

---

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

---

SENATE BILL

No. 1170 Session of  
2015

---

INTRODUCED BY ARGALL, GREENLEAF AND COSTA, MARCH 22, 2016

---

REFERRED TO COMMUNITY, ECONOMIC AND RECREATIONAL DEVELOPMENT,  
MARCH 22, 2016

---

AN ACT

1 Establishing the Pennsylvania Neighborhood Restoration Act; and  
2 providing for powers and duties of the Department of  
3 Community and Economic Development.

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

6 Section 1. Short title.

7 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Pennsylvania  
8 Neighborhood Restoration Act.

9 Section 2. Definitions.

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

13 "Accredited architecture program." A program of study  
14 leading to a degree in professional architecture at an  
15 institution of higher education in this Commonwealth that is  
16 accredited by the National Architectural Accrediting Boards,  
17 Inc.

18 "Blighted property." Any property described in section 12.1

1 of the act of May 24, 1945 (P.L.991, No.385), known as the Urban  
2 Redevelopment Law.

3 "Community design center." A not-for-profit organization  
4 operated and managed by a licensed architect that has as a  
5 primary function providing design and planning assistance to  
6 community groups, not-for-profit organizations, academic  
7 institutions and local governments for blighted properties in  
8 impoverished areas of this Commonwealth.

9 "Department." The Department of Community and Economic  
10 Development of the Commonwealth.

11 "Eligible architectural services." Any of the following:

12 (1) The design and preparation of construction documents  
13 for housing facilities, schools, health clinics, libraries,  
14 community centers and other public facilities.

15 (2) Public education sessions and community charettes.

16 (3) The development of comprehensive long-range  
17 community development plans.

18 (4) The development of plans for neighborhoods that are  
19 appropriate for rehabilitation or conservation activities,  
20 including neighborhoods that are blighted, deteriorated or  
21 deteriorating.

22 (5) The preservation or rehabilitation of historic  
23 sites.

24 (6) The design and preparation of construction documents  
25 for building retrofits for energy efficiency, water  
26 efficiency and conservation improvements.

27 (7) Assessment of the safety of structures that are in  
28 disrepair or have been damaged as the result of natural or  
29 manmade disasters.

30 (8) The design of improvements that remove material and

1 architectural barriers that restrict the mobility and  
2 accessibility of persons with physical disabilities or  
3 limitations.

4 (9) Plans for the redevelopment of traditional main  
5 streets and business districts.

6 (10) Other services as determined by the Department of  
7 Community and Economic Development to further the purpose of  
8 this act.

9 "Impoverished area." An area of this Commonwealth that is  
10 certified as an impoverished area by the Department of Community  
11 and Economic Development, and the certification is approved by  
12 the Governor. Certification shall be made on the basis of  
13 Federal census studies and current indices of social and  
14 economic conditions.

15 "Intern architect." A graduate of an accredited architecture  
16 program who is a resident of this Commonwealth and who is  
17 enrolled in the National Council of Architectural Registration  
18 Boards' Intern Development Program.

19 "Program." The Pennsylvania Neighborhood Restoration Program  
20 established under this act.

21 "Qualified applicant." A person who meets all of the  
22 following criteria:

23 (1) Is a resident of this Commonwealth.

24 (2) Is an intern architect or architect registered in  
25 this Commonwealth.

26 (3) Is employed as a full-time or part-time employee of  
27 a registered architectural firm in this Commonwealth.

28 (4) Owes outstanding principal or interest on a  
29 qualifying education loan.

30 "Qualifying education loan." A government or commercial loan

1 received by the qualified applicant for tuition, fees, room,  
2 board or other reasonable educational expenses incurred while  
3 enrolled in an accredited architecture program at a college or  
4 university.

5 Section 3. Pennsylvania Neighborhood Restoration Program.

6 (a) Establishment.--The Pennsylvania Neighborhood  
7 Restoration Program is established in the Department of  
8 Community and Economic Development.

9 (b) Purpose.--The purpose of the program is to encourage  
10 qualified applicants to provide eligible architectural services  
11 for blighted properties in impoverished areas and to work with  
12 community design centers located within this Commonwealth.

13 (c) Loan repayment.--The department may provide funds for  
14 qualifying education loan repayment to individuals who meet the  
15 requirements of this act. The department shall develop an  
16 application process to solicit and review applications from  
17 qualified applicants and to award the loan repayment funds.

18 Section 4. Eligibility for program.

19 (a) Application.--A qualified applicant must submit an  
20 application to the department for selection to participate in  
21 the program. The application shall be submitted at the time, in  
22 the manner and contain the information required by the  
23 department. At a minimum, the application shall include all of  
24 the following:

25 (1) Documentation of full-time or part-time employment  
26 with a registered architectural firm in this Commonwealth.

27 (2) Proof of residency in this Commonwealth.

28 (3) Educational transcripts.

29 (4) A signed agreement to provide eligible architectural  
30 services in an impoverished area for blighted property or to

1 work with a community design center located in this  
2 Commonwealth.

3 (5) Documentation of outstanding qualifying education  
4 loans.

5 (6) Acknowledgment that loan repayment funds shall be  
6 awarded on a competitive basis to selected applicants, are  
7 dependent upon funding availability and shall be provided  
8 following completion of eligible architectural services.

9 (7) Two letters of recommendation.

10 (8) Written letter of approval to participate in the  
11 program from the architectural firm by which the qualified  
12 applicant is employed, if applicable.

13 (b) Contract.--If selected for participation in the program,  
14 a qualified applicant shall enter into a written contract with  
15 the department to participate in the program.

16 (c) Employment.--A qualified applicant who participates in  
17 the program shall agree for two years following the receipt of  
18 money under the program to:

19 (1) continue employment with an architectural firm  
20 registered in this Commonwealth; and

21 (2) continue residency in this Commonwealth.

22 (d) Promissory notes.--Upon receipt of funds under the  
23 program, a qualified applicant who participates in the program  
24 shall sign a promissory note to repay to the Commonwealth the  
25 full amount awarded to the qualified applicant if employment or  
26 residency in this Commonwealth terminates prior to completion of  
27 the requirement in subsection (c).

28 (e) Documentation.--The department may require a qualified  
29 applicant participating in the program to submit documentation  
30 to the department to maintain eligibility for the program.

1 (f) Limitations.--

2 (1) No more than \$10,000 shall be awarded in any one  
3 year to a qualified applicant.

4 (2) Payments to a qualified applicant under this program  
5 may not exceed the value of the eligible architectural  
6 services provided under subsection (a)(4).

7 (3) Participation in the program shall be limited to a  
8 total of three consecutive calendar years with a maximum  
9 payment under the program of \$25,000 per qualified applicant.

10 (4) The department shall establish procedures for making  
11 payments to qualified applicants.

12 (5) A loan repayment may not be made for a loan that is  
13 in default at the time of application.

14 (g) Time period.--A qualified applicant shall be eligible  
15 for the program regardless of whether the applicant's  
16 outstanding qualifying education loan is acquired before or  
17 after the effective date of this act. Services provided prior to  
18 application and selection for the program may not be eligible  
19 for the program.

20 Section 5. Funding.

21 Loan repayment funds under this act may be awarded to the  
22 extent that funds are appropriated by the General Assembly or  
23 available from other sources and are sufficient to cover the  
24 administration of the program.

25 Section 6. Tax applicability.

26 Loan repayment funds under this act may not be considered  
27 taxable income for purposes of Article III of the act of March  
28 4, 1971 (P.L.6, No.2), known as the Tax Reform Code of 1971.

29 Section 7. Duties of department.

30 The department shall administer the program and shall

1 promulgate any rules, regulations, procedures and forms that are  
2 necessary to implement this act.  
3 Section 8. Effective date.  
4 This act shall take effect in 90 days.