

[First Reprint]

SENATE, No. 1746

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 13, 2020

Sponsored by:

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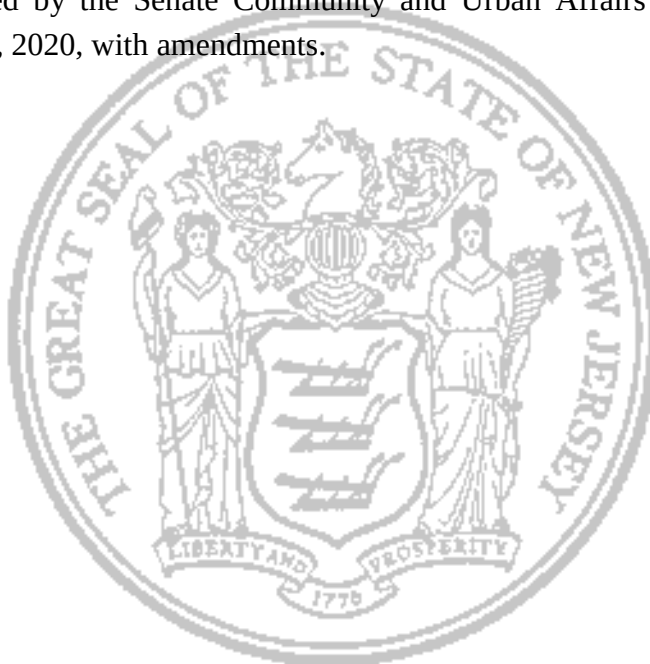
Senators O'Scanlon, Pou and Stack

SYNOPSIS

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

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As reported by the Senate Community and Urban Affairs Committee on December 10, 2020, with amendments.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 12/17/2020)

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 ¹1. 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

Matter enclosed in superscript numerals has been adopted as follows:

¹Senate SCU committee amendments adopted December 10, 2020.

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)】¹

14
15 ¹1. Section 2 of P.L.2017, c.258 (C.52:27D-517) is amended to
16 read as follows:

17 2. As used in this act:

18 "Director" means the Director of the Division of Housing and
19 Community Resources in the Department of Community Affairs.

20 **【"Disabled"】** "Disability" means 【a person who fulfills the
21 definition of having a "disability"】 the same as that term is defined
22 pursuant to section 3 of the "Americans with Disabilities Act of
23 1990," 42 U.S.C. s.12102.

24 "Division" means the Division of Housing and Community
25 Resources in the Department of Community Affairs.

26 "Eligible veteran" means a **【disabled or low-income】** veteran
27 who is low-income or has a disability, or both.

28 "Energy efficient features or equipment" means features or
29 equipment within a primary residence that help to reduce the
30 amount of electricity used to heat, cool, or ventilate the residence,
31 including but not limited to insulation, weatherstripping, air sealing,
32 repaired heating systems, or duct sealing.

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

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

44 "Low-income veteran" means a veteran occupying a household
45 with a gross household income equal to 50 percent or less of the
46 median gross household income for households of the same size,

1 and within the same housing region, as defined by subsection b. of
2 section 4 of P.L.1985, c.222 (C.52:27D-304).

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

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

9 "Rehabilitation" means the repair, renovation, alteration, or
10 reconstruction of any building or structure.

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

20 (cf: P.L.2019, c.500, s.12.)

21
22 2. Section 3 of P.L.2017, c.258 (C.52:27D-518) is amended to
23 read as follows:

24 3. The director shall establish a pilot program to award grants
25 to qualified organizations to rehabilitate **【and modify】** the primary
26 residences of eligible veterans, and to purchase and rehabilitate
27 abandoned homes for occupancy by homeless veterans. The
28 director shall manage the pilot program in consultation with the
29 Adjutant General of the Department of Military and Veterans'
30 Affairs to most effectively advance the needs of eligible veterans.
31 The director shall administer the pilot program for five years
32 following the operative date of P.L.2017, c.258 (C.52:27D-
33 516 et seq.). Grant awards totaling \$1 million shall be awarded
34 during each year the pilot program is in operation.

35 a. In addition to any additional information required by the
36 director, a qualified organization seeking a grant under the pilot
37 program shall submit an application to the division that shall
38 include the following information:

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

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

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

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

- 1 (2) have experience in successfully carrying out accountability
2 and reporting requirements involved in the proper administration of
3 grant funds; and
- 4 (3) commit to paying workers employed through the pilot
5 program no less than the prevailing wage rate for the worker's craft
6 or trade, as determined by the Commissioner of Labor and
7 Workforce Development pursuant to P.L.1963, c.150 (C.34:11-
8 56.25 et seq.).
- 9 c. In awarding grants under the pilot program,
- 10 (1) the director shall give preference to:
- 11 (a) qualified organizations that employ workers from an
12 apprenticeable trade participating in the Helmets to Hardhats
13 Program, as certified by the New Jersey State Building and
14 Construction Trades Council, such that not less than five percent of
15 projected labor hours shall be completed by such participating
16 organizations; and
- 17 (b) qualified organizations that serve communities that the
18 director determines have the greatest need for homeless services;
19 and
- 20 (2) the director may give preference to qualified organizations
21 to achieve a fair distribution, as determined by the director, among
22 homeless veterans in different geographical regions.
- 23 d. Low income veterans who **[are]** also **[disabled]** have a
24 disability shall receive preference over other eligible veterans in
25 selection for assistance under the pilot program.
- 26 e. Grant awards under the pilot program shall be used to
27 **[modify and]** rehabilitate the primary residences of eligible
28 veterans, to purchase and rehabilitate abandoned homes, including
29 homes that have been foreclosed, and for other purposes necessary
30 to advance **[this goal]** these goals, as permitted by the director.
31 Permitted uses of grant funding shall include, but shall not be
32 limited to:
- 33 (1) installing wheelchair ramps, widening exterior and interior
34 doors, reconfiguring and re-equipping bathrooms to enhance
35 accessibility, removing doorway thresholds, and installing
36 appropriate floor coverings to accommodate the functional
37 limitations that result from having a disability;
- 38 (2) rehabilitating homes that are in a state of interior or exterior
39 disrepair; and
- 40 (3) installing energy efficient features or equipment if the
41 eligible veteran's monthly residential utility costs are greater than
42 five percent of monthly household income, and an energy audit of
43 the residence indicates that the installation of energy efficient
44 features or equipment would reduce utility costs by 10 percent or
45 more.
- 46 f. No qualified organization shall be awarded more than
47 \$400,000 through the pilot program in any one fiscal year. A
48 qualified organization receiving a grant shall contribute a matching

1 contribution in an amount not less than 50 percent of the grant
2 award. This matching requirement may be met through cash
3 contributions, or in-kind contributions, as permitted by the director.
4 Eligible veterans benefitting from the pilot program shall not pay an
5 application fee or any other cost for the work completed on their
6 residence, unless a modest fee can be charged, as permitted by the
7 director, without forcing the veteran's total monthly housing costs
8 to exceed 30 percent of total household income.

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

13 (a) the number of eligible veterans provided assistance under
14 the pilot program;

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

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

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

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

23 (f) a description of the outreach initiatives implemented to
24 educate the general public and qualified organizations about the
25 pilot program, and to identify eligible veterans and their families;
26 and

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

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

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

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

40
41 3. This act shall take effect immediately.