

A bill to be entitled

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.—

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

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.

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~~

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

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.