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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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SENATE BILL

No. 524 Session of  
2023

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INTRODUCED BY KEARNEY, CAPPELLETTI, MUTH, L. WILLIAMS, HAYWOOD,  
SAVAL, STREET, FONTANA AND KANE, MARCH 15, 2023

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REFERRED TO COMMUNITY, ECONOMIC AND RECREATIONAL DEVELOPMENT,  
MARCH 15, 2023

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AN ACT

1 Amending Title 54 (Names) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated  
2 Statutes, providing for Compassionate Name Change Assistance  
3 Grant Program and for powers and duties of Department of  
4 Community and Economic Development; establishing the  
5 Compassionate Name Change Assistance Grant Fund; and making  
6 an appropriation.

7 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
8 hereby enacts as follows:

9 Section 1. Title 54 of the Pennsylvania Consolidated  
10 Statutes is amended by adding a chapter to read:

11 CHAPTER 7A

12 COMPASSIONATE NAME CHANGE ASSISTANCE GRANT PROGRAM

13 Sec.

14 7A01. Definitions.

15 7A02. Compassionate Name Change Assistance Grant Program.

16 7A03. Compassionate Name Change Assistance Grant Fund.

17 7A04. Administration.

18 § 7A01. Definitions.

19 The following words and phrases when used in this chapter

1 shall have the meanings given to them in this section unless the  
2 context clearly indicates otherwise:

3 "Department." The Department of Community and Economic  
4 Development of the Commonwealth.

5 "Eligible applicant." A nonprofit organization or a county  
6 or municipal government.

7 "Eligible assistance program." A program providing supports  
8 and guidance, which is informational, emotional, social, legal  
9 or otherwise in nature, to individuals who confront biases or  
10 inequalities based on gender or sexual stereotypes in navigating  
11 the name change process in this Commonwealth.

12 "Fund." The Compassionate Name Change Assistance Grant Fund  
13 established under section 7A03 (relating to Compassionate Name  
14 Change Assistance Grant Fund).

15 "Grant program." The Compassionate Name Change Assistance  
16 Grant Program established under section 7A02 (relating to  
17 Compassionate Name Change Assistance Grant Program).

18 "Nonprofit organization." A corporation or other entity  
19 based in this Commonwealth which is an exempt organization as  
20 defined under 26 U.S.C. § 501(c)(3) (relating to exemption from  
21 tax on corporations, certain trusts, etc.).

22 § 7A02. Compassionate Name Change Assistance Grant Program.

23 (a) Establishment.--The Compassionate Name Change Assistance  
24 Grant Program is established as a competitive grant program  
25 within the department.

26 (b) Eligible uses of grant money.--Grants under the grant  
27 program may only be used for the costs of administering an  
28 eligible assistance program.

29 (c) Department powers and duties.--The department has the  
30 following powers and duties:

1       (1) The department shall provide grants under the grant  
2 program in accordance with this chapter to eligible  
3 applicants to administer eligible assistance programs.

4       (2) The department shall determine the form and manner  
5 by which an eligible applicant may apply for funding under  
6 section 7A04 (relating to administration). The application  
7 shall be posted on the department's publicly accessible  
8 Internet website.

9       (3) The department may establish guidelines for  
10 implementing the grant program under this section. The  
11 guidelines shall be posted on the department's publicly  
12 accessible Internet website.

13 § 7A03. Compassionate Name Change Assistance Grant Fund.

14       (a) Establishment.--The Compassionate Name Change Assistance  
15 Grant Fund is established as a separate account in the State  
16 Treasury.

17       (b) Appropriation.--All money deposited into the fund and  
18 the interest the money accrues shall be appropriated to the  
19 department on a continuing basis to award grants under this  
20 chapter. The appropriation shall not lapse at the end of any  
21 fiscal year.

22       (c) Transfers from General Fund.--In addition to any amounts  
23 otherwise authorized to be appropriated or made available to the  
24 fund for the grant program, the sum of \$2,000,000 is  
25 appropriated to the fund from the General Fund to fund the grant  
26 program.

27       (d) Appropriation by the General Assembly.--Beginning with  
28 the 2023-2024 fiscal year, the General Assembly may appropriate  
29 money to the fund.

30       (e) Administrative costs.--No more than 1% of the fund may

1 be used for reasonable administrative costs.

2 § 7A04. Administration.

3 (a) Applications.--An application for a grant under this  
4 chapter shall be submitted by an eligible applicant in the form  
5 and manner prescribed by the department.

6 (b) Application period.--Beginning no later than 180 days  
7 after the effective date of this section, the department shall  
8 begin accepting and processing applications on a rolling basis  
9 until the grant program funding available for the fiscal year  
10 has been exhausted.

11 (c) Review process.--The department shall review  
12 applications and make awards subject to subsection (d) on a  
13 rolling basis. The department shall approve or deny an  
14 application no later than 30 days after the receipt of the  
15 application. An eligible applicant may revise and resubmit a  
16 denied application to the department.

17 (d) Allocation.--An eligible applicant may not receive more  
18 than the following amounts in any fiscal year:

19 (1) Subject to paragraphs (2) and (3):

20 (i) The minimum grant amount awarded shall be no  
21 less than \$5,000.

22 (ii) The maximum grant amount awarded may not be  
23 more than \$100,000.

24 (2) The department may award a grant of no more than  
25 \$75,000 to eligible applicants that are headquartered within  
26 a city of the first class or second class.

27 (3) The department may award a grant of between \$75,001  
28 and \$100,000 inclusive to eligible applicants that are:

29 (i) headquartered outside of a city of the first  
30 class or second class; or

1 (ii) implementing a new eligible assistance program  
2 for the first time in the same fiscal year for which the  
3 grant is awarded.

4 (e) Limitations.--The following apply to grant applications:

5 (1) The department may not provide grants in excess of  
6 the amount of the fund.

7 (2) The department may prorate the grant amount to an  
8 eligible applicant.

9 (3) The department may only award a grant to an eligible  
10 applicant that establishes to the department that the  
11 administration of its eligible assistance program involves at  
12 least one resident of this Commonwealth who identifies as  
13 transgender or nonbinary with specialized experience in  
14 assisting individuals who confront biases or inequalities  
15 based on gender or sexual stereotypes in navigating the name  
16 change process in this Commonwealth.

17 (f) Evaluation.--The department shall evaluate the  
18 utilization of the grant program money, including an analysis of  
19 the total amount of grants awarded, each eligible applicant that  
20 received a grant and the efficacy of the eligible assistance  
21 programs funded through the grant program, based on  
22 disaggregated data. The department shall conduct the evaluation,  
23 at a minimum, every three years after the establishment of the  
24 grant program and shall post the evaluation on the department's  
25 publicly accessible Internet website.

26 Section 2. This act shall take effect immediately.