
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 653 Session of
2021

INTRODUCED BY SCHWEYER, A. DAVIS, DEASY, DELLOSO, FREEMAN, HILL-
EVANS, HOHENSTEIN, HOWARD, ISAACSON, KENYATTA, KINSEY, LEE,
ROZZI, SANCHEZ, SCHLOSSBERG, WARREN AND D. WILLIAMS,
FEBRUARY 24, 2021

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES, FEBRUARY 24, 2021

AN ACT

1 Providing for the Emergency COVID-19 Homelessness Grant Program;
2 imposing duties on the Department of Human Services; and
3 making an appropriation.

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 Emergency
8 COVID-19 Homelessness Grant Program Act.

9 Section 2. Declaration of policy.

10 The General Assembly intends that grants provided under the
11 program be used to support a not-for-profit organization, county
12 government or municipal government that provides community-based
13 services, programs and activities conducive to secure shelter,
14 housing, food, essential supplies, public assistance benefits
15 and sanitation and personal hygiene measures to protect the
16 health and well-being of individuals who are homeless.

17 Section 3. Definitions.

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

4 "Department." The Department of Human Services of the
5 Commonwealth.

6 "Individual who is homeless." An individual who:

7 (1) lacks a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime
8 residence;

9 (2) will imminently lose a primary nighttime residence;

10 (3) is an unaccompanied youth under 25 years of age or a
11 member of a family with at least one child, if the
12 unaccompanied youth or family member does not have a
13 residential lease, ownership interest or occupancy agreement
14 in permanent housing or experiences persistent housing
15 instability; or

16 (4) is fleeing domestic or dating violence, sexual
17 assault, stalking or any other violence-related or life-
18 threatening living condition that has taken place within the
19 individual's primary residence.

20 "Personal protective equipment." Equipment worn to minimize
21 exposure to hazards that cause serious injuries and illnesses.

22 "Program." The Emergency COVID-19 Homelessness Grant Program
23 established under this act.

24 Section 4. Establishment of program.

25 A program is established within the department, to be known
26 as the Emergency COVID-19 Homelessness Grant Program, to provide
27 grants in an amount determined by the department to eligible
28 not-for-profit organizations, county governments or municipal
29 governments for community-based services, programs and
30 activities that support individuals who are homeless.

1 Section 5. Applications.

2 (a) Development and availability.--Grant application forms
3 shall be developed by the department and be made available on
4 the department's publicly accessible Internet website.

5 (b) Compliance.--The department shall verify in writing on
6 each grant application that the application complies with all
7 the requirements under section 6.

8 Section 6. Requirements.

9 The department shall award grants to an eligible not-for-
10 profit organization, county government or municipal government
11 that has been approved by the department for any of the
12 following purposes:

13 (1) Shelter or securing part-time or full-time housing.

14 (2) Food and essential supplies.

15 (3) Sanitation and personal hygiene measures, including,
16 but not limited to, outdoor latrines, hand-washing stations
17 and personal protective equipment.

18 (4) Any other related services that support individuals
19 who are homeless.

20 (5) The capital needs of the not-for-profit
21 organization, county government or municipal government,
22 including, but not limited to, administrative costs and
23 payroll.

24 Section 7. Powers and duties of department.

25 The department shall promulgate rules, regulations and
26 directives that the department deems necessary to carry out the
27 provisions of this act.

28 Section 8. Awarding of grants.

29 (a) Authorization.--The department shall award grants to
30 eligible not-for-profit organizations, county governments or

1 municipal governments that have been approved by the department
2 to achieve the purposes specified under this act.

3 (b) Amount.--A grant amount may not exceed a maximum of
4 \$250,000 for each not-for-profit organization, county government
5 or municipal government approved under this act.

6 Section 9. Appropriation.

7 For fiscal year 2021-2022, the sum of \$5,000,000 shall be
8 appropriated from the General Fund to the department for the
9 program.

10 Section 10. Effective date.

11 This act shall take effect immediately.