



General Assembly

January Session, 2001

Raised Bill No. 6699

LCO No. 3767

Referred to Committee on Select Committee on Housing

Introduced by:
(HSG)

AN ACT CONCERNING THE RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM AND HOUSING FOR ELDERLY PERSONS.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Section 17b-812 of the general statutes is repealed and the
2 following is substituted in lieu thereof:

3 (a) The Commissioner of Social Services shall implement and
4 administer a program of rental assistance for low-income families
5 living in privately-owned rental housing. For the purposes of this
6 section, a low-income family is one whose income does not exceed fifty
7 per cent of the median family income for the area of the state in which
8 such family lives, as determined by the commissioner.

9 (b) Housing eligible for participation in the program shall comply
10 with applicable state and local health, housing, building and safety
11 codes.

12 (c) In addition to an element in which rental assistance certificates
13 are made available to qualified tenants, to be used in eligible housing
14 which such tenants are able to locate, the program may include a

15 housing support element in which rental assistance for tenants is
16 linked to participation by the property owner in other municipal, state
17 or federal housing repair, rehabilitation or financing programs. The
18 commissioner shall use rental assistance under this section so as to
19 encourage the preservation of existing housing and the revitalization
20 of neighborhoods or the creation of additional rental housing.

21 (d) The commissioner shall administer the program under this
22 section to promote housing choice for certificate holders and
23 encourage racial and economic integration. The commissioner shall
24 establish maximum rent levels for each municipality in a manner that
25 promotes the use of the program in all municipalities, provided the
26 maximum rent level for each municipality shall not be less than one
27 hundred ten per cent of the rent levels established by the United States
28 Department of Housing and Urban Development under the Section 8
29 certificate program. Any certificate issued pursuant to this section may
30 be used for housing in any municipality in the state. The commissioner
31 shall inform certificate holders that a certificate may be used in any
32 municipality and, to the extent practicable, the commissioner shall
33 assist certificate holders in finding housing in the municipality of their
34 choice.

35 (e) (1) As used in this subsection:

36 (A) "Eligible household" means a low income family, as defined in
37 subsection (a) of this section, who also meets one or more of the
38 following criteria: (i) A family with housing costs that are more than
39 fifty per cent of household income; (ii) a family that is homeless or at
40 risk of homelessness; (iii) a disabled person, that for purposes of this
41 subdivision means a person with a disability, as defined in the
42 Americans with Disabilities Act, 42 USCA12102; (iv) a family exposed
43 to domestic violence; (v) a family with lead-exposed children; (vi) a
44 family participating in Project CHOICE programs pursuant to section
45 10-266aa; (vii) a family residing in an emergency shelter or
46 participating in a transitional living program; (viii) a family receiving

47 benefits pursuant to section 17b-257 or 17b-78; or (ix) a family with
48 severe housing needs, as determined by the Commissioner of Social
49 Services; and

50 (B) "Support services" means activities that assist eligible
51 households to obtain available community services, such as physical
52 health and behavioral health services, housing mobility counseling,
53 training in independent living skills and tenant responsibilities, peer
54 mentoring and peer counseling, crisis intervention, conflict resolution
55 and mediation, employment training and education, employment
56 counseling and job retention supports.

57 (2) (A) The Commissioner of Social Services shall implement the
58 program of rental assistance with support services pursuant to this
59 subsection for not more than five hundred eligible households living in
60 privately-owned rental housing.

61 (B) The commissioner may contract with an entity to provide rental
62 assistance and support services pursuant to this subsection, and shall
63 consider such entity's demonstrated capability to (i) make available
64 clean and safe rental housing, and (ii) provide one or more support
65 services.

66 (C) On or before January 1, 2003, and annually thereafter, the
67 commissioner shall submit a report to the select committee of the
68 General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to housing,
69 analyzing the ability of the program established pursuant to this
70 subsection to succeed in minimizing or eliminating the need for
71 support services for eligible households.

72 (f) (1) For purposes of this subsection, an "eligible household" means
73 a family whose income does not exceed fifty per cent of the median
74 family income for the area of the state in which such person lives, as
75 determined by the commissioner, provided such family includes a
76 person with psychiatric disabilities or a person with substance abuse
77 disabilities, as defined in section 17a-458.

78 (2) The commissioner shall enter into an interagency agreement
79 with the Commissioner of Mental Health and Addiction Services to
80 implement and administer a program of rental assistance for not more
81 than two hundred fifty eligible persons living in privately-owned
82 rental housing.

83 [(e)] (g) Nothing in this section shall give any person a right to
84 continued receipt of rental assistance at any time that the program is
85 not funded.

86 [(f)] (h) The commissioner shall adopt regulations in accordance
87 with the provisions of chapter 54 to carry out the purposes of this
88 section. The regulations shall establish maximum income eligibility
89 guidelines for such rental assistance and criteria for determining the
90 amount of rental assistance which shall be provided to eligible
91 families. Such regulations shall also include eligibility criteria for
92 providers of rental assistance and support services pursuant to
93 subsection (e) of this section.

94 Sec. 2. Section 8-115a of the general statutes is repealed and the
95 following is substituted in lieu thereof:

96 (a) No housing project or projects for elderly persons shall be
97 developed until the Commissioner of Economic and Community
98 Development has approved the site, the plans and specifications, the
99 estimated development cost, including administrative or other cost or
100 expense to be incurred by the state in connection therewith as
101 determined by said commissioner, and an operation or management
102 plan for such project or projects which shall provide an income,
103 including contributions expected from any source, which shall be
104 adequate for debt service on any notes or bonds issued by an authority
105 to finance such development cost, administration, including a state
106 service charge as established by the commissioner, other operating
107 costs and establishment of reasonable reserves for repairs,
108 maintenance and replacements, vacancy and collection losses. During
109 the period of operation of such project or projects, the authority,

110 municipal developer, nonprofit corporation or housing partnership
111 shall submit to the commissioner for said commissioner's approval its
112 rent schedules and its standards of tenant eligibility and any changes
113 therein, and its proposed budget for each fiscal year, together with
114 such reports and financial and operating statements as the
115 commissioner finds necessary. Such authority, municipal developer,
116 nonprofit corporation or housing partnership shall also annually
117 submit verification that the significant facilities and services required
118 to be provided to the residents of such project pursuant to Title VIII of
119 the Civil Rights Act of 1968, as amended by the Fair Housing
120 Amendments Act of 1988 (42 USC 3600 et seq.) are being provided. On
121 and after July 1, 1997, the maximum income limits for admission to
122 such project shall be eighty per cent of the area median income
123 adjusted for family size.

124 (b) The commissioner shall have the right of inspection of any such
125 project at any time.

126 (c) The commissioner may, for periods of up to one year, authorize a
127 housing authority, municipal developer or nonprofit corporation to
128 admit to such a project persons who are not less than fifty-five years of
129 age and otherwise meet the eligibility requirements for the housing
130 project. The commissioner may only grant such authority upon receipt
131 from a housing authority, municipal developer or nonprofit
132 corporation of an application approved by the chief executive officer of
133 the municipality in which the housing authority, municipal developer
134 or nonprofit corporation is located demonstrating (1) that the housing
135 authority, municipal developer or nonprofit corporation is unable to
136 attract an adequate number of elderly persons to occupy the project
137 and (2) that the housing authority, municipal developer or nonprofit
138 corporation (A) has published a notice, at least once each week during
139 the thirty days preceding the submission of its application, in one or
140 more newspapers having a substantial circulation in the municipality
141 in which the housing project is located, indicating that units in such
142 project are available and (B) has sent such a notice, at least thirty days

143 preceding submission of its application, to each housing authority,
144 municipal developer or nonprofit corporation operating an elderly
145 housing project pursuant to this part and having fifty or more units.
146 No person admitted to such a project pursuant to this subsection shall
147 be evicted from or denied continued occupancy of such project solely
148 because such person is less than sixty-two years of age.

149 (d) (1) For the purposes of this subsection, "seniors" means persons
150 sixty-two years of age or over who lack the amount of income that is
151 necessary, as determined by the authority or nonprofit corporation,
152 subject to approval by the commissioner, to enable them to live in
153 decent, safe and sanitary dwellings without financial assistance as
154 provided under this part, and "nonelderly disabled persons" means
155 persons sixty-one years of age or less who have been certified by the
156 Social Security board as being totally disabled under the federal Social
157 Security Act or certified by any other federal board or agency as being
158 totally disabled.

159 (2) The commissioner shall require each housing authority,
160 municipal developer or nonprofit corporation to give priority in
161 placement to seniors in eighty to eighty-five per cent of the units in
162 such projects. If between eighty and eighty-five per cent of the units in
163 a project are occupied by seniors, then any vacancies may be filled
164 directly from the waiting list. If there are insufficient numbers of
165 seniors to fill eighty per cent of such units, the housing authority,
166 municipal developer or nonprofit corporation shall give priority in
167 placement to nonelderly disabled persons who are fifty-five years of
168 age or over. If there are insufficient numbers of nonelderly disabled
169 persons who are fifty-five years of age or over, the housing authority,
170 municipal developer or nonprofit corporation shall place other
171 nonelderly disabled persons in such units. In any project where seniors
172 occupy more than eighty-five per cent of the units, placement ratios
173 shall not be less than one senior for each nonelderly disabled person.

174 (3) The commissioner shall require each housing authority,

175 municipal developer or nonprofit corporation to give priority in
176 placement to nonelderly disabled persons in fifteen to twenty per cent
177 of the units in such projects. If between fifteen to twenty per cent of the
178 units in a project are occupied by nonelderly disabled persons, then
179 any vacancies may be filled directly from the waiting list. If there are
180 insufficient numbers of nonelderly disabled persons to fill fifteen per
181 cent of such units, the housing authority, municipal developer or
182 nonprofit corporation shall place seniors in such units. In any project
183 where nonelderly disabled persons occupy more than twenty per cent
184 of the units, placement ratios shall not be less than one nonelderly
185 disabled person for each senior.

186 (4) Any person lawfully residing in such projects may not be evicted
187 from or denied continued occupancy of a unit in such projects solely as
188 a result of the priorities in placement established in this subsection.

189 (5) The commissioner may adopt regulations, pursuant to chapter
190 54, to implement the placement priorities established in this
191 subsection. Such regulations may establish placement ratios between
192 seniors and nonelderly disabled persons to provide for an equitable
193 transition to such placement priorities.

194 [(d)] (e) The commissioner is authorized to make orders and to
195 adopt regulations in accordance with chapter 54 with respect to the
196 development and the operation and management of such project or
197 projects by housing authorities, municipal developers, nonprofit
198 corporations and housing partnerships, and to determine the
199 allocation of funds to meet the development costs of such project or
200 projects, including administrative or other costs or expenses to be
201 incurred by the state. Such regulations shall establish maximum
202 income limits for admission to projects that reflect area median
203 incomes, as determined by the Department of Housing and Urban
204 Development.

205 Sec. 3. The sum of thirteen million four hundred fifty thousand
206 dollars is appropriated to the Department of Social Services, from the

207 General Fund, for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2002, for (1) an
208 addition over the current amount for the program of rental assistance
209 for low income families living in privately-owned rental housing, (2)
210 increasing the number of families served by such program, and (3) to
211 provide the support services required pursuant to subsection (e) of
212 section 1 of this act.

213 Sec. 4. The sum of fourteen million five hundred fifty thousand
214 dollars is appropriated to the Department of Social Services, from the
215 General Fund, for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2003, for (1) an
216 addition over the current amount for the program of rental assistance
217 for low income families living in privately-owned rental housing, (2)
218 increasing the number of families served by such program, and (3) to
219 provide the support services required pursuant to subsection (e) of
220 section 1 of this act.

221 Sec. 5. This act shall take effect July 1, 2001.

Statement of Purpose:

To provide for an increase in the number of families served by the state Rental Assistance Program, to make the program more effective by raising the fair market rent levels, to provide supportive services in conjunction with rental assistance, and to set a range of populations for elderly housing projects.

[Proposed deletions are enclosed in brackets. Proposed additions are indicated by underline, except that when the entire text of a bill or resolution or a section of a bill or resolution is new, it is not underlined.]