

HOUSE BILL 749

By Alexander

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 4 and Title 58, relative to veterans services.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 58, Chapter 3, is amended by adding the following as a new section:

(a) There is created the office of veteran comprehensive services coordination and grant administration within the department of veterans services.

(b)

(1) The purpose of the office is to identify and provide financial grants to nonprofit corporations organized and operating in this state that provide comprehensive services to veterans in this state.

(2) Subject to appropriations, the office shall disburse direct grants to nonprofit veteran comprehensive service providers organized and operating in this state. Each year, the office shall strive to disburse no less than three (3) grants in equal amounts.

(c)

(1) No later than September 1, 2017, the commissioner shall hire a director of the office of veteran comprehensive services coordination and grant administration.

(2) The director must possess those job qualifications minimally required to carry out the purposes of this section and the functions of the office, as determined by the department of veterans services.

(3) The department of veterans services shall fix the compensation of the director at a reasonable amount commensurate with the director's duties and responsibilities and the services rendered.

(d) As used in this section, "nonprofit veteran comprehensive service provider" means a nonprofit corporation organized and operating in this state, which, alone or through a joint venture with other nonprofit corporations, faith-based organizations, or service providers, provides at least the following services:

(1) Counseling services, whether individualized or through veteran support groups;

(2)

(A) Provision or coordination of transitional housing for veterans or the development or management of affordable veterans community housing, including apartments, condominiums, homes, or group homes; or

(B) Development and management of affordable housing where at least fifty percent (50%) of the tenants, occupants, owners, renters, or lessees of the housing units are rented, leased, or sold to, or occupied by, a veteran;

(3) Transportation services for veterans and veteran service providers for:

(A) Outreach to identify and consult with veterans, set up informational screenings, and establish contact and veteran status information to help veterans file for veterans' benefits and prepare for employment, housing, credit, counseling, educational, and income opportunities;

(B) Transporting veterans to and from transitional housing and counseling, medical care, educational facilities, job interviews, and employment; and

(C) Extending transportation services to veterans who do not have adequate, regular, or convenient transportation available to them;

(4) Educating veterans, including homeless and disabled veterans, veterans' families, and the public on resources available to assist veterans in addressing their comprehensive needs;

(5) Income opportunities or job or career employment counseling, coaching, and mentoring for veterans, particularly homeless veterans;

(6) Educational services consisting of:

(A) Counseling, including transitional and screening counseling, for veterans to qualify for educational benefits; and

(B) Communication assistance with vocational educational facilities, community colleges, colleges, and universities in this state and such institutions' offices of veteran student affairs;

(7) Developing veterans' publications and performing printing services for veterans and veterans' organizations, and other nonprofit or faith-based organizations assisting veterans, and which publications provide information to veterans, veterans' families, and caregivers in this state regarding comprehensive services available to veterans; and

(8) Employment services through independent contractor or supervised, on-site job opportunities in conjunction with veteran housing development projects, transitional housing locations, or the management, maintenance, or

supplying of other services related to the provision of veteran housing and  
veteran support services.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2017, the public welfare requiring it.