

ASSEMBLY, No. 1907

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 218th LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2018 SESSION

Sponsored by:

Assemblyman RAJ MUKHERJI

District 33 (Hudson)

Assemblywoman PAMELA R. LAMPITT

District 6 (Burlington and Camden)

Assemblyman TIM EUSTACE

District 38 (Bergen and Passaic)

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Assemblyman JOE DANIELSEN

District 17 (Middlesex and Somerset)

Assemblyman BENJIE E. WIMBERLY

District 35 (Bergen and Passaic)

Co-Sponsored by:

Assemblywoman Jones, Assemblymen Holley, DeAngelo, Assemblywoman Pinkin, Assemblymen Coughlin, Space, Assemblywoman Pintor Marin, Assemblymen Houghtaling, Gusciora, Chiaravalloti, Assemblywomen McKnight and Chaparro

SYNOPSIS

Establishes “Veterans Affordable Housing Section 8 Voucher Pilot Program.”

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel.

(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 3/13/2018)

1 AN ACT establishing the “Veterans Affordable Housing Section 8
2 Voucher Pilot Program.”

3

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

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7 1. a. As used in this section:

8 “Homeless” means an individual without permanent domicile
9 who is living outside, or in a building not meant for human
10 habitation or which the person has no legal right to occupy, or in an
11 emergency shelter, or in a temporary housing program which may
12 include a transitional and supportive housing program if habitation
13 time limits exist, or temporarily in the home of another household,
14 or in a motel.

15 “Veteran” means any citizen and resident of this State honorably
16 discharged or released under honorable circumstances, including
17 medical separations and general discharges under honorable
18 conditions, from service in any branch of the Armed Forces of the
19 United States.

20 b. The Commissioner of Community Affairs shall establish and
21 operate a project-based voucher pilot program, to be known as the
22 “Veterans Affordable Housing Section 8 Voucher Pilot Program,”
23 under the federal Housing Choice Voucher (Section 8) Program for
24 veterans and their families who are confronting homelessness or are
25 residing in unsafe housing.

26 c. The commissioner shall annually allocate to the pilot
27 program at least 1.5 percent of the unencumbered amount of the
28 budget authority allocated to the Department of Community
29 Affairs’ Housing Choice Voucher Program by the U.S. Department
30 of Housing and Urban Development during each of the five years
31 following the date of enactment of this act.

32 d. The commissioner shall annually announce the availability
33 of project-based vouchers for veterans pursuant to the “Veterans
34 Affordable Housing Section 8 Voucher Pilot Program” by
35 publication of a request for proposals through an open competitive
36 process.

37 e. The commissioner shall administer the pilot program in
38 accordance with the provisions of this act and in compliance with
39 the federal Housing Choice Voucher Program regulations and
40 requirements.

41 f. The commissioner shall not award project-based vouchers
42 under the pilot program for newly constructed or rehabilitated
43 housing units unless at least 50 percent of the units at the premises
44 are reserved for occupancy by veterans or households where a
45 veteran is the head of the household and the veteran or household is
46 currently homeless, at imminent risk of becoming homeless, or the
47 veteran is disabled and in need of access to supportive services.

- 1 g. In awarding vouchers under the pilot program, the
2 commissioner shall consider the following factors:
- 3 (1) geographic diversity, however, during each of the first two
4 years of operation of the pilot program, the commissioner shall
5 award vouchers representing at least half of the amount allocated to
6 the pilot program in accordance with a preference targeting the
7 location of projects within an eligible municipality, as defined in
8 section 2 of the "Urban Transit Hub Tax Credit Act," P.L.2007,
9 c.346 (C.34:1B-208),
- 10 (2) availability of supportive services on site, and
- 11 (3) proximity of supportive services to the proposed project
12 location.
- 13 h. The commissioner shall report to the Governor, and to the
14 Legislature pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1),
15 on the pilot program within two years of its implementation and
16 make any recommendations the commissioner deems appropriate.

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18 2. This act shall take effect immediately.

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21 STATEMENT

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23 This bill would require the Commissioner of Community Affairs to
24 establish and operate a project-based voucher pilot program under the
25 federal Housing Choice Voucher (Section 8) Program for veterans and
26 their families who are confronting homelessness or are residing in
27 unsafe housing. The Section 8 Housing Voucher Program assists in
28 making safe and quality housing in the private rental market affordable
29 to low, and very low-income households by reducing housing costs
30 through direct rent subsidy payments to landlords. The program is
31 funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

32 The bill would require the Commissioner of Community Affairs to
33 annually allocate to the pilot program at least 1.5 percent of the
34 unencumbered amount the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban
35 Development provides to the State Department of Community Affairs'
36 Housing Choice Voucher Program for five years.

37 According to the New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans
38 Affairs, New Jersey has among its homeless population an estimated
39 1,000 veterans of the United States Armed Forces. Our nation and
40 our State, grateful for its hard won freedom and democracy, owes a
41 special debt to veterans. That there are so many falling through the
42 gaps in our society is a call to action. This bill is intended to help
43 restore dignity and purpose to those who so unselfishly laid their
44 lives on the line for our country.