
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 1960 Session of
2015

INTRODUCED BY SCHWEYER, ROZZI, READSHAW, CUTLER, SCHREIBER,
MACKENZIE, O'BRIEN, ACOSTA, BRIGGS, SCHLOSSBERG, YOUNGBLOOD,
THOMAS, FREEMAN, D. COSTA, COHEN, V. BROWN, PAYNE, BULLOCK,
DeLUCA, SIMS, DAVIS, DRISCOLL, DEAN, KORTZ, RADER, GIBBONS,
HARHAI, MAHONEY, KINSEY, MASSER, KILLION, KRUEGER-BRANEKY,
KIM, HARHART, JOZWIAK, FARINA AND WATSON, APRIL 7, 2016

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON VETERANS AFFAIRS AND EMERGENCY
PREPAREDNESS, APRIL 7, 2016

AN ACT

1 Establishing the Veteran Suicide Prevention Grant Program;
2 conferring powers and imposing duties on the Department of
3 Military and Veterans Affairs; and establishing the Veteran
4 Suicide Prevention Fund.

5 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
6 hereby enacts as follows:

7 Section 1. Short title.

8 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Veteran
9 Suicide Prevention Program Act.

10 Section 2. Declaration of policy.

11 The General Assembly finds and declares that it is critical
12 to ensure that all United States military veterans in this
13 Commonwealth and their loved ones have the necessary resources
14 and support when dealing with the invisible wounds of war and
15 that struggling veterans are able to receive needed assistance
16 before reaching a point of despair and taking the irrevocable

1 step of taking their own lives.

2 Section 3. Definitions.

3 The following words and phrases when used in this act shall
4 have the meanings given to them in this section unless the
5 context clearly indicates otherwise:

6 "Department." The Department of Military and Veterans
7 Affairs of the Commonwealth.

8 "Eligible entity." Includes:

9 (1) A not-for-profit organization.

10 (2) A local government agency.

11 (3) A veterans' service organization.

12 (4) A private organization.

13 "Fund." The Veteran Suicide Prevention Fund established in
14 section 5.

15 "Program." The Veteran Suicide Prevention Grant Program
16 established in section 4.

17 Section 4. Program.

18 (a) Program established.--The Veteran Suicide Prevention
19 Grant Program is established. The program shall be administered
20 by the department in accordance with this act. The goal of the
21 program is to provide funding for community-based services,
22 programs and activities that will reduce the rate of suicide
23 among veterans in this Commonwealth.

24 (b) Award of grants.--The department may award grants
25 annually to eligible entities. Grant funds shall be used to
26 support programs and activities designed to prevent veteran
27 suicide, including the following:

28 (1) Suicide prevention support groups.

29 (2) Depression screenings.

30 (3) Suicide prevention or crisis hotline.

1 (4) Suicide prevention education and outreach.

2 (5) Any other related services that provide suicide
3 prevention and support to veterans and their families.

4 (c) Amount.--The amount of a grant may not exceed \$25,000
5 for each eligible entity approved by the department.

6 (d) Compliance.--The department shall document compliance of
7 each grant recipient with the requirements of this act.

8 (e) Application forms.--Grant application forms shall be
9 developed by the department and made available on the
10 department's publicly accessible Internet website.

11 Section 5. Veteran Suicide Prevention Fund.

12 (a) Fund established.--The Veteran Suicide Prevention Fund
13 is established in the State Treasury.

14 (b) Source of fund money.--The fund shall consist of revenue
15 from fees allocated under this section and gifts, grants,
16 bequests or devises from any source, including funds from the
17 Federal Government and the State government.

18 (c) Fee increase.--The fee imposed by the Department of
19 Health for each of the following shall be increased by \$2:

20 (1) The issuance of a certified copy of a birth record
21 under section 609-A(6) of the act of April 9, 1929 (P.L.177,
22 No.175), known as The Administrative Code of 1929.

23 (2) The issuance of a certified copy of a death record
24 under section 609-A(6) of The Administrative Code of 1929.

25 (d) Allocation.--The additional amounts collected by the
26 Department of Health in accordance with subsection (c) shall be
27 allocated to the fund.

28 (e) Deposits.--

29 (1) The Department of Health shall determine on a
30 monthly basis the amount to be allocated under subsection (d)

1 and report the amount to the State Treasurer.

2 (2) The State Treasurer shall transfer the amount
3 collected to the fund.

4 (f) Use of fund money.--Money in the fund shall be used
5 exclusively for the program, and no more than 5% may be expended
6 for costs of the department in administering the program.

7 Section 6. Restriction.

8 Grant funds may not be used for the capital needs of an
9 eligible entity.

10 Section 7. Department authority.

11 The department may promulgate regulations and issue
12 guidelines and directives as deemed necessary to carry out the
13 provisions of this act.

14 Section 8. Effective date.

15 This act shall take effect in 60 days.