

## CHAPTER 2014-214

### Committee Substitute for Committee Substitute for House Bill No. 979

An act relating to homelessness; amending s. 420.606, F.S.; revising legislative findings; requiring the Department of Economic Opportunity to provide training and technical assistance to certain designated lead agencies of homeless assistance continuums of care; requiring that the provision of such training and assistance be delegated to certain nonprofit entities; conforming provisions to changes made by the act; amending s. 420.622, F.S.; requiring the department to establish award levels for “Challenge Grants”; specifying criteria to determine award levels; requiring the department, after consultation with the Council on Homelessness, to specify a grant award level in the notice of solicitation of grant applications; revising qualifications for the grant; specifying authorized uses of grant funds; requiring a lead agency that receives a grant to submit a report to the department; providing for contingent effect; providing an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Subsections (1) through (3) of section 420.606, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

420.606 Training and technical assistance program.—

(1) LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS.—In addition to the legislative findings set forth in s. 420.6015, the Legislature finds and declares that:

(a) Housing in economically declining or distressed areas is frequently substandard and is often unaffordable or unavailable to homeless persons, very-low-income persons, and low-income persons;

(b) Community-based organizations often have limited experience in development of quality housing for homeless persons, very-low-income persons, and low-income persons in economically declining or distressed areas; ~~and~~

(c) The staffs and board members of community-based organizations need additional training in housing development as well as technical support to assist them in gaining the experience they need to better serve their communities; ~~and~~;

(d) The staffs of state agencies and local governments, whether directly involved in the production of affordable or available housing or acting in a supportive role, can better serve the goals of state and local governments if their expertise in housing development is expanded.

(2) PURPOSE.—The purpose of this section is to provide community-based organizations, ~~and staff of state and local governments, and designated lead agencies of homeless assistance continuums of care with the necessary training and technical assistance to meet the needs of homeless persons,~~ very-low-income persons, low-income persons, and moderate-income persons for standard, affordable housing.

(3) TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.—The Department of Economic Opportunity shall be responsible for securing the necessary expertise to provide training and technical assistance to:

(a) Staff of local governments, to staff of state agencies, as appropriate, ~~and to community-based organizations, and to persons forming such organizations, which are formed for the purpose of developing new housing and rehabilitating existing housing that which~~ is affordable for very-low-income persons, low-income persons, and moderate-income persons.

1.(a) The training component of the program shall be designed to build the housing development capacity of community-based organizations and local governments as a permanent resource for the benefit of communities in this state.

a.1. The scope of training ~~must shall~~ include, but need not be limited to, real estate development skills related to affordable housing, including the construction process and property management and disposition, the development of public-private partnerships to reduce housing costs, model housing projects, and management and board responsibilities of community-based organizations.

b.2. Training activities may include, but are not limited to, materials for self-instruction, workshops, seminars, internships, coursework, and special programs developed in conjunction with state universities and community colleges.

2.(b) The technical assistance component of the program shall be designed to assist applicants for state-administered programs in developing applications and in expediting project implementation. Technical assistance activities for the staffs of community-based organizations and local governments who are directly involved in the production of affordable housing may include, but are not limited to, workshops for program applicants, onsite visits, guidance in achieving project completion, and a newsletter to community-based organizations and local governments.

(b) Designated lead agencies of homeless assistance continuums of care which receive funding from the Department of Children and Families to provide or secure housing, programs, and other services for homeless persons. Such training and technical assistance, subject to a specific appropriation in the General Appropriations Act for that purpose, must be provided by a nonprofit entity that meets the requirements for providing training and technical assistance under s. 420.531.

Section 2. Subsection (4) of section 420.622, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

420.622 State Office on Homelessness; Council on Homelessness.—

(4) ~~Not less than 120 days after the effective date of this act, The State Office on Homelessness, with the concurrence of the Council on Homelessness, may accept and administer moneys appropriated to it to provide annual “Challenge Grants” annually to lead agencies of for homeless assistance continuums of care designated by the State Office on Homelessness pursuant to s. 420.624. A lead agency may be a local homeless coalition, municipal or county government, or other public agency or private, not-for-profit corporation. The department shall establish varying levels of grant awards Such grants may be up to \$500,000 per lead agency. Award levels shall be based upon the total population within the continuum of care catchment area and reflect the differing degrees of homelessness in the catchment planning areas. The department, in consultation with the Council on Homelessness, shall specify a grant award level in the notice of the solicitation of grant applications.~~

(a) To qualify for the grant, a lead agency must develop and implement a local homeless assistance continuum of care plan for its designated catchment area. The continuum of care plan must implement a coordinated assessment or central intake system to screen, assess, and refer persons seeking assistance to the appropriate service provider. The lead agency shall also document the commitment of local government and private organizations to provide matching funds or in-kind support in an amount equal to the grant requested.

(b) Preference must be given to those lead agencies that have demonstrated the ability of their continuum of care to provide quality services to homeless persons and the ability to leverage federal homeless-assistance funding under the Stewart B. McKinney Act and private funding for the provision of services to homeless persons.

(c) Preference must be given to lead agencies in catchment areas with the greatest need for the provision of housing and services to the homeless, relative to the population of the catchment area.

(d) The grant may be used to fund any of the housing, program, or service needs included in the local homeless assistance continuum of care plan. The lead agency may allocate the grant to programs, services, or housing providers that implement the local homeless assistance continuum care plan. The lead agency may provide subgrants to a local agency to implement programs or services or provide housing identified for funding in the lead agency’s application to the department. A lead agency may spend a maximum of 8 percent of its funding on administrative costs.

(e) The lead agency shall submit a final report to the department documenting the outcomes achieved by the grant in enabling persons who

are homeless to return to permanent housing thereby ending such person's episode of homelessness.

Section 3. The provisions of this act are contingent upon specific legislative appropriation.

Section 4. This act shall take effect July 1, 2014.

Approved by the Governor June 20, 2014.

Filed in Office Secretary of State June 20, 2014.