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CS/CS/HB 979

2014 Legislature

1
2 An act relating to homelessness; amending s. 420.606,
3 F.S.; revising legislative findings; requiring the
4 Department of Economic Opportunity to provide training
5 and technical assistance to certain designated lead
6 agencies of homeless assistance continuums of care;
7 requiring that the provision of such training and
8 assistance be delegated to certain nonprofit entities;
9 conforming provisions to changes made by the act;
10 amending s. 420.622, F.S.; requiring the department to
11 establish award levels for "Challenge Grants";
12 specifying criteria to determine award levels;
13 requiring the department, after consultation with the
14 Council on Homelessness, to specify a grant award
15 level in the notice of solicitation of grant
16 applications; revising qualifications for the grant;
17 specifying authorized uses of grant funds; requiring a
18 lead agency that receives a grant to submit a report
19 to the department; providing for contingent effect;
20 providing an effective date.

21
22 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

23
24 Section 1. Subsections (1) through (3) of section 420.606,
25 Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

26 420.606 Training and technical assistance program.—

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

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

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

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

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

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

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53 for standard, affordable housing.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

99 420.622 State Office on Homelessness; Council on
 100 Homelessness.—

101 (4) ~~Not less than 120 days after the effective date of~~
 102 ~~this act,~~ The State Office on Homelessness, with the concurrence
 103 of the Council on Homelessness, may accept and administer moneys
 104 appropriated to it to provide annual "Challenge Grants" ~~annually~~

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105 to lead agencies of ~~for~~ homeless assistance continuums of care
106 designated by the State Office on Homelessness pursuant to s.
107 420.624. ~~A lead agency may be a local homeless coalition,~~
108 ~~municipal or county government, or other public agency or~~
109 ~~private, not-for-profit corporation.~~ The department shall
110 establish varying levels of grant awards ~~Such grants may be up~~
111 ~~to \$500,000 per lead agency.~~ Award levels shall be based upon
112 the total population within the continuum of care catchment area
113 and reflect the differing degrees of homelessness in the
114 catchment planning areas. The department, in consultation with
115 the Council on Homelessness, shall specify a grant award level
116 in the notice of the solicitation of grant applications.

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

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

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131 services to homeless persons.

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

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

146 (e) The lead agency shall submit a final report to the
147 department documenting the outcomes achieved by the grant in
148 enabling persons who are homeless to return to permanent housing
149 thereby ending such person's episode of homelessness.

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

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