

HOUSE BILL No. 4912

September 29, 2015, Introduced by Reps. Hughes, Barrett, Kelly, Chatfield, Muxlow, Bizon, Crawford, Sheppard, Franz, Leutheuser, Price, Heise, Vaupel, Jenkins, Canfield, Rutledge, Graves, Outman, Rendon, Talabi, Lane, Faris, Cole, Howrylak, Glenn, Hooker, Pagel, Goike, Inman, Lauwers, Yonker and Kosowski and referred to the Committee on Local Government.

A bill to establish and implement a veterans service dog grant program; and to prescribe the powers and duties of certain state agencies and officials.

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF MICHIGAN ENACT:

1 Sec. 1. This act shall be known and may be cited as the
2 "veterans service dog act".

3 Sec. 2. As used in this act:

4 (a) "Department" means the department of military and veterans
5 affairs.

6 (b) "Fund" means the veterans service dog fund created in
7 section 4.

8 (c) "Grant program" means the veterans service dog grant
9 program established in section 3.

1 (d) "Person" means an individual, partnership, corporation,
2 association, governmental entity, or other legal entity.

3 (e) "Service dog" means a dog that is trained to do work or
4 perform tasks for an individual with a disability, including a
5 physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental
6 disability. The work done or tasks performed must be directly
7 related to the individual's disability and may include, but are not
8 limited to, guiding an individual who is visually impaired or
9 blind, alerting an individual who is deaf or has difficulty
10 hearing, pulling a wheelchair, assisting with mobility or balance,
11 alerting and protecting an individual who is having a seizure,
12 retrieving objects, alerting an individual to the presence of
13 allergens, providing physical support and assistance with balance
14 and stability to an individual with a mobility disability, helping
15 an individual with a psychiatric or neurological disability by
16 preventing or interrupting impulsive or destructive behaviors,
17 reminding an individual with mental illness to take prescribed
18 medications, calming an individual with posttraumatic stress
19 disorder during an anxiety attack, or doing other specific work or
20 performing other special tasks. A service dog is not a pet. For
21 purposes of this subdivision, "do work or perform tasks" does not
22 include the crime-deterrent effect of an animal's presence or the
23 provision of emotional support, well-being, comfort, or
24 companionship.

25 (f) "Service dog provider" means a person in the business of
26 training service dogs for sale.

27 (g) "Veteran" means that term as it is defined in section 1 of

1 1965 PA 190, MCL 35.61.

2 Sec. 3. (1) The department shall establish and implement a
3 veterans service dog grant program that uses money from the fund to
4 provide grants for the acquisition of service dogs for veterans.

5 (2) The grant program shall require that a veteran applying to
6 receive a grant contribute at least 50% of the cost of the service
7 dog, but not more than \$3,000.00.

8 (3) A veteran who wishes to apply for a grant shall submit an
9 application to the department containing the information required
10 by the department, including all of the following:

11 (a) The name, address, and other contact information of the
12 service dog provider that will be providing the service dog.

13 (b) The total cost of purchase of the service dog.

14 (c) The amount of the grant that is being requested.

15 (d) The amount that the veteran will be contributing toward
16 the purchase of the service dog and documentation of the source of
17 the veteran's contribution.

18 (e) A letter in support of the grant from a congressionally
19 chartered veterans' organization or other organization approved by
20 the department.

21 (4) If the department approves a grant, the department shall
22 notify the veteran. Upon confirmation that the veteran has paid the
23 veteran's share of the cost of the service dog, the department
24 shall disburse the grant funds to the service dog provider.

25 Sec. 4. (1) The veterans service dog fund is created within
26 the state treasury.

27 (2) The state treasurer may receive money or other assets from

1 any source for deposit into the fund. The state treasurer shall
2 direct the investment of the fund. The state treasurer shall credit
3 to the fund interest and earnings from fund investments.

4 (3) The fund shall have an accumulated principal limitation of
5 \$5,000,000.00, exclusive of interest and earnings. Any money
6 received by the fund after the fund reaches its accumulated
7 principal limitation shall be forwarded to the state treasurer for
8 deposit into the Michigan veterans' trust fund established in
9 section 37 of article IX of the state constitution of 1963.

10 (4) Money in the fund at the close of the fiscal year shall
11 remain in the fund and shall not lapse to the general fund.

12 (5) The department shall be the administrator of the fund for
13 auditing purposes.

14 (6) The department shall expend money from the fund, upon
15 appropriation, only for the following:

16 (a) Grants issued pursuant to the grant program.

17 (b) Not more than 10% of the money appropriated from the fund
18 for the employment of not more than 1 FTE to administer the grant
19 program.

20 Sec. 5. At least every 5 years, the department shall prepare a
21 report for the reporting period that describes the money received
22 by the fund, the balance of the fund, the total expenditures from
23 the fund, and the number of grants issued with money from the fund.
24 The department shall provide this report to the standing committees
25 of each house of the legislature with jurisdiction over veterans
26 issues.

27 Enacting section 1. This act takes effect 90 days after the

1 date it is enacted into law.