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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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HOUSE BILL

No. 2744 Session of  
2022

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INTRODUCED BY RABB, BULLOCK, HOHENSTEIN, HILL-EVANS, KINSEY,  
STURLA, SANCHEZ, DELLOSO, KRAJEWSKI, OTTEN AND CEPHAS,  
JULY 13, 2022

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REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY, JULY 13, 2022

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AN ACT

1 Providing for grants to provide legal assistance for resolving  
2 unclear title to real property; establishing the Unclear  
3 Title Grant Program and the Unclear Title Grant Fund; and  
4 making an appropriation.

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

7 Section 1. Short title.

8 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Unclear Title  
9 Grant Fund Act.

10 Section 2. Definitions.

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

14 "Department." The Department of Human Services of the  
15 Commonwealth.

16 "Fund." The Unclear Title Grant Fund established under  
17 section 4(a).

18 "Legal aid entity." A nonprofit network that provides legal

1 services to low-income individuals and is competent to provide  
2 legal assistance to an individual seeking to resolve an unclear  
3 title to real property.

4 "Program." The Unclear Title Grant Program established under  
5 section 3(a).

6 "Real property." As defined under 68 Pa.C.S. § 2103  
7 (relating to definitions).

8 "Unclear title." A deed to real property that bears the name  
9 of someone other than the apparent owner of the property.

#### 10 Section 3. Unclear Title Grant Program.

11 (a) Establishment.--The Unclear Title Grant Program is  
12 established within the department.

13 (b) Grants.--The department shall award grants under the  
14 program to a legal aid entity, as selected under section 6, for  
15 the purpose of providing legal assistance to individuals with an  
16 unclear title to real property in accordance with this act.

17 (c) Use of grants.--

18 (1) Grant money may be used for administrative, legal  
19 and other costs associated with resolving an unclear title to  
20 real property located in this Commonwealth.

21 (2) Grant money may not be used to pay taxes or liens  
22 owed on the real property.

#### 23 Section 4. Unclear Title Grant Fund.

24 (a) Establishment.--The Unclear Title Grant Fund is  
25 established within the State Treasury. Money in the fund shall  
26 be used for the purpose of this act.

27 (b) Appropriation.--Money transferred to the fund under  
28 subsection (c) is appropriated on a continuing basis to the  
29 department to award grants under this act.

30 (c) Transfer.--The sum of \$50,000,000 shall be transferred

1 from the General Fund to the fund.

2 Section 5. Administration.

3 (a) Guidelines.--The department shall develop written  
4 guidelines for the implementation and administration of this  
5 act.

6 (b) Promulgation of regulations.--

7 (1) Subject to paragraph (2), the guidelines under  
8 subsection (a) shall be in effect until such time as the  
9 department promulgates regulations for the implementation and  
10 administration of this act.

11 (2) Within two years of the effective date of this  
12 section, the department shall promulgate regulations for the  
13 implementation and administration of this act.

14 (c) Contents.--The written guidelines and regulations under  
15 this section shall include the following:

16 (1) An application and approval process for awarding a  
17 grant to the legal aid entity selected under section 6. The  
18 application and approval process shall include the ability  
19 for the legal aid entity to apply for grants as needed to  
20 provide legal assistance under this act on a basis as  
21 determined by the department.

22 (2) A method for the legal aid entity to prioritize  
23 providing legal assistance to individuals eligible to receive  
24 legal assistance under section 7 who live in cities of the  
25 first class, second class, second class A or third class.

26 Section 6. Legal aid entity.

27 (a) Selection of legal aid entity.--The department shall  
28 select a legal aid entity, in accordance with subsection (b), to  
29 provide grants in accordance with section 5 for the purpose of  
30 providing legal assistance to individuals in accordance with

1 this act.

2 (b) Requirements of legal aid entity.--The legal aid entity  
3 selected by the department under subsection (a) must be  
4 headquartered in this Commonwealth and be able to provide legal  
5 assistance to individuals seeking to resolve unclear titles to  
6 real property throughout this Commonwealth.

7 Section 7. Eligibility.

8 (a) Eligibility of individuals.--The gross household income  
9 of an applicant to receive legal assistance from a legal aid  
10 entity awarded a grant under this act may not exceed the  
11 following incomes:

12 (1) \$25,760 per year for households with one individual.

13 (2) \$34,840 per year for households with two  
14 individuals.

15 (3) \$43,920 per year for households with three  
16 individuals.

17 (4) \$53,000 per year for households with four  
18 individuals.

19 (5) \$62,080 per year for households with five  
20 individuals.

21 (6) \$71,160 per year for households with six  
22 individuals.

23 (7) \$9,080 per year for each additional individual in  
24 the household after six individuals.

25 (b) Documentation.--Documentation of household income under  
26 subsection (a) must be provided to the legal aid entity.

27 Section 8. Register of wills.

28 (a) Waiver of fees.--Notwithstanding any other provision of  
29 law, a register of wills shall waive probate fees or other  
30 similar county fees under the purview of the register of wills

1 for individuals who are eligible for assistance under section 7.

2 (b) Annual reports.--

3 (1) By December 31 of each year, a register of wills  
4 shall submit an annual report to the county commissioners or  
5 county executive of the county in which the register of wills  
6 serves.

7 (2) Each report under this subsection shall include:

8 (i) The number of fee waivers provided in the past  
9 year.

10 (ii) The dollar amount of the fees waived in the  
11 past year.

12 (iii) Any other information deemed necessary by the  
13 register of wills.

14 (3) Each report under this subsection shall be posted on  
15 the publicly accessible Internet website of the county.

16 Section 9. Effective date.

17 This act shall take effect in 60 days.