
OLR Bill Analysis

SB 142

AN ACT ESTABLISHING A HOUSING AUTHORITY RESIDENT QUALITY OF LIFE IMPROVEMENT GRANT PROGRAM AND A HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER TASK FORCE.

SUMMARY

This bill establishes a Department of Housing (DOH) grant program to give housing authorities funding for improvements to their residential buildings. It also creates related requirements for the application process, funding limits, and use of the grants.

The bill also establishes a task force to study the federal Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program (see BACKGROUND) and its implementation in the state. It requires the task force to report its findings and recommendations to the Housing Committee and the state's congressional delegation by January 16, 2025.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

§ 1 — GRANT PROGRAM FOR HOUSING AUTHORITIES

The bill establishes a new grant program to give housing authorities funding for improvements to the residential buildings they manage, as may be recommended by their resident advisory boards (see BACKGROUND). It requires DOH to award program grants within available appropriations and begin accepting applications by October 1, 2024.

Under the bill, housing authorities can apply for a grant by submitting applications to DOH as the commissioner prescribes. The department must evaluate applications and can award up to \$250,000 in total grants under the program per fiscal year. These grants must give an ongoing benefit to residents of the housing authority-managed building or buildings that are to be improved, as determined by the

commissioner.

Additionally, the commissioner may adopt regulations to carry out the program.

§ 2 — HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM TASK FORCE

The bill establishes a 12-member task force to study the federal HCV program and its implementation in the state, including any disparate impacts the program has on the development of at-risk children and youth or families.

Membership, Initial Appointments, and Vacancies

Task force members may be General Assembly members and must include (1) the Housing Committee chairpersons and ranking members, or their designees; (2) two each appointed by the minority leaders of the House and Senate; and (3) one each appointed by the four other legislative leaders. The legislative leaders must make their initial task force appointments within 30 days of the bill's passage and appointing authorities fill vacancies.

Chairpersons, Meetings, and Reporting Requirement

The bill requires the House speaker and Senate minority leader to each select a task force member to serve as a chairperson. The chairpersons must schedule the task force's first meeting and hold it within 60 days of the bill's passage.

The bill requires the task force, by January 16, 2025, to report on its findings and recommendations to the Housing Committee and the state's congressional delegation. The task force terminates when it submits this report or on January 16, 2025, whichever is later. The Housing Committee's administrative staff serves as that of the task force.

BACKGROUND

Resident Advisory Boards

Federal law generally requires public housing agencies (PHAs) to establish at least one resident advisory board to assist and make

recommendations on the development of a PHA's public housing agency plan (42 U.S.C. § 1437c-1(e)). A housing authority in Connecticut that does not administer any federal Housing and Urban Development (HUD) programs or receive HUD funding is not considered a PHA and so is not subject to this requirement.

HCV Program

The HCV program is the federal government's main program for helping very low-income families afford private market housing (42 U.S.C. § 1437f(o)). Eligible households that are issued a housing voucher must find housing that meets the program's requirements. HUD funds the program and it is administered locally by PHAs and statewide by DOH.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Housing Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 12 Nay 3 (02/29/2024)