

# SENATE, No. 2607

## STATE OF NEW JERSEY 218th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED MAY 21, 2018

**Sponsored by:**

**Senator TROY SINGLETON**

**District 7 (Burlington)**

**Senator KRISTIN M. CORRADO**

**District 40 (Bergen, Essex, Morris and Passaic)**

**Co-Sponsored by:**

**Senators A.R.Bucco, Cruz-Perez, Ruiz, Addiego, Andrzejczak and Pou**

**SYNOPSIS**

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

**CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT**

As introduced.



**(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 2/22/2019)**

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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 who has been  
7 honorably discharged or released under honorable circumstances  
8 from active service in any branch of the armed forces of the United  
9 States, or any honorably discharged member of the American  
10 Merchant Marine who served during World War II and is declared  
11 by the United States Department of Defense to be eligible for  
12 federal veterans' benefits.

13 (cf: P.L.2017, c.258, s.2)

14  
15 2. Section 3 of P.L.2017, c.258 (C.52:27D-518) is amended to  
16 read as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

45 (3) commit to paying workers employed through the pilot  
46 program no less than the prevailing wage rate for the worker's craft  
47 or trade, as determined by the Commissioner of Labor and

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1 Workforce Development pursuant to P.L.1963, c.150 (C.34:11-  
2 56.25 et seq.).

3 c. In awarding grants under the pilot program,

4 (1) the director shall give preference to:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1 director, without forcing the veteran's total monthly housing costs  
2 to exceed 30 percent of total household income.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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35 3. This act shall take effect immediately.

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#### STATEMENT

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

47 Under the bill, a nonprofit veterans' organization that has  
48 experience in rehabilitating housing for homeless veterans, or

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

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