STATE OF NEW YORK

5018

2021-2022 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

February 22, 2021

Introduced by Sens. PARKER, ADDABBO, BAILEY, COMRIE -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Veterans, Homeland Security and Military Affairs

AN ACT to amend the executive law, the social services law, and the mental hygiene law, in relation to providing veterans' housing

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

Section 1. The executive law is amended by adding a new section 354-f to read as follows:

§ 354-f. Veterans' housing. 1. For purposes of this section, the following terms shall have the following meanings: a. "Veteran" means a resident of this state, who has served in the active military, naval or air service of the United States or the national guard and who has been released from such service without regard to the duration of service or manner of discharge, or citizenship;

b. "Transitional housing" means temporary housing for veterans and shall include bridge housing and service-intensive transitional housing.

c. "Bridge housing" means transitional housing in which a veteran may await permanent housing placement. No veteran shall be required to spend more than ninety days in bridge housing.

d. "Service-intensive housing" means transitional housing in which veterans are provided support and resources to actively seek permanent housing. Service-intensive housing shall provide veterans with generalized case-management, clinically appropriate care, and job training.

e. "Permanent housing" means long-term housing and shall not include bridge housing or service-intensive housing. Permanent housing may be supported through a local, state, or federal housing program.

f. "Homeless" means a person who is undomiciled or unsheltered, and is unable to secure permanent or stable housing without special assistance, as determined by the division.

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

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g. "Housing first principles" means the approach articulated by the United States department of housing and urban development that prioritizes placement of homeless individuals in housing without preconditions and barriers to entry, such as sobriety, treatment or service participation requirements.

2. In consultation with the division of housing and community renewal, the office for temporary disability assistance, the office of mental health, and the office for alcoholism and substance abuse, the division shall ensure that homeless veterans are housed according to federal housing first principles.

3. The division shall provide immediate housing to every homeless veteran who requests to be housed. Such housing may be transitional housing or permanent housing and shall not be contingent on sobriety, minimum income requirements, absence of a criminal record, or any other conditions deemed unnecessary by the state director. Long-term service-intensive housing shall only be provided in limited instances and only when the veteran specifically chooses to remain in service-intensive housing despite the availability of permanent housing. Any veteran who chooses long-term service-intensive housing shall be provided a monthly review of all available services and housing options. Absent a veteran's choice to remain in service-intensive housing, all homeless veterans shall be placed in permanent housing at the first available opportunity using federal housing first principles.

4. The division shall prepare and publish an annual report on its website detailing the resources, plans, partnerships, and system capacity for housing homeless veterans. The report shall identify all sources of data upon which it relied and shall contain recommendations on how to better provide housing and related services to homeless veterans.

§ 2. Section 353 of the executive law is amended by adding a new subdivision 7-c to read as follows:

7-c. The division shall consult with the division of housing and community renewal, the office of temporary disability assistance, the office of mental health, and the office of alcoholism and substance abuse to provide housing services to homeless veterans pursuant to section three hundred fifty-four-f of this article. The division may consult with members of the community devoted to helping veterans obtain housing, employment and general services for the same purpose.

§ 3. Section 20 of the social services law is amended by adding a new subdivision 9 to read as follows:

9. The office of temporary and disability assistance shall consult with the state director of the division of veterans affairs, the commissioner of the division of housing and community renewal, the commissioner of the office of temporary disability assistance, the commissioner of the office of mental health, and the commissioner of the office of alcoholism and substance abuse to provide housing services to homeless veterans pursuant to section three hundred fifty-four-f of the executive law.

§ 4. Section 7.07 of the mental hygiene law is amended by adding a new subdivision (i) to read as follows:

(i) The office shall consult with the state director of the division of veterans affairs, the commissioner of the division of housing and community renewal, the commissioner of the office of temporary disability assistance, and the commissioner of the office of alcoholism and substance abuse to provide housing services to homeless veterans pursuant to section three hundred fifty-four-f of the executive law.

§ 5. Section 19.07 of the mental hygiene law is amended by adding a new subdivision (n) to read as follows:

(n) The office shall consult with the state director of the division of veterans affairs, the commissioner of the division of housing and community renewal, the commissioner of the office of temporary disability assistance, and the commissioner of the office of mental health to provide housing services to homeless veterans pursuant to section three hundred fifty-four-f of the executive law.

§ 6. This act shall take effect immediately.