

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:

- 1 Section 1. This act shall be known and may be cited as the "Rural
2 Housing Workforce Corps Act".
- 3 § 2. The Legislature finds that:
- 4 1. Rural regions of New York State, including the North Country, face
5 an acute shortage of safe, affordable, year-round housing, constraining
6 economic growth, workforce retention, and community stability.
- 7 2. Housing shortages in rural areas are driven not only by financing
8 gaps, but by a lack of construction capacity, skilled labor, and entry
9 pathways into the building trades.
- 10 3. Workforce development programs modeled on national service initi-
11 atives such as AmeriCorps have demonstrated success in building skills,
12 fostering civic engagement, and creating career pipelines.
- 13 4. Strategic, time limited state investment can expand local housing
14 capacity while preparing a new generation of skilled trades workers for
15 permanent employment.
- 16 The purpose of this act is to create a small scale, cost efficient
17 pilot program that mobilizes a trained housing workforce corps to part-
18 ner with local developers to construct modest housing units in rural
19 communities.
- 20 § 3. The private housing finance law is amended by adding a new arti-
21 cle 33 to read as follows:
- 22 ARTICLE 33
- 23 RURAL HOUSING WORKFORCE CORPS

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

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1 Section 1300. Definitions.

2 1301. Rural housing workforce corps.

3 1302. Program design and partnerships.

4 1303. Housing production role.

5 1304. Corps members.

6 1305. Tax incentives.

7 1306. Reporting and evaluation.

8 § 1300. Definitions. For the purposes of this article:

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

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

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

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

17 5. "Participating developer" shall mean a private, nonprofit, municipi-
18 pal, or public benefit entity that provides land control, project spon-
19 sorship, and local permitting for eligible housing projects.

20 6. "Rural regions" shall mean a municipality, county, or area desig-
21 nated as rural by the department pursuant to population density and
22 housing need.

23 § 1301. Rural housing workforce corps. 1. The department shall estab-
24 lish a rural housing workforce corps which shall operate as a pilot
25 program for two years. The corps shall operate in one or more rural
26 regions with priority given during the two-year pilot program to rural
27 regions in Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Hamilton, Jefferson, Lewis, and St.
28 Lawrence counties.

29 2. The corps shall use appropriated funds for:

30 (a) corps member living allowances;

31 (b) educational and training stipends;

32 (c) program administration;

33 (d) safety equipment and shared tools; and

34 (e) limited instructional and supervisory costs.

35 § 1302. Program design and partnerships. 1. The department, in coordi-
36 nation with the commission on national and community service, shall
37 administer the corps with the commission providing guidance on service-
38 year structure, member recruitment, training standards, and post-service
39 pathways, drawing on best practices from state and national service
40 programs.

41 2. The department may contract with or designate one or more nonprofit
42 organizations, educational institutions, or regional consortia to admin-
43 ister the pilot program.

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

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

1 5. Corps members shall receive hands-on training and supervised expe-
2 rience in residential construction, rehabilitation, and related trades.

3 § 1303. Housing production role. 1. Participating developers shall
4 retain responsibility for: (a) site control and land acquisition; (b)
5 project financing; (c) design approval; (d) local permits and code
6 compliance; and (e) long term ownership or sale of completed units.

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

9 3. The corps shall target the construction or substantial rehabili-
10 tation of between eight and twelve housing units over the two-year pilot
11 period.

12 § 1304. Corps members. 1. The corps shall consist of between eight and
13 twelve corps members each year.

14 2. Corps members:

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

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

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

21 § 1305. Tax incentives. 1. Notwithstanding any other provision of law,
22 the state shall waive state sales and use taxes on construction materi-
23 als incorporated into housing units constructed or rehabilitated by the
24 corps.

25 2. Such waiver shall apply only to materials used directly in eligible
26 projects certified by the department. Local industrial development agen-
27 cies will work with participating developers to certify materials.

28 § 1306. Reporting and evaluation. The department, in consultation with
29 the commission and any participating state university of New York insti-
30 tutions, shall submit a report to the governor and the legislature with-
31 in six months of the completion of the two-year pilot program. Such
32 report shall include, but not be limited to:

33 1. the number of corps members trained;

34 2. the number of housing units produced;

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

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

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

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

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