

Veteran Housing Amendments

2025 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

Chief Sponsor: Jennifer Dailey-Provost

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LONG TITLE**General Description:**

This bill addresses veteran homelessness.

Highlighted Provisions:

This bill:

- requires the Utah Homeless Services Board and the Department of Veterans and Military Affairs to work in conjunction to create best practices for assisting veterans experiencing homelessness; and
- makes technical and conforming changes.

Money Appropriated in this Bill:

None

Other Special Clauses:

None

Utah Code Sections Affected:**AMENDS:**

35A-16-205, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2024, Chapters 204, 338 and 349

71A-1-201, as enacted by Laws of Utah 2023, Chapter 44 and last amended by Coordination Clause, Laws of Utah 2023, Chapter 154

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Be it enacted by the Legislature of the state of Utah:

Section 1. Section **35A-16-205** is amended to read:

35A-16-205 . Duties of the board.

(1) The board:

(a) shall provide final approval for:

- (i) a funding formula developed by the steering committee under Section 35A-16-211;
- (ii) the homeless services budget;
- (iii) the strategic plan; and
- (iv) the awarding of funding for the provision of homeless services as described in Subsection 35A-16-203(1)(d);

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- 31 (b) in cooperation with the coordinator, shall:
- 32 (i) develop and maintain the homeless services budget;
- 33 (ii) develop and maintain the strategic plan; and
- 34 (iii) review applications and approve funding for the provision of homeless services
- 35 in the state as described in Subsection 35A-16-203(1)(d);
- 36 (c) shall review local and regional plans for providing services to individuals
- 37 experiencing homelessness;
- 38 (d) shall cooperate with local homeless councils to:
- 39 (i) develop a common agenda and vision for reducing homelessness in each local
- 40 oversight body's respective region;
- 41 (ii) as part of the homeless services budget, develop a spending plan that coordinates
- 42 the funding supplied to local stakeholders; and
- 43 (iii) align local funding to projects that improve outcomes and target specific needs in
- 44 each community;
- 45 (e) shall coordinate gap funding with private entities for providing services to
- 46 individuals experiencing homelessness;
- 47 (f) shall recommend performance and accountability measures for service providers,
- 48 including the support of collecting consistent and transparent data;
- 49 (g) when reviewing and giving final approval for requests as described in Subsection
- 50 35A-16-203(1)(d):
- 51 (i) may only recommend funding if the proposed recipient has a policy to share
- 52 client-level service information with other entities in accordance with state and
- 53 federal law to enhance the coordination of services for individuals who are
- 54 experiencing homelessness; and
- 55 (ii) shall identify specific targets and benchmarks that align with the strategic plan for
- 56 each recommended award;
- 57 (h) shall regularly update the state strategic plan on homelessness to reflect proven
- 58 strategies to reduce homelessness among:
- 59 (i) the unsheltered;
- 60 (ii) the chronically or episodically homeless; and
- 61 (iii) the situationally homeless;
- 62 (i) shall develop annual state and local goals for reducing homelessness among the target
- 63 subpopulations identified by the board;
- 64 (j) shall work with the local homeless councils to carry out the requirements of

- 65 Subsection 35A-16-211(3);
- 66 (k) shall develop metrics for measuring the effectiveness of providers in assisting clients
67 to successfully progress through the services coordinated by a continuum of care;
- 68 (l) shall create best practices for a service provider to administer services to an
69 individual experiencing homelessness, including promotion of:
- 70 (i) a recognition of the human dignity of clients served;
- 71 (ii) a need to develop self-reliance;
- 72 (iii) the value of work;
- 73 (iv) personal accountability; and
- 74 (v) personal progress toward greater personal independence;
- 75 (m) shall make recommendations for uniform standards for enforcing pedestrian safety
76 and camping laws and ordinances;
- 77 (n) shall identify best practices for responding to unsheltered individuals experiencing
78 mental health disorder and substance use disorder;
- 79 (o) shall make recommendations for strategies to reduce illegal drug use within
80 homeless shelters, transitional housing, and permanent supportive housing;
- 81 (p) shall facilitate client connection to alternative support systems, including behavioral
82 health services, addiction recovery, and residential services;
- 83 (q) shall facilitate participation in HMIS, where appropriate and in alignment with
84 established HMIS policies, and data sharing agreements among all participants in a
85 client support network, including homeless services, physical health systems, mental
86 health systems, and the criminal justice system;
- 87 (r) shall make recommendations to the office for defining "successful exit,"
88 "unsuccessful exit," and "neutral exit";
- 89 (s) shall evaluate additional opportunities for the office to become a collaborative
90 applicant;
- 91 (t) shall coordinate with the continuums of care to provide for cooperative distribution of
92 available funding;
- 93 (u) shall work in conjunction with the executive directors of the Department of
94 Workforce Services, the Department of Health and Human Services, and the
95 Department of Corrections to create best practices for helping individuals exiting
96 from incarceration or an institution to avoid homelessness;[-and]
- 97 (v) shall establish standards for the prioritization of beds located in homeless shelters in
98 accordance with Section 35A-16-205.1; and

99 (w) shall work in conjunction with the Department of Veterans and Military Affairs to
 100 create best practices for helping veterans, as that term is defined in Section 68-3-12.5,
 101 avoid homelessness.

102 (2)(a) In approving a funding formula, as described in Subsection (1)(a)(i), the board
 103 shall take action on a proposed funding formula by a two-thirds vote.

104 (b) If the board cannot approve a proposed funding formula, the board shall refer the
 105 proposed funding formula back to the steering committee for further consideration.

106 (3)(a) The executive committee shall act in an advisory capacity for the board and make
 107 recommendations regarding the board's duties under Subsection (1).

108 (b) The executive committee does not have authority to make decisions independent of
 109 the board.

110 Section 2. Section **71A-1-201** is amended to read:

111 **71A-1-201 . Department of Veterans and Military Affairs -- Creation --**

112 **Appointment of executive director -- Department responsibilities.**

113 (1) There is created the Department of Veterans and Military Affairs.

114 (2) The governor shall appoint an executive director for the department who is subject to
 115 Senate confirmation.

116 (3) The executive director shall be a veteran.

117 (4) The department shall:

118 (a) conduct and supervise all veteran and military affairs activities as provided in this
 119 title;

120 (b) adopt rules in accordance with Title 63G, Chapter 3, Utah Administrative
 121 Rulemaking Act, to carry out the provisions of this title;

122 (c) in accordance with Section 41-1a-418:

123 (i) determine which campaign or combat theater awards are eligible for a special
 124 group license plate;

125 (ii) verify that an applicant for a campaign or combat theater award special group
 126 license plate is qualified to receive it; and

127 (iii) provide an applicant that qualifies a form indicating the campaign or combat
 128 theater award special group license plate for which the applicant qualifies;

129 (d) maintain liaison with local, state, and federal veterans agencies and with Utah
 130 veterans organizations;

131 (e) provide current information to veterans, service members, their surviving spouses
 132 and family members, and Utah veterans and military organizations on benefits they

- 133 are entitled to;
- 134 (f) assist veterans, service members, and their families in applying for benefits and
135 services;
- 136 (g) cooperate with other state entities in the receipt of information to create and maintain
137 a record of veterans in Utah;
- 138 (h) create and administer a veterans assistance registry in accordance with Chapter 5,
139 Veterans Assistance Registry, with recommendations from the council, that provides
140 contact information to the qualified donors of materials and labor for certain qualified
141 recipients;
- 142 (i) identify military-related issues, challenges, and opportunities, and develop plans for
143 addressing them;
- 144 (j) develop, coordinate, and maintain relationships with military leaders of Utah military
145 installations, including the Utah National Guard;
- 146 (k) develop and maintain relationships with military-related organizations in Utah; ~~and~~
- 147 (l) consult with municipalities and counties regarding compatible use plans as described
148 in Sections 10-9a-537 and 17-27a-533; and
- 149 (m) work in conjunction with the Utah Homeless Services Board to create best practices
150 for helping veterans, as that term is defined in Section 68-3-12.5, avoid homelessness.
- 151 (5)(a) The department may award grants for the purpose of supporting veteran and
152 military outreach, employment, education, healthcare, homelessness prevention, and
153 recognition events.
- 154 (b) The department may award a grant described in Subsection (5)(a) to:
- 155 (i) an institution of higher education listed in Section 53B-1-102;
- 156 (ii) a nonprofit organization involved in veterans or military-related activities; or
- 157 (iii) a political subdivision of the state.
- 158 (c) In accordance with Title 63G, Chapter 3, Utah Administrative Rulemaking Act, the
159 department shall make rules for the administration of grants, including establishing:
- 160 (i) the form and process for submitting an application to the department;
- 161 (ii) the method and criteria for selecting a grant recipient;
- 162 (iii) the method and formula for determining a grant amount; and
- 163 (iv) the reporting requirements of a grant recipient.
- 164 (6) In accordance with Title 63G, Chapter 3, Utah Administrative Rulemaking Act, the
165 department may make rules related to:
- 166 (a) the consultation with municipalities and counties regarding compatible use plans as

167 required in Subsection (4)(l); and
168 (b) criteria to evaluate whether a proposed land use is compatible with military
169 operations.
170 (7) Nothing in this chapter shall be construed as altering or preempting any provisions of
171 Title 39A, National Guard and Militia Act, as specifically related to the Utah National
172 Guard.
173 Section 3. **Effective Date.**
174 This bill takes effect on May 7, 2025.