
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

SENATE BILL

No. 459 Session of
2017

INTRODUCED BY ARGALL, RAFFERTY, GREENLEAF AND COSTA,
FEBRUARY 28, 2017

REFERRED TO COMMUNITY, ECONOMIC AND RECREATIONAL DEVELOPMENT,
FEBRUARY 28, 2017

AN ACT

1 Establishing the Pennsylvania Neighborhood Restoration Program;
2 and providing for powers and duties of the Department of
3 Community and Economic Development.

4 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
5 hereby enacts as follows:

6 Section 1. Short title.

7 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Pennsylvania
8 Neighborhood Restoration Act.

9 Section 2. Definitions.

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

13 "Accredited architecture program." A program of study
14 leading to a degree in professional architecture at an
15 institution of higher education in this Commonwealth that is
16 accredited by the National Architectural Accrediting Boards,
17 Inc.

18 "Blighted property." Any property described in section 12.1

1 of the act of May 24, 1945 (P.L.991, No.385), known as the Urban
2 Redevelopment Law.

3 "Community design center." A not-for-profit organization
4 operated and managed by a licensed architect that has as a
5 primary function providing design and planning assistance to
6 community groups, not-for-profit organizations, academic
7 institutions and local governments for blighted properties in
8 impoverished areas of this Commonwealth.

9 "Department." The Department of Community and Economic
10 Development of the Commonwealth.

11 "Eligible architectural services." Any of the following:

12 (1) The design and preparation of construction documents
13 for housing facilities, schools, health clinics, libraries,
14 community centers and other public facilities.

15 (2) Public education sessions and community charettes.

16 (3) The development of comprehensive long-range
17 community development plans.

18 (4) The development of plans for neighborhoods that are
19 appropriate for rehabilitation or conservation activities,
20 including neighborhoods that are blighted, deteriorated or
21 deteriorating.

22 (5) The preservation or rehabilitation of historic
23 sites.

24 (6) The design and preparation of construction documents
25 for building retrofits for energy efficiency, water
26 efficiency and conservation improvements.

27 (7) Assessment of the safety of structures that are in
28 disrepair or have been damaged as the result of natural or
29 manmade disasters.

30 (8) The design of improvements that remove material and

1 architectural barriers that restrict the mobility and
2 accessibility of persons with physical disabilities or
3 limitations.

4 (9) Plans for the redevelopment of traditional main
5 streets and business districts.

6 (10) Other services as determined by the Department of
7 Community and Economic Development to further the purpose of
8 this act.

9 "Impoverished area." An area of this Commonwealth that is
10 certified on the basis of Federal census studies and current
11 indices of social and economic conditions by the Department of
12 Community and Economic Development, and the certification is
13 approved by the Governor.

14 "Intern architect." A graduate of an accredited architecture
15 program who is a resident of this Commonwealth and who is
16 enrolled in the National Council of Architectural Registration
17 Boards' Intern Development Program.

18 "Program." The Pennsylvania Neighborhood Restoration Program
19 established under this act.

20 "Qualified applicant." A person who meets all of the
21 following criteria:

22 (1) Is a resident of this Commonwealth.

23 (2) Is an intern architect or architect registered in
24 this Commonwealth.

25 (3) Is employed as a full-time or part-time employee of
26 a registered architectural firm in this Commonwealth.

27 (4) Owes outstanding principal or interest on a
28 qualifying education loan.

29 "Qualifying education loan." A government or commercial loan
30 received by the qualified applicant for tuition, fees, room,

1 board or other reasonable educational expenses incurred while
2 enrolled in an accredited architecture program at a college or
3 university.

4 Section 3. Pennsylvania Neighborhood Restoration Program.

5 (a) Establishment.--The Pennsylvania Neighborhood
6 Restoration Program is established in the Department of
7 Community and Economic Development.

8 (b) Purpose.--The purpose of the program is to encourage
9 qualified applicants to provide eligible architectural services
10 for blighted properties in impoverished areas and to work with
11 community design centers located within this Commonwealth.

12 (c) Loan repayment.--The department may provide funds for
13 qualifying education loan repayment to individuals who meet the
14 requirements of this act. The department shall develop an
15 application process to solicit and review applications from
16 qualified applicants and to award the loan repayment funds.

17 Section 4. Eligibility for program.

18 (a) Application.--A qualified applicant must submit an
19 application to the department for selection to participate in
20 the program. The application shall be submitted at the time, in
21 the manner and contain the information required by the
22 department. At a minimum, the application shall include all of
23 the following:

24 (1) Documentation of full-time or part-time employment
25 with a registered architectural firm in this Commonwealth.

26 (2) Proof of residency in this Commonwealth.

27 (3) Educational transcripts.

28 (4) A signed agreement to provide eligible architectural
29 services in an impoverished area for blighted property or to
30 work with a community design center located in this

1 Commonwealth.

2 (5) Documentation of outstanding qualifying education
3 loans.

4 (6) Acknowledgment that loan repayment funds shall be
5 awarded on a competitive basis to selected applicants, are
6 dependent upon funding availability and shall be provided
7 following completion of eligible architectural services.

8 (7) Two letters of recommendation.

9 (8) A written letter of approval to participate in the
10 program from the architectural firm by which the qualified
11 applicant is employed, if applicable.

12 (b) Contract.--If selected for participation in the program,
13 a qualified applicant shall enter into a written contract with
14 the department to participate in the program.

15 (c) Employment.--A qualified applicant who participates in
16 the program shall agree for two years following the receipt of
17 money under the program to:

18 (1) continue employment with an architectural firm
19 registered in this Commonwealth; and

20 (2) continue residency in this Commonwealth.

21 (d) Promissory notes.--Upon receipt of funds under the
22 program, a qualified applicant who participates in the program
23 shall sign a promissory note to repay to the Commonwealth the
24 full amount awarded to the qualified applicant if employment or
25 residency in this Commonwealth terminates prior to completion of
26 the requirement in subsection (c).

27 (e) Documentation.--The department may require a qualified
28 applicant participating in the program to submit documentation
29 to the department to maintain eligibility for the program.

30 (f) Limitations.--

1 (1) No more than \$10,000 shall be awarded in any one
2 year to a qualified applicant.

3 (2) Payments to a qualified applicant under this program
4 may not exceed the value of the eligible architectural
5 services provided under subsection (a)(4).

6 (3) Participation in the program shall be limited to a
7 total of three consecutive calendar years with a maximum
8 payment under the program of \$25,000 per qualified applicant.

9 (4) The department shall establish procedures for making
10 payments to qualified applicants.

11 (5) A loan repayment may not be made for a loan that is
12 in default at the time of application.

13 (g) Time period.--A qualified applicant shall be eligible
14 for the program regardless of whether the applicant's
15 outstanding qualifying education loan is acquired before or
16 after the effective date of this act. Services provided prior to
17 application and selection for the program may not be eligible
18 for the program.

19 Section 5. Funding.

20 Loan repayment funds under this act may be awarded to the
21 extent that funds are appropriated by the General Assembly or
22 available from other sources and are sufficient to cover the
23 administration of the program.

24 Section 6. Tax applicability.

25 Loan repayment funds under this act may not be considered
26 taxable income for purposes of Article III of the act of March
27 4, 1971 (P.L.6, No.2), known as the Tax Reform Code of 1971.

28 Section 7. Duties of department.

29 The department shall administer the program and shall
30 promulgate any rules, regulations, procedures and forms that are

- 1 necessary to implement this act.
- 2 Section 8. Effective date.
- 3 This act shall take effect in 90 days.