



# Acts Affecting Housing

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## Notice to Readers

This report summarizes laws passed during the 2018 regular session affecting housing. In each summary, we indicate the public act (PA) or special act (SA) number. We do not include vetoed public acts, unless the legislature overrode the governor's veto.

Not all provisions of the acts are included. Complete summaries of all 2018 Public Acts will be available on OLR's webpage: <http://www.cga.ct.gov/olr>. Readers are encouraged to obtain the full text of acts that interest them from the Connecticut State Library, the House Clerk's Office, or the General Assembly's website (<http://www.cga.ct.gov/default.asp>).

# Table of Contents

<b>Funding for Rehabilitation of Unsafe Homes</b> .....	<b>4</b>
Crumbling Concrete Foundations, Subsidence, and Lead Abatement .....	4
Lead Abatement and Other Environmental Health Concerns.....	4
<b>Group Homes and Supportive Housing</b> .....	<b>4</b>
Intellectual Disability Residential Services Pilot Programs .....	4
Private Providers Operating DDS Group Homes .....	5
Sober Living Homes .....	5
<b>Mortgages and Foreclosures</b> .....	<b>5</b>
Consumer Protections for Reverse Mortgages .....	5
Limitations on Water Pollution Control Authorities' Interest Rates and Foreclosures.....	6
<b>Rental Housing Assistance</b> .....	<b>6</b>
Renters' Rebate Program .....	6
Low- or Moderate-Income Rental Housing for Veterans .....	6
<b>Miscellaneous</b> .....	<b>6</b>
Property Tax Credit for Donations to Community Supporting Organizations .....	6
Recommendations for Housing for People Reentering the Community After Incarceration .....	7
Recommendations for Public Housing Projects for Seniors and People with Disabilities.....	7

## **Funding for Rehabilitation of Unsafe Homes**

### ***Crumbling Concrete Foundations, Subsidence, and Lead Abatement***

Two new acts establish funds to (1) assist homeowners with concrete foundations damaged by the presence of pyrrhotite, (2) assist certain homeowners in New Haven and Woodbridge with structural damage from subsidence or water infiltration, and (3) pay for Department of Housing (DoH) lead abatement activities. One of the new acts capitalizes the fund by imposing a \$12 surcharge on the named insured on certain homeowner's insurance policies issued during the next 11 years. Of the money collected, 85% will be transferred to the Crumbling Concrete Foundations Assistance Fund and used to aid homeowners with crumbling foundations and 15% will be used to assist homeowners with subsidence, water infiltration, or lead abatement.

([PA 18-160](#), insurance surcharge provisions, effective January 1, 2019, and applicable to policies delivered, issued, or renewed on or after that date; [PA 18-160](#), subsidence, water infiltration, and lead abatement provisions, effective upon passage; and [PA 18-179](#), effective January 1, 2019).

### ***Lead Abatement and Other Environmental Health Concerns***

[PA 17-2](#), June Special Session, authorized \$10 million in bonds per FYs 18 and 19 for lead abatement by DoH and the Children's Medical Center's Healthy Homes Program. Two new laws modify how the funds must be used. One designates, for each year, \$7 million of the authorized funds for home lead abatement and the remaining \$3 million for other environmental health and safety concerns, such as mold, pesticides, and radon. But the other, the bond act, also earmarks the \$3 million in FY 19 for grants to certain homebuyers to address blight conditions ([PA 18-52](#), effective upon passage, except the FY 19 authorization takes effect July 1, 2018; [PA 18-178](#), §37, effective July 1, 2018).

## **Group Homes and Supportive Housing**

### ***Intellectual Disability Residential Services Pilot Programs***

A new law requires the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) to establish, within available appropriations, up to three pilot programs that use alternative service models for eligible people with an intellectual disability who are waiting for DDS residential services. The programs must establish and evaluate alternative service models in which people receiving residential services may move, with the consent of the person or the person's legal representative, into more independent, less restrictive settings.

DDS must (1) choose up to three qualified service providers to participate in the pilot program and (2) work in collaboration with advocacy and nonprofit stakeholder organizations to establish the program. The program terminates by July 1, 2021, unless the legislature reauthorizes it. DDS must annually report on the program until it concludes ([SA 18-2](#), § 2, effective July 1, 2018).

### ***Private Providers Operating DDS Group Homes***

A new law allows the DDS commissioner to waive the \$50 application fee for private providers applying for a license to operate DDS group homes. It also specifies that these applications do not need to be notarized, but existing law requires them to be verified by oath ([PA 18-170](#), effective October 1, 2018).

### ***Sober Living Homes***

A new law contains several provisions on the oversight of sober living homes. Among other things, it (1) allows a certified sober living home's owner to report the home's certified status to Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS), (2) requires DMHAS to post on its website a list of these certified homes as well as the number of available beds at each home and update the information weekly, and (3) prohibits operators from advertising or representing the home as being licensed to provide substance use disorder treatment services or publishing claims of a particular outcome for residents.

The new law also requires operators who report their home's certified status to maintain at least two doses of an opioid antagonist (i.e., Narcan) on the premises and train all residents in how to administer it if at least one resident has an opioid use disorder diagnosis ([PA 18-171](#), effective October 1, 2018).

## **Mortgages and Foreclosures**

### ***Consumer Protections for Reverse Mortgages***

A new law expands the counseling and certification requirements for reverse mortgages, a type of mortgage that allows homeowners to convert accumulated home equity into liquid assets. Among other things, it requires prospective applicants or their representatives to receive counseling from a federal Housing and Urban Development-approved agency before a reverse mortgage lender may accept a final loan application or assess any related fees. It also requires lenders to receive and store a signed certification from the applicant stating that the counseling requirements were met. Failure to meet the law's counseling and certification requirements is a violation of the state's unfair trade practices law ([PA 18-38](#), effective October 1, 2018).

## ***Limitations on Water Pollution Control Authorities' Interest Rates and Foreclosures***

A new law institutes a one year delay for foreclosure actions on liens held by water pollution control authorities (WPCAs). It also requires municipalities with a population of at least 100,000 served by a Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA)-regulated private water company to adopt ordinances that (1) restrict foreclosure proceedings for past due sewer fees, (2) lower the interest rate on such fees, (3) limit a WPCA assignee's ability to purchase a foreclosed property, and (4) set financial guidelines that trigger foreclosure for nonpayment ([PA 18-174](#), effective July 1, 2018).

## **Rental Housing Assistance**

### ***Renters' Rebate Program***

A new law eliminates the requirement under the Renters' Rebate Program that the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) annually recover from each municipality 50% of the cost of issuing rent rebates, up to \$250,000. It thus shifts responsibility for funding the program entirely back to the state. Prior law required OPM to recover rebate costs by selecting at least one state grant per municipality from which to withhold funds. The program reimburses income-eligible older adults and totally disabled individuals for rent and utility costs ([PA 18-81](#), § 34, effective July 1, 2018).

### ***Low- or Moderate-Income Rental Housing for Veterans***

A new law gives preference for state-funded low- or moderate-income rental housing to veterans who (1) were discharged under conditions other than dishonorable or for bad conduct and (2) have a qualifying condition (i.e., post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury diagnosis, or certain military sexual trauma experiences) ([PA 18-47](#), § 5, effective October 1, 2018).

## **Miscellaneous**

### ***Property Tax Credit for Donations to Community Supporting Organizations***

A new law allows municipalities to provide a property tax credit to eligible residential property taxpayers who donate to a municipally-approved nonprofit that is organized exclusively to support municipal spending on programs and services (i.e., a "community supporting organization"). The municipality's legislative body must annually approve the credit and determine its amount, which may not exceed the lesser of the amount of property tax owed or 85% of the taxpayer's donation ([PA 18-49](#), § 10, effective July 1, 2018).

## ***Recommendations for Housing for People Reentering the Community After Incarceration***

A new law requires the Commission on Equity and Opportunity to convene a working group to (1) study housing options for people reentering the community after being released from jail or prison and (2) recommend an evidence-based housing policy for them. The working group must submit a report with its recommendations to the Housing Committee by January 1, 2019 ([SA 18-14](#), effective upon passage).

## ***Recommendations for Public Housing Projects for Seniors and People with Disabilities***

[SA 17-19](#) required the housing commissioner, in consultation with Disability Rights Connecticut, Inc. and the departments of Mental Health and Addiction Services, Aging, and Development Services, to study three state-funded housing projects serving the elderly and people with disabilities. Based on the results of this study, a new act requires the commissioner to make recommendations for improving these types of housing projects. The commissioner must submit the report to the Housing Committee by October 1, 2018 ([SA 18-12](#), effective upon passage).

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