

SENATE, No. 1564

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 220th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 14, 2022

Sponsored by:

Senator TROY SINGLETON

District 7 (Burlington)

Senator KRISTIN M. CORRADO

District 40 (Bergen, Essex, Morris and Passaic)

Co-Sponsored by:

Senators Greenstein, Johnson, Pou and Turner

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)

S1564 SINGLETON, CORRADO

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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
6 P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), presenting the following
7 information with 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.

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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
5 would afford a preference in awarding grants to nonprofit
6 organizations that serve communities that are in the greatest need of
7 homeless services. The bill would allow the administrator of the
8 current pilot program to give preferences in awarding grants in
9 order to achieve a fair distribution among homeless veterans in
10 different geographical 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.