

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

SENATE BILL

No. **960** Session of
2013

INTRODUCED BY KITCHEN, COSTA, HUGHES, SCHWANK, TARTAGLIONE,
SOLOBAY AND WOZNIAK, MAY 29, 2013

REFERRED TO PUBLIC HEALTH AND WELFARE, MAY 29, 2013

AN ACT

1 Establishing a transitional housing assistance program; and
2 making an appropriation.

3 The General Assembly finds and declares that:

4 (1) General assistance in Pennsylvania was eliminated in
5 2012, for approximately 65,000 Pennsylvanians, almost 60% of
6 whom are disabled or otherwise unable to work.

7 (2) In addition to disabled individuals, general
8 assistance was received by domestic violence survivors,
9 adults participating in intensive alcohol or drug treatment
10 programs that precluded them from working, children living
11 with unrelated adults and adults caring for someone who is
12 sick, disabled or an unrelated child.

13 (3) With the elimination of general assistance, many
14 people lost housing because of their inability to pay rent,
15 leaving them homeless or requiring them to repeatedly move.

16 (4) Some people chose to forgo basic household and
17 personal items in order to use those funds toward housing.

18 (5) Providing transitional housing assistance for

1 disabled people who have lost funding due to the elimination
2 of general assistance would provide the disabled people who
3 have lost funding with the necessary safeguard that is needed
4 while looking for avenues of assistance through Social
5 Security or other available programs.

6 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
7 hereby enacts as follows:

8 Section 1. Short title.

9 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Transitional
10 Housing Assistance Program Act.

11 Section 2. Definitions.

12 The following words and phrases when used in this act shall
13 have the meanings given to them in this section unless the
14 context clearly indicates otherwise:

15 "Department." The Department of Public Welfare of the
16 Commonwealth.

17 "Eligible person." A person that meets all of the following:

18 (1) Has a permanent disability or illness and was
19 eligible for general assistance prior to elimination of the
20 program on August 1, 2012.

21 (2) Does not have housing on the effective date of this
22 section or is at risk of becoming homeless as a result of the
23 elimination of general assistance.

24 (3) Is in the process of or has applied for Social
25 Security benefits with the Social Security Administration.

26 "General assistance." Assistance granted under section
27 432(3) of the act of June 13, 1967 (P.L.31, No.21), known as the
28 Public Welfare Code, but terminated under the act of June 30,
29 2012 (P.L.668, No.80), entitled "An act amending the act of June
30 13, 1967 (P.L.31, No.21), entitled 'An act to consolidate,

1 editorially revise, and codify the public welfare laws of the
2 Commonwealth,' in general powers and duties of the Department of
3 Public Welfare, providing for county human services consolidated
4 planning and reporting; in public assistance, further providing
5 for definitions, providing for cessation of the general
6 assistance cash program and the continuation of the general
7 assistance-related medical assistance programs, further
8 providing for establishment of RESET, for determination of
9 eligibility, for failure to comply with employment and work-
10 related activity requirements and for medically needy and
11 determination of eligibility; in children and youth, further
12 providing for definitions; in Nursing Facility Assessments,
13 further providing for time periods; in kinship care, further
14 providing for definitions and for Kinship Care Program,
15 providing for Subsidized Permanent Legal Custodianship Program
16 and for permanent legal custodianship subsidy and reimbursement;
17 providing for Human Services Block Grant Pilot Program; and
18 making related repeals."

19 "Housing payment." An amount provided under this act to pay
20 for any of the following incurred by an eligible person:

21 (1) A lease payment.

22 (2) A payment for rental of a hotel room or similar
23 lodging.

24 (3) A payment to an individual providing housing to the
25 eligible person.

26 "Transitional housing." Housing and supportive services for
27 an individual that is designed to facilitate the movement of a
28 homeless person to independent living.

29 Section 3. Transitional housing assistance.

30 (a) Establishment.--The department shall establish a program

1 to provide for transitional housing assistance for an eligible
2 person.

3 (b) Amount and use.--Assistance provided under subsection
4 (a) may not exceed \$200 per month for a housing payment.

5 Section 4. Housing voucher.

6 (a) Application.--An eligible person shall apply for housing
7 assistance on an application provided by the department. The
8 application shall include a form completed by the individual
9 providing housing to the eligible person verifying that the
10 eligible person is the individual's tenant or that individual is
11 providing housing to the eligible person.

12 (b) Payment.--Housing payments shall be made directly to the
13 landlord, on behalf of the eligible person.

14 Section 5. Reimbursement.

15 An eligible person who receives housing assistance shall
16 reimburse the department for any funds received under this act
17 upon becoming eligible for Social Security benefits.

18 Reimbursement may be received directly from the Social Security
19 Administration for the eligible person's disability claim.

20 Section 6. Assistance with application for Social Security
21 disability benefits.

22 The department may contract with an appropriate nonprofit
23 entity to provide services to the eligible person for assistance
24 with the application process for disability benefits under the
25 Social Security Act (49 Stat. 620, 42 U.S.C. § 301 et seq.).

26 Section 7. Regulations.

27 The department may promulgate regulations to carry out the
28 provisions of this act.

29 Section 8. Appropriation.

30 The amount of \$35,000,000 shall be transferred from the

1 General Fund to the department to provide housing assistance
2 under this act.
3 Section 40. Effective date.
4 This act shall take effect in 60 days.