STATE OF NEW YORK

10592

IN ASSEMBLY

June 20, 2024

Introduced by COMMITTEE ON RULES -- (at request of M. of A. L. Rosenthal) -- read once and referred to the Committee on Social Services

AN ACT to amend the social services law, in relation to establishing the housing people and animals together grant program

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

Section 1. The social services law is amended by adding a new section 45-aa to read as follows:

§ 45-aa. Housing people and animals together grant program for people experiencing homelessness. 1. As used in this section, the term "co-sheltering" refers to housing accommodations that enable the coexistence of people and their companion animals in a shelter setting.

2. There is hereby established a co-sheltering grant program to be implemented by the office of children and family services and the office of temporary and disability assistance to aid in expanding access to sheltered housing for people experiencing homelessness with companion animals. The program shall provide funding to non-profit organizations and municipal shelters that provide housing to people experiencing homelessness. The program shall be designed to support the implementation and maintenance of co-sheltering programs that enable such population to gain access to shelter with a companion animal. Funding used to support the program shall be subject to appropriation.

3. Funds shall be distributed and made available for expenditure under this section. In determining funding for applicants under the grant program, the following criteria and goals may be considered:

(a) The provision of veterinary services to provide essential medical care to animals housed onsite;

(b) The renovation of a facility to incorporate a kennel or other needed infrastructural changes to safely house people experiencing homelessness with companion animals;

(c) The training of staff and technical assistance related to applicable health and hygiene protocol, outreach and partnerships, best practices and policies; and

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

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(d) The provision of food, supplies, and equipment to accommodate animals in the shelter.

4. In establishing and operating the program, a range of experts shall be consulted including but not limited to, the division of housing and community renewal, providers of housing accommodations for people experiencing homelessness, and any other related state agency, municipality or organization.

§ 2. The social services law is amended by adding a new section 459-bb to read as follows:

§ 459-bb. Housing people and animals together grant program for victims of domestic violence. 1. As used in this section, the term "co-sheltering" refers to housing accommodations that enable the coexistence of people and their companion animals in a shelter setting.

2. There is hereby established a co-sheltering grant program to be implemented by the office of children and family services and the office of temporary and disability assistance to aid in expanding access to sheltered housing for victims of domestic violence with companion animals. The program shall provide funding to non-profit organizations and municipal shelters that provide housing to victims of domestic violence or people experiencing homelessness. The program shall be designed to support the implementation and maintenance of co-sheltering programs that enable such populations to gain access to shelter with a companion animal. Funding used to support the program shall be subject to appropriation.

3. Funds shall be distributed and made available for expenditure under this section. In determining funding for applicants under the grant program, the following criteria and goals may be considered:

(a) The provision of veterinary services to provide essential medical care to animals housed onsite;

(b) The renovation of a facility to incorporate a kennel or other needed infrastructural changes to safely house people experiencing homelessness or victims of domestic violence with companion animals;

(c) The training of staff and technical assistance related to applicable health and hygiene protocol, outreach and partnerships, best practices and policies; and

(d) The provision of food, supplies, and equipment to accommodate animals in the shelter.

4. In establishing and operating the program, a range of experts shall be consulted including but not limited to, the office for the prevention of domestic violence, the division of housing and community renewal, providers of housing accommodations for people experiencing homelessness, organizations serving the needs of victims of domestic violence, and any other related state agency, municipality or organization.

§ 3. This act shall take effect on the one hundred eightieth day after it shall have become a law.