



House Bill No. 7064

Public Act No. 19-148

AN ACT CONCERNING MUNICIPAL VETERANS' REPRESENTATIVES.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

Section 1. Subsection (b) of section 27-135 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2019*):

(b) (1) Any city or town that has not established its own local veterans' advisory committee separate from one or more other cities or towns pursuant to subsection (a) of this section and does not otherwise provide funding for a veterans' service officer shall designate (A) a city or town employee, or (B) a volunteer who is a resident of such city or town, and (i) is a veteran, as defined in subsection (a) of section 27-103, or (ii) has practical experience handling veterans' issues, to serve as a [veterans' service contact person] municipal veterans' representative in such city or town. The Commissioner of Veterans Affairs shall annually send to the chief executive officer of any such city or town an electronic notification of such chief executive officer's duty to so designate a city or town employee or volunteer in accordance with this subsection. Such chief executive officer shall, not later than thirty days after receipt of such notification, submit to the Office of Advocacy and Assistance, as described in subsection (b) of section 27-102l, as

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amended by this act, the name and electronic mail address of the city or town employee or volunteer so designated. As used in this subdivision, "chief executive officer" means the officer described in section 7-193.

(2) [Any city or town employee designated as a veterans' service contact person] Each municipal veterans' representative shall carry out the duties described in subsection (a) of this section and shall complete a training course conducted by the Office of Advocacy and Assistance, as described in subdivision (3) of subsection (b) of section 27-102l, as amended by this act, or attend a training session conducted by the manager of said office, as described in subparagraph (A) of subdivision (2) of subsection (b) of said section. [Each employee so designated prior to July 1, 2016, shall complete such training course prior to January 1, 2017. Each employee so] Each municipal veterans' representative designated on or after [July 1, 2016] October 1, 2019, shall complete such training course not later than one year after the date of such designation. Upon completion of such training course, a [veterans' service contact person] municipal veterans' representative may thereafter receive electronically any new or updated training information from the Office of Advocacy and Assistance and shall not be required to complete any other such training course.

(3) Any volunteer designated as a municipal veterans' representative by a city or town pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection shall (A) be available to veterans in person, by telephone or by electronic mail for any minimum number of hours per week that the city or town designating the volunteer may establish, and (B) file a performance report each month with the city or town designating the volunteer that includes, but is not limited to, the names of veterans assisted, services or referrals provided and any other information as determined by the city or town.

Sec. 2. Subdivisions (1) to (3), inclusive, of subsection (b) of section

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27-102l of the general statutes are repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2019*):

(b) (1) The commissioner may appoint a manager to administer an Office of Advocacy and Assistance for the aid and benefit of veterans and their spouses, eligible dependents and family members. The office shall have a staff of not less than eight men and women, including six veterans' service officers, and clerical personnel. The manager and veterans' service officers shall be veterans, as defined in subsection (a) of section 27-103, or veterans who were awarded the armed forces expeditionary medal for service by the armed forces.

(2) (A) The manager shall develop a training module on assisting and serving women veterans with regard to state or federal services or benefits and identifying and advising such veterans of community or nonprofit programs focused on assisting and serving such veterans. The manager shall hold and provide instruction for an annual training session, in accordance with such module, to each veterans' [services] service officer and any [veterans' service contact person] municipal veterans' representative, as described in subsection (b) of section 27-135, as amended by this act, or representative from an Operation Academic Support for Incoming Service Members center at a public institution of higher education in this state.

(B) At least one of the veterans' service officers shall be a woman having a demonstrated interest in the concerns of women veterans, who shall be responsible for addressing those concerns, and, effective upon the next opening of a veterans' service officer position occurring on or after July 1, 2010, at least two of the veterans' service officers shall be individuals having bilingual proficiency in English and Spanish, within existing authorized positions. Each veterans' service officer shall (i) successfully complete a course in veterans' benefits not later than one year after commencement of employment, (ii) attend the training session described in subparagraph (A) of this subdivision, and

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(iii) be assigned to one of the five congressional districts of the state.

(3) The office staff shall, at least twice annually, conduct a training course for any [city or town employee designated a veterans' service contact person pursuant to subsection (b) of section 27-135] municipal veterans' representative. The office staff shall include in such training course a summary of state and federal services and benefits, the duties to be carried out by each [veterans' service contact person] municipal veterans' representative, as described in subsection (a) of section 27-135, and any assistance the office staff may provide to any [veterans' service contact person] municipal veterans' representative related to such duties.

Approved July 9, 2019