



House of Representatives

File No. 905

General Assembly

January Session, 2019

(Reprint of File No. 27)

House Bill No. 7064
As Amended by House Amendment
Schedule "A"

Approved by the Legislative Commissioner
May 16, 2019

***AN ACT CONCERNING MUNICIPAL VETERANS'
REPRESENTATIVES.***

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

1 Section 1. Subsection (b) of section 27-135 of the general statutes is
2 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective*
3 *October 1, 2019*):

4 (b) (1) Any city or town that has not established its own local
5 veterans' advisory committee separate from one or more other cities or
6 towns pursuant to subsection (a) of this section and does not otherwise
7 provide funding for a veterans' service officer shall designate (A) a city
8 or town employee, or (B) a volunteer who is a resident of such city or
9 town, and (i) is a veteran, as defined in subsection (a) of section 27-103,
10 or (ii) has practical experience handling veterans' issues, to serve as a
11 [veterans' service contact person] municipal veterans' representative in
12 such city or town. The Commissioner of Veterans Affairs shall
13 annually send to the chief executive officer of any such city or town an
14 electronic notification of such chief executive officer's duty to so

15 designate a city or town employee or volunteer in accordance with this
16 subsection. Such chief executive officer shall, not later than thirty days
17 after receipt of such notification, submit to the Office of Advocacy and
18 Assistance, as described in subsection (b) of section 27-102l, as
19 amended by this act, the name and electronic mail address of the city
20 or town employee or volunteer so designated. As used in this
21 subdivision, "chief executive officer" means the officer described in
22 section 7-193.

23 (2) [Any city or town employee designated as a veterans' service
24 contact person] Each municipal veterans' representative shall carry out
25 the duties described in subsection (a) of this section and shall complete
26 a training course conducted by the Office of Advocacy and Assistance,
27 as described in subdivision (3) of subsection (b) of section 27-102l, as
28 amended by this act, or attend a training session conducted by the
29 manager of said office, as described in subparagraph (A) of
30 subdivision (2) of subsection (b) of said section. [Each employee so
31 designated prior to July 1, 2016, shall complete such training course
32 prior to January 1, 2017. Each employee so] Each municipal veterans'
33 representative designated on or after [July 1, 2016] October 1, 2019,
34 shall complete such training course not later than one year after the
35 date of such designation. Upon completion of such training course, a
36 [veterans' service contact person] municipal veterans' representative
37 may thereafter receive electronically any new or updated training
38 information from the Office of Advocacy and Assistance and shall not
39 be required to complete any other such training course.

40 (3) Any volunteer designated as a municipal veterans'
41 representative by a city or town pursuant to subdivision (1) of this
42 subsection shall (A) be available to veterans in person, by telephone or
43 by electronic mail for any minimum number of hours per week that
44 the city or town designating the volunteer may establish, and (B) file a
45 performance report each month with the city or town designating the
46 volunteer that includes, but is not limited to, the names of veterans
47 assisted, services or referrals provided and any other information as
48 determined by the city or town.

49 Sec. 2. Subdivisions (1) to (3), inclusive, of subsection (b) of section
50 27-102~~l~~ of the general statutes are repealed and the following is
51 substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2019*):

52 (b) (1) The commissioner may appoint a manager to administer an
53 Office of Advocacy and Assistance for the aid and benefit of veterans
54 and their spouses, eligible dependents and family members. The office
55 shall have a staff of not less than eight men and women, including six
56 veterans' service officers, and clerical personnel. The manager and
57 veterans' service officers shall be veterans, as defined in subsection (a)
58 of section 27-103, or veterans who were awarded the armed forces
59 expeditionary medal for service by the armed forces.

60 (2) (A) The manager shall develop a training module on assisting
61 and serving women veterans with regard to state or federal services or
62 benefits and identifying and advising such veterans of community or
63 nonprofit programs focused on assisting and serving such veterans.
64 The manager shall hold and provide instruction for an annual training
65 session, in accordance with such module, to each veterans' [services]
66 service officer and any [veterans' service contact person] municipal
67 veterans' representative, as described in subsection (b) of section 27-
68 135, as amended by this act, or representative from an Operation
69 Academic Support for Incoming Service Members center at a public
70 institution of higher education in this state.

71 (B) At least one of the veterans' service officers shall be a woman
72 having a demonstrated interest in the concerns of women veterans,
73 who shall be responsible for addressing those concerns, and, effective
74 upon the next opening of a veterans' service officer position occurring
75 on or after July 1, 2010, at least two of the veterans' service officers
76 shall be individuals having bilingual proficiency in English and
77 Spanish, within existing authorized positions. Each veterans' service
78 officer shall (i) successfully complete a course in veterans' benefits not
79 later than one year after commencement of employment, (ii) attend the
80 training session described in subparagraph (A) of this subdivision, and
81 (iii) be assigned to one of the five congressional districts of the state.

82 (3) The office staff shall, at least twice annually, conduct a training
 83 course for any [city or town employee designated a veterans' service
 84 contact person pursuant to subsection (b) of section 27-135] municipal
 85 veterans' representative. The office staff shall include in such training
 86 course a summary of state and federal services and benefits, the duties
 87 to be carried out by each [veterans' service contact person] municipal
 88 veterans' representative, as described in subsection (a) of section 27-
 89 135, and any assistance the office staff may provide to any [veterans'
 90 service contact person] municipal veterans' representative related to
 91 such duties.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>October 1, 2019</i>	27-135(b)
Sec. 2	<i>October 1, 2019</i>	27-1021(b)(1) to (3)

The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact: None

Municipal Impact:

Municipalities	Effect	FY 20 \$	FY 21 \$
Various Municipalities	Potential Savings	Minimal	Minimal

Explanation

The bill results in a potential savings, expected to be less than \$1,000 annually, to municipalities by allowing them to appoint volunteers, rather than employees, as municipal veterans' service contacts.

Any savings would occur if, for example, such municipalities were currently providing paid leave or mileage reimbursement for an employee to attend required training seminars.

House "A" requires volunteer municipal veterans' representatives to 1) be available to veterans in person, by phone or email on a weekly basis, and 2) file a performance report each month with the municipality. This has no fiscal impact, as it impacts unpaid municipal volunteers.

The Out Years

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future subject to inflation.

OLR Bill Analysis**HB 7064 (as amended by House "A")*****AN ACT CONCERNING MUNICIPAL VETERANS' REPRESENTATIVES.****SUMMARY**

Under current law, any municipality that does not have a local veterans' advisory committee (see BACKGROUND) and does not provide funding for a veterans' service officer must designate an employee to serve as a veterans' service contact person. This bill substitutes the term "municipal veterans' representative" for the term "veterans' service contact person," allows volunteers to serve in this position, and subjects them to all the existing training requirements. (The Department of Veterans Affairs Office of Advocacy and Assistance conducts such training at least two times per year.)

Under the bill, a volunteer designated as the municipal veterans' representative must:

1. be a resident of the municipality;
2. be a veteran or have practical experience handling veterans' issues;
3. be available to veterans in person, by phone, or by email for a minimum number of hours per week as the municipality may establish; and
4. file a monthly performance report with the municipality that includes the names of the veterans assisted, services or referrals provided, and any other information as determined by the municipality.

The bill also makes conforming changes.

*House Amendment "A" adds a provision that requires volunteers serving as municipal veterans' representatives to (1) be available to veterans a minimum number of hours per week as the municipality may establish and (2) file a monthly performance report with the municipality.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2019

BACKGROUND

Veterans' Advisory Committee

By law, any municipality may establish a local veterans' advisory committee to, among other things:

1. coordinate reemployment, education, rehabilitation, and adjustment to peacetime living for veterans and their dependents;
2. cooperate with all national, state, and local government and private agencies to secure services and benefits for veterans and their dependents; and
3. encourage and coordinate vocational training services for veterans (CGS § 27-135(a)).

COMMITTEE ACTION

Veterans' Affairs Committee

Joint Favorable
 Yea 16 Nay 0 (02/19/2019)