

SENATE No. 01967

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year Two Thousand Eleven.

AN ACT RELATIVE TO COMMUNITY HOUSING AND SERVICES.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

SECTION 1. The executive office of health and human services, the executive office of housing and economic development, the executive office of elder affairs, the department of veterans' services, the department of housing and community development, the department of transitional assistance, the department of developmental services, the department of mental health, the department of children and families, the department of public health, the Massachusetts rehabilitation commission, the Massachusetts commission for the blind, the Massachusetts commission for the deaf and hard of hearing, the Massachusetts Housing Finance Agency, the Massachusetts housing partnership and the Community Economic Development Assistance Corporation shall develop and execute a memorandum of understanding to be known as the community housing and services memorandum of understanding. The memorandum of understanding shall include an action plan to coordinate the procurement and availability of community-based supportive services, capital subsidies and operating subsidies for new and existing housing available to residents with very low and extremely low-incomes, as those terms are defined by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development in 24 C.F.R. § 5.603. The action plan shall establish benchmarks to assess financial savings to the commonwealth resulting from the avoidance of institutionalization, shelter or nursing care due to the availability of community-based housing supportive services. The memorandum of understanding shall identify and determine methods and procedures for eliminating barriers and reducing fragmentation for the provision of community-based

supportive services and affordable housing. For the purposes of this act, “community-based supportive services” shall include, but not be limited to: resident service coordinators, housing support teams and other models to link very low and extremely low-income tenants with services necessary to maintain their tenancy or direct community-based social services or other services necessary to maintain a successful tenancy; provided, that receipt of services by a tenant with a disability shall not be an eligibility requirement or a requirement of maintaining a tenancy under the action plan.

The community housing and services memorandum of understanding shall be filed with the governor, the lieutenant governor, the joint committee on housing, the joint committee on elder affairs, the joint committee on children, families and persons with disabilities and the house and senate committees on ways and means no later than March 15, 2012.

The memorandum shall facilitate the creation of a demonstration program that creates up to 1,000 units of permanent supportive housing that includes coordinated operating, capital subsidies and voluntary community-based supportive services by March 15, 2015; provided, that the aforementioned agencies shall assess the need for permanent supportive housing to serve the commonwealth’s homeless or at-risk of homelessness, people with disabilities and elders and shall establish a long range target to produce new supportive housing opportunities to meet the commonwealth’s need.

SECTION 2. There shall be, subject to appropriation, a grant program to be known as the community housing supportive services action grant. The grant program shall be administered by the Massachusetts Interagency Council on Housing and Homelessness to support new and existing very low and extremely low-income housing that is developed or provided with service coordination in accordance with the community housing and services memorandum of understanding; provided, that applicants seeking to use these funds in conjunction with a new housing development receiving funds authorized under chapter 119 of the acts of 2008, the Massachusetts rental voucher program or section 8 of the United States Housing Act of 1937, as amended, shall do so by submitting a simultaneous application for the funds; provided further, that housing that requires a tenant with a disability to receive services to maintain the housing shall not be eligible; and provided further, that no greater than 4 per cent of the funds may be used to administer the grant program.