STATE OF NEW YORK

10259

IN ASSEMBLY

February 12, 2026

Introduced by M. of A. CASHMAN -- read once and referred to the Committee on Housing

AN ACT to amend the private housing finance law, in relation to establishing the rural housing workforce corps to address rural housing shortages by expanding construction capacity, training a local workforce, and supporting the development of modest, year-round housing units in rural New York state; providing for the repeal of such provisions upon expiration thereof; and making an appropriation therefor

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

Section 1. This act shall be known and may be cited as the "Rural Housing Workforce Corps Act".

§ 2. The Legislature finds that:

1. Rural regions of New York State, including the North Country, face an acute shortage of safe, affordable, year-round housing, constraining economic growth, workforce retention, and community stability.

2. Housing shortages in rural areas are driven not only by financing gaps, but by a lack of construction capacity, skilled labor, and entry pathways into the building trades.

3. Workforce development programs modeled on national service initiatives such as AmeriCorps have demonstrated success in building skills, fostering civic engagement, and creating career pipelines.

4. Strategic, time limited state investment can expand local housing capacity while preparing a new generation of skilled trades workers for permanent employment.

The purpose of this act is to create a small scale, cost efficient pilot program that mobilizes a trained housing workforce corps to partner with local developers to construct modest housing units in rural communities.

§ 3. The private housing finance law is amended by adding a new article 33 to read as follows:

ARTICLE 33

RURAL HOUSING WORKFORCE CORPS

EXPLANATION--Matter in *italics* (underscored) is new; matter in brackets [-] is old law to be omitted.

LBD14849-01-6

Section 1300. Definitions.
1301. Rural housing workforce corps.
1302. Program design and partnerships.
1303. Housing production role.
1304. Corps members.
1305. Tax incentives.
1306. Reporting and evaluation.

§ 1300. Definitions. For the purposes of this article:

1. "Commission" shall mean the New York state commission on national and community service.

2. "Corps" shall mean the rural housing workforce corps established by this article.

3. "Corps member" shall mean an individual selected to participate in the rural housing workforce corps.

4. "Department" shall mean the department of New York state homes and community renewal.

5. "Participating developer" shall mean a private, nonprofit, municipal, or public benefit entity that provides land control, project sponsorship, and local permitting for eligible housing projects.

6. "Rural regions" shall mean a municipality, county, or area designated as rural by the department pursuant to population density and housing need.

§ 1301. Rural housing workforce corps. 1. The department shall establish a rural housing workforce corps which shall operate as a pilot program for two years. The corps shall operate in one or more rural regions with priority given during the two-year pilot program to rural regions in Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Hamilton, Jefferson, Lewis, and St. Lawrence counties.

2. The corps shall use appropriated funds for:

(a) corps member living allowances;

(b) educational and training stipends;

(c) program administration;

(d) safety equipment and shared tools; and

(e) limited instructional and supervisory costs.

§ 1302. Program design and partnerships. 1. The department, in coordination with the commission on national and community service, shall administer the corps with the commission providing guidance on service-year structure, member recruitment, training standards, and post-service pathways, drawing on best practices from state and national service programs.

2. The department may contract with or designate one or more nonprofit organizations, educational institutions, or regional consortia to administer the pilot program.

3. The corps shall prioritize formal partnerships with: (a) the state university of New York, including campuses, community colleges, and applied learning programs; (b) boards of cooperative educational services and other career and technical education programs and trade schools; (c) local workforce development boards; (d) nonprofit housing organizations; (e) industrial development agencies; and (f) municipal governments in participating rural regions.

4. State university of New York institutions may provide academic credit, certificate alignment, or instructional support for corps members, as appropriate. The state university of New York may also provide no-cost on campus housing to corps members during their term of service.

5. Corps members shall receive hands-on training and supervised experience in residential construction, rehabilitation, and related trades.

§ 1303. Housing production role. 1. Participating developers shall retain responsibility for: (a) site control and land acquisition; (b) project financing; (c) design approval; (d) local permits and code compliance; and (e) long term ownership or sale of completed units.

2. The corps shall provide labor capacity and training support under the supervision of licensed professionals.

3. The corps shall target the construction or substantial rehabilitation of between eight and twelve housing units over the two-year pilot period.

§ 1304. Corps members. 1. The corps shall consist of between eight and twelve corps members each year.

2. Corps members:

(a) shall not be considered employees of the state of New York.

(b) shall receive a modest living allowance during their term of service.

(c) upon successful completion of service, may receive an educational or training stipend to be used for tuition, certification, tools, or apprenticeship costs.

§ 1305. Tax incentives. 1. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the state shall waive state sales and use taxes on construction materials incorporated into housing units constructed or rehabilitated by the corps.

2. Such waiver shall apply only to materials used directly in eligible projects certified by the department. Local industrial development agencies will work with participating developers to certify materials.

§ 1306. Reporting and evaluation. The department, in consultation with the commission and any participating state university of New York institutions, shall submit a report to the governor and the legislature within six months of the completion of the two-year pilot program. Such report shall include, but not be limited to:

1. the number of corps members trained;

2. the number of housing units produced;

3. post-service employment, apprenticeship placement, or continued education outcomes for corps members;

4. a cost analysis including, but not limited to, the cost per housing unit constructed or rehabilitated by the corps and cost per corps member trained; and

5. recommendations for program expansion or modification, including alignment with existing state and national service initiatives.

§ 4. The sum of five hundred thousand dollars ($500,000), or so much thereof as may be necessary, is hereby appropriated from any moneys in the state treasury in the general fund to the credit of the New York state department of homes and community renewal in carrying out the provisions of this act. Such sum shall be payable on the audit and warrant of the state comptroller on vouchers certified or approved in the manner provided by law.

§ 5. This act shall take effect immediately and shall expire and be deemed repealed four years after the effective date of this act.