

By Senator Smith

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A bill to be entitled
An act relating to rental assistance for veterans;
creating s. 420.54, F.S.; providing legislative
findings; creating the Veterans' Rental Assistance
Grant Program; authorizing the Florida Housing Finance
Corporation to provide certain grants to eligible
applicants for a specified purpose; providing
eligibility requirements for the program; authorizing
rulemaking; providing an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Section 420.54, Florida Statutes, is created to
read:

420.54 Veterans' Rental Assistance Grant Program.—

(1) The Legislature finds that:

(a) Honorably discharged veterans have earned and deserve
the highest level of social welfare support.

(b) Honorably discharged veterans deserve reasonable access
to housing.

(c) Some honorably discharged veterans are only able to
secure housing through renting.

(d) Lower-income, honorably discharged veterans may not
have the financial means to provide a security deposit and first
and last month's rent, which many landlords require before
issuing a lease.

(e) Providing rental assistance for eligible honorably
discharged veterans would help eliminate barriers to housing.

(2) The Veterans' Rental Assistance Grant Program is

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created to provide security deposit assistance for low-income,
honorably discharged veterans.

(3) The Florida Housing Finance Corporation is authorized to provide one-time grants under the program from funds of the corporation in amounts up to \$2,000 to eligible applicants for the purpose of assisting in the payment of security deposits for rental housing.

(4) To be eligible to receive a rental assistance grant under this section, a person must meet all of the following requirements:

(a) Be an honorably discharged veteran of a branch of the United States Armed Forces. A DD-214 form issued at the time of separation is required as proof of honorable discharge from a branch of the United States Armed Forces. However, if a DD-214 form is not available, other documentation may be acceptable if recognized by the United States Department of Defense or the United States Department of Veterans Affairs, as determined by the Florida Housing Finance Corporation.

(b) Be a resident of this state. A Florida driver license or Florida identification card is required as proof of residency.

(c) Have an annual household income that is at or below 140 percent of the area median income. Annual household income must be verified in the manner required by the Florida Housing Finance Corporation, which may include background checks and a review of documentation such as bank statements and W-2 forms.

(d) Apply to the Florida Housing Finance Corporation in the manner prescribed by the corporation.

(5) The Florida Housing Finance Corporation may adopt rules

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59 to implement this section.

60 Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2026.