

STATE OF NEW YORK

5407

2025-2026 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

February 21, 2025

Introduced by Sens. HARCKHAM, ASHBY, BORRELLO, FERNANDEZ, HELMING, ROLISON, STEC, TEDISCO, WEBB, WEBER, WEIK -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Mental Health

AN ACT to amend the mental hygiene law, in relation to the "First Responder Peer Support Program Act"

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 "First
2 Responder Peer Support Program Act".

3 § 2. The mental hygiene law is amended by adding a new section 7.51 to
4 read as follows:

5 § 7.51 First responder peer support program.

6 (a) For the purposes of this section, the following terms shall have
7 the following meanings:

8 1. "The program" shall mean the "first responder peer support program"
9 established by this section.

10 2. "Eligible entities" shall mean an entity or county first responder
11 peer program which submits to the commissioner an application, in a form
12 prescribed by the commissioner, containing such information and assur-
13 ances as the commissioner may require to provide initial and continued
14 training in mental illness, including but not limited to, helping indi-
15 viduals gain a better understanding about the effects of trauma, repeti-
16 tive exposure, signs and symptoms of trauma, triggers of a traumatic
17 event, coping mechanisms, suicide prevention, as well as available
18 tools, resources, and local mental health services for first responder
19 peer volunteers, volunteer and paid individuals who are trained to
20 respond to emergency situations and provide immediate assistance and
21 care to those in need. This would include individuals who work as fire-
22 fighters, police officers, 9-1-1 operators, emergency dispatchers and
23 emergency medical services personnel.

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

LBD10098-01-5

1 (b) The commissioner, in consultation with the commissioner of the
2 department of health, the office of fire prevention and control, the
3 municipal police training council, and the superintendent of state
4 police, shall, subject to appropriation, establish a statewide grant
5 program to be known as the "first responder peer support program". The
6 program shall provide grants, with appropriations therefor, to eligible
7 entities for the purpose of establishing peer-to-peer mental health
8 programs for first responders.

9 (c) The commissioner shall establish standards applicable to the
10 program. Such standards shall include, but not be limited to, initial
11 and continued training for first responder peer volunteers, administra-
12 tive staffing needs, and best practices for addressing the needs of each
13 first responder served, including, but not limited to, a warm handoff to
14 mental health services for individuals identified as being in duress.

15 (d) The commissioner shall not require the recipient of any grant
16 under this section to maintain records on first responders seeking
17 support or report any personal identifying information directly or indi-
18 rectly to the commissioner, a first responder's employer, or a first
19 responder's organization.

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