

STATE OF NEW YORK

549

2023-2024 Regular Sessions

IN ASSEMBLY

January 9, 2023

Introduced by M. of A. CRUZ -- read once and referred to the Committee on Governmental Operations

AN ACT to amend the military law and the state finance law, in relation to legal assistance for military families

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

1 Section 1. The military law is amended by adding a new section 15-a to
2 read as follows:

3 § 15-a. Legal assistance for military families. 1. The attorney gener-
4 al shall, in consultation with the adjutant general and the chairman of
5 the board of trustees of the New York interest on lawyer account fund,
6 establish a military pro bono program to provide legal assistance with-
7 out charge to those in active military service of the United States and
8 those military personnel who have been deployed for active duty other
9 than training, and their family members domiciled or stationed in the
10 state.

11 2. The assistance provided by such program shall include, but not be
12 limited to: (a) civil law; (b) family law; (c) estate planning; (d)
13 employment law; (e) immigration law; (f) debtor-creditor law; and (g)
14 military administrative law.

15 3. The attorney general and the adjutant general may apply for and
16 receive grants, gifts, donations, bequests, or other contributions to
17 support the military pro bono program and shall deposit such funds in
18 the New York interest on lawyer account fund, to be used exclusively for
19 legal assistance for military families pursuant to paragraph c of subdi-
20 vision three of section ninety-seven-v of the state finance law.

21 4. The adjutant general shall establish a military family legal
22 assistance advisory committee to include, among others, representatives
23 from each of the legal assistance offices on military installations in
24 the state, the New York state bar association's committee on veterans,
25 the division of veterans' services, the office of court administration,

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

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1 veterans service organizations, military support organizations, and
2 organizations involved in coordinating, supporting and delivering civil
3 legal aid and pro bono legal services in New York state. The committee
4 shall be co-chaired by the state judge advocate or his or her assist-
5 ants, and the chairman of the board of trustees of the New York interest
6 on lawyer account fund, or his or her designee, and shall provide advice
7 and assistance to the attorney general regarding program design, opera-
8 tion, volunteer recruitment, support strategies, service delivery objec-
9 tives and priorities, and funding for the military pro bono program.

10 5. The attorney general may promulgate rules and regulations necessary
11 to effectuate the purposes of this section.

12 § 2. Paragraph c of subdivision 3 of section 97-v of the state finance
13 law, as added by chapter 659 of the laws of 1983, is amended to read as
14 follows:

15 c. The remaining funds shall be allocated for purposes related to the
16 improvement of the administration of justice, including, but not limited
17 to, legal assistance for military families pursuant to a military pro
18 bono program established under section fifteen-a of the military law,
19 the provision of civil legal services to groups currently underserved by
20 legal services, such as the elderly and the disabled, and the enhance-
21 ment of civil legal services to the poor through innovative and cost-ef-
22 fective means, such as volunteer lawyer programs and support and train-
23 ing services.

24 § 3. This act shall take effect immediately.