shall give preference to:

6 (a) qualified organizations that employ workers from an  
7 apprenticeable trade participating in the Helmets to Hardhats  
8 Program, as certified by the New Jersey State Building and  
9 Construction Trades Council, such that not less than five percent of  
10 projected labor hours shall be completed by such participating  
11 organizations; and

12 (b) qualified organizations that serve communities that the  
13 director determines have the greatest need for homeless services;  
14 and

15 (2) the director may give preference to qualified organizations  
16 to achieve a fair distribution, as determined by the director, among  
17 homeless veterans in different geographical regions.

18 d. Low income veterans who **[are]** also **[disabled]** have a  
19 disability shall receive preference over other eligible veterans in  
20 selection for assistance under the pilot program.

21 e. Grant awards under the pilot program shall be used to  
22 **[modify and]** rehabilitate the primary residences of eligible  
23 veterans, to purchase and rehabilitate abandoned homes, including  
24 homes that have been foreclosed, and for other purposes necessary  
25 to advance **[this goal]** these goals, as permitted by the director.  
26 Permitted uses of grant funding shall include, but shall not be  
27 limited to:

28 (1) installing wheelchair ramps, widening exterior and interior  
29 doors, reconfiguring and re-equipping bathrooms to enhance  
30 accessibility, removing doorway thresholds, and installing  
31 appropriate floor coverings to accommodate the functional  
32 limitations that result from having a disability;

33 (2) rehabilitating homes that are in a state of interior or exterior  
34 disrepair; and

35 (3) installing energy efficient features or equipment if the  
36 eligible veteran's monthly residential utility costs are greater than  
37 five percent of monthly household income, and an energy audit of  
38 the residence indicates that the installation of energy efficient  
39 features or equipment would reduce utility costs by 10 percent or  
40 more.

41 f. No qualified organization shall be awarded more than  
42 \$400,000 through the pilot program in any one fiscal year. A  
43 qualified organization receiving a grant shall contribute a matching  
44 contribution in an amount not less than 50 percent of the grant  
45 award. This matching requirement may be met through cash  
46 contributions, or in-kind contributions, as permitted by the director.  
47 Eligible veterans benefitting from the pilot program shall not pay an  
48 application fee or any other cost for the work completed on their

1 residence, unless a modest fee can be charged, as permitted by the  
2 director, without forcing the veteran's total monthly housing costs  
3 to exceed 30 percent of total household income.

4 g. (1) The director shall provide an annual report to the  
5 Governor, and the Legislature pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991,  
6 c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), presenting the following information with  
7 respect to the associated year of the pilot program:

8 (a) the number of eligible veterans provided assistance under  
9 the pilot program;

10 (b) the socioeconomic characteristics of the benefited veterans;

11 (c) the total number, types, and locations of qualified  
12 organizations offered grant funding under the pilot program;

13 (d) the amount of matching funds, and form of in-kind  
14 contributions raised with each grant;

15 (e) a description of the housing rehabilitation [and  
16 modification] services provided, costs saved, and actions taken  
17 under the pilot program;

18 (f) a description of the outreach initiatives implemented to  
19 educate the general public and qualified organizations about the  
20 pilot program, and to identify eligible veterans and their families;  
21 and

22 (g) a description of compensation offered to workers employed  
23 through the pilot program, and a certification that workers have not  
24 been paid less than the prevailing wage rate for the worker's craft or  
25 trade, as determined by the Commissioner of Labor and Workforce  
26 Development pursuant to P.L.1963, c.150 (C.34:11-56.25 et seq.).

27 (h) any other information that the director considers relevant in  
28 assessing the pilot program.

29 (2) Not later than six months following completion of the pilot  
30 program, the director shall provide another report to the Governor,  
31 and the Legislature pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164  
32 (C.52:14-19.1), presenting information necessary to assess the  
33 success of the pilot program as a whole.

34 (cf: P.L.2017, c.258, s.3)

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36 3. This act shall take effect immediately.

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#### STATEMENT

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41 This bill would amend the "New Jersey Housing Assistance for  
42 Veterans Act," P.L.2017, c.258 (C.52:27D-516 et seq.) to expand  
43 the purposes of the pilot program established by that act to include  
44 the purchase and rehabilitation of abandoned homes for homeless  
45 veterans. Currently, the pilot program established by this law  
46 authorizes grants to eligible nonprofit organizations to rehabilitate  
47 existing primary residences of disabled or low-income veterans.

**A3142 MOEN, MORIARTY**

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1 Under the bill, a nonprofit veterans' organization that has  
2 experience in rehabilitating housing for homeless veterans, or  
3 others, would be eligible to receive a grant to purchase and  
4 rehabilitate abandoned homes for homeless veterans. The bill would  
5 afford a preference in awarding grants to nonprofit organizations  
6 that serve communities that are in the greatest need of homeless  
7 services. The bill would allow the administrator of the current pilot  
8 program to give preferences in awarding grants in order to achieve a  
9 fair distribution among homeless veterans in different geographical  
10 regions of the State.

11 Finally, this bill adjusts the existing law, through defining  
12 "rehabilitation" and other language changes, to clarify that pilot  
13 program funds may be expended for a broad range of project types,  
14 including repairs, renovations, reconstruction, as well as the  
15 installation of appropriate new fixtures and other alterations.