

By Senator Smith

17-00886-25

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1                   A bill to be entitled  
2       An act relating to rental assistance for veterans;  
3       creating s. 420.5098, F.S.; providing legislative  
4       findings; creating the Veterans' Rental Assistance  
5       Grant Program; authorizing the Florida Housing Finance  
6       Corporation to provide certain grants to eligible  
7       applicants for a specified purpose; providing  
8       eligibility requirements for the program; authorizing  
9       rulemaking; providing an effective date.

10  
11 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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13       Section 1. Section 420.5098, Florida Statutes, is created  
14 to read:

15       420.5098 Veterans' Rental Assistance Grant Program.—

16       (1) The Legislature finds that:

17       (a) Honorably discharged veterans have earned and deserve  
18 the highest level of social welfare support.

19       (b) Honorably discharged veterans deserve reasonable access  
20 to housing.

21       (c) Some honorably discharged veterans are only able to  
22 secure housing through renting.

23       (d) Lower-income honorably discharged veterans may not have  
24 the financial means to provide a security deposit and first and  
25 last month's rent, which many landlords require before issuing a  
26 lease.

27       (e) Providing rental assistance for eligible honorably  
28 discharged veterans would help eliminate barriers to housing.

29       (2) The Veterans' Rental Assistance Grant Program is

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30 created to provide security deposit assistance for low-income,  
31 honorably discharged veterans.

32 (3) The Florida Housing Finance Corporation is authorized  
33 to provide one-time grants under the program from funds of the  
34 corporation in amounts up to \$2,000 to eligible applicants for  
35 the purpose of assisting in the payment of security deposits for  
36 rental housing.

37 (4) To be eligible to receive a rental assistance grant  
38 under this section, a person must meet all of the following  
39 requirements:

40 (a) Be an honorably discharged veteran of a branch of the  
41 United States Armed Forces. A DD-214 form issued at the time of  
42 separation is required as proof of honorable discharge from a  
43 branch of the United States Armed Forces. However, if a DD-214  
44 form is not available, other documentation may be acceptable if  
45 recognized by the United States Department of Defense or the  
46 United States Department of Veterans Affairs, as determined by  
47 the Florida Housing Finance Corporation.

48 (b) Be a resident of this state. A Florida driver license  
49 or Florida identification card is required as proof of  
50 residency.

51 (c) Have an annual household income that is at or below 140  
52 percent of the area median income. Annual household income must  
53 be verified in the manner required by the Florida Housing  
54 Finance Corporation, which may include background checks and a  
55 review of documentation such as bank statements and W-2 forms.

56 (d) Apply to the Florida Housing Finance Corporation in the  
57 manner prescribed by the corporation.

58 (5) The Florida Housing Finance Corporation may adopt rules

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59 to implement this section.

60 Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2025.