

As Introduced

**134th General Assembly
Regular Session
2021-2022**

H. B. No. 407

Representatives Gross, Miller, A.

A BILL

To amend section 5902.02 and to enact section 1
5902.25 of the Revised Code to establish the 2
Safe Shelter Initiative Program for Ohio 3
veterans. 4

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

Section 1. That section 5902.02 be amended and section 5
5902.25 of the Revised Code be enacted to read as follows: 6

Sec. 5902.02. The duties of the director of veterans 7
services shall include the following: 8

(A) Furnishing the veterans service commissions of all 9
counties of the state copies of the state laws, rules, and 10
legislation relating to the operation of the commissions and 11
their offices; 12

(B) Upon application, assisting the general public in 13
obtaining records of vital statistics pertaining to veterans or 14
their dependents; 15

(C) Adopting rules pursuant to Chapter 119. of the Revised 16
Code pertaining to minimum qualifications for hiring, 17
certifying, and accrediting county veterans service officers, 18

pertaining to their required duties, and pertaining to 19
revocation of the certification of county veterans service 20
officers; 21

(D) Adopting rules pursuant to Chapter 119. of the Revised 22
Code for the education, training, certification, and duties of 23
veterans service commissioners and for the revocation of the 24
certification of a veterans service commissioner; 25

(E) Developing and monitoring programs and agreements 26
enhancing employment and training for veterans in single or 27
multiple county areas; 28

(F) Developing and monitoring programs and agreements to 29
enable county veterans service commissions to address 30
homelessness, indigency, and other veteran-related issues 31
individually or jointly; 32

(G) Developing and monitoring programs and agreements to 33
enable state agencies, individually or jointly, that provide 34
services to veterans, including the veterans' homes operated 35
under Chapter 5907. of the Revised Code and the director of job 36
and family services, to address homelessness, indigency, 37
employment, and other veteran-related issues; 38

(H) Establishing and providing statistical reporting 39
formats and procedures for county veterans service commissions; 40

(I) Publishing electronically a listing of county veterans 41
service offices and county veterans service commissioners. The 42
listing shall include the expiration dates of commission 43
members' terms of office and the organizations they represent; 44
the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of county veterans 45
service offices; and the addresses and telephone numbers of the 46
Ohio offices and headquarters of state and national veterans 47

service organizations. 48

(J) Establishing a veterans advisory committee to advise 49
and assist the department of veterans services in its duties. 50
Members shall include a member of the national guard association 51
of the United States who is a resident of this state, a member 52
of the military officers association of America who is a 53
resident of this state, a state representative of 54
congressionally chartered veterans organizations referred to in 55
section 5901.02 of the Revised Code, a representative of any 56
other congressionally chartered state veterans organization that 57
has at least one veterans service commissioner in the state, 58
three representatives of the Ohio state association of county 59
veterans service commissioners, who shall have a combined vote 60
of one, three representatives of the state association of county 61
veterans service officers, who shall have a combined vote of 62
one, one representative of the county commissioners association 63
of Ohio, who shall be a county commissioner not from the same 64
county as any of the other county representatives, a 65
representative of the advisory committee on women veterans, a 66
representative of a labor organization, and a representative of 67
the office of the attorney general. The department of veterans 68
services shall submit to the advisory committee proposed rules 69
for the committee's operation. The committee may review and 70
revise these proposed rules prior to submitting them to the 71
joint committee on agency rule review. 72

(K) Adopting, with the advice and assistance of the 73
veterans advisory committee, policy and procedural guidelines 74
that the veterans service commissions shall adhere to in the 75
development and implementation of rules, policies, procedures, 76
and guidelines for the administration of Chapter 5901. of the 77
Revised Code. The department of veterans services shall adopt no 78

guidelines or rules regulating the purposes, scope, duration, or 79
amounts of financial assistance provided to applicants pursuant 80
to sections 5901.01 to 5901.15 of the Revised Code. The director 81
of veterans services may obtain opinions from the office of the 82
attorney general regarding rules, policies, procedures, and 83
guidelines of the veterans service commissions and may enforce 84
compliance with Chapter 5901. of the Revised Code. 85

(L) Receiving copies of form DD214 filed in accordance 86
with the director's guidelines adopted under division (L) of 87
this section from members of veterans service commissions 88
appointed under section 5901.02 and from county veterans service 89
officers employed under section 5901.07 of the Revised Code; 90

(M) Developing and maintaining and improving a resource, 91
such as a telephone answering point or a web site, by means of 92
which veterans and their dependents, through a single portal, 93
can access multiple sources of information and interaction with 94
regard to the rights of, and the benefits available to, veterans 95
and their dependents. The director of veterans services may 96
enter into agreements with state and federal agencies, with 97
agencies of political subdivisions, with state and local 98
instrumentalities, and with private entities as necessary to 99
make the resource as complete as is possible. 100

(N) Planning, organizing, advertising, and conducting 101
outreach efforts, such as conferences and fairs, at which 102
veterans and their dependents may meet, learn about the 103
organization and operation of the department of veterans 104
services and of veterans service commissions, and obtain 105
information about the rights of, and the benefits and services 106
available to, veterans and their dependents; 107

(O) Advertising, in print, on radio and television, and 108

otherwise, the rights of, and the benefits and services	109
available to, veterans and their dependents;	110
(P) Developing and advocating improved benefits and	111
services for, and improved delivery of benefits and services to,	112
veterans and their dependents;	113
(Q) Searching for, identifying, and reviewing statutory	114
and administrative policies that relate to veterans and their	115
dependents and reporting to the general assembly statutory and	116
administrative policies that should be consolidated in whole or	117
in part within the organization of the department of veterans	118
services to unify funding, delivery, and accounting of statutory	119
and administrative policy expressions that relate particularly	120
to veterans and their dependents;	121
(R) Encouraging veterans service commissions to innovate	122
and otherwise to improve efficiency in delivering benefits and	123
services to veterans and their dependents and to report	124
successful innovations and efficiencies to the director of	125
veterans services;	126
(S) Publishing and encouraging adoption of successful	127
innovations and efficiencies veterans service commissions have	128
achieved in delivering benefits and services to veterans and	129
their dependents;	130
(T) Establishing advisory committees, in addition to the	131
veterans advisory committee established under division (K) of	132
this section, on veterans issues;	133
(U) Developing and maintaining a relationship with the	134
United States department of veterans affairs, seeking optimal	135
federal benefits and services for Ohio veterans and their	136
dependents, and encouraging veterans service commissions to	137

maximize the federal benefits and services to which veterans and	138
their dependents are entitled;	139
(V) Developing and maintaining relationships with the	140
several veterans organizations, encouraging the organizations in	141
their efforts at assisting veterans and their dependents, and	142
advocating for adequate state subsidization of the	143
organizations;	144
(W) Requiring the several veterans organizations that	145
receive funding from the state annually, not later than the	146
thirtieth day of July, to report to the director of veterans	147
services and prescribing the form and content of the report;	148
(X) Reviewing the reports submitted to the director under	149
division (W) of this section within thirty days of receipt and	150
informing the veterans organization of any deficiencies that	151
exist in the organization's report and that funding will not be	152
released until the deficiencies have been corrected and a	153
satisfactory report submitted;	154
(Y) Releasing funds and processing payments to veterans	155
organizations when a report submitted to the director under	156
division (W) of this section has been reviewed and determined to	157
be satisfactory;	158
(Z) Furnishing copies of all reports that the director of	159
veterans services has determined have been submitted	160
satisfactorily under division (W) of this section to the	161
chairperson of the finance committees of the general assembly;	162
(AA) Investigating complaints against county veterans	163
services commissioners and county veterans service officers if	164
the director reasonably believes the investigation to be	165
appropriate and necessary;	166

(BB) Developing and maintaining a web site that is 167
accessible by veterans and their dependents and provides a link 168
to the web site of each state agency that issues a license, 169
certificate, or other authorization permitting an individual to 170
engage in an occupation or occupational activity; 171

(CC) Encouraging state agencies to conduct outreach 172
efforts through which veterans and their dependents can learn 173
about available job and education benefits; 174

(DD) Informing state agencies about changes in statutes 175
and rules that affect veterans and their dependents; 176

(EE) Assisting licensing agencies in adopting rules under 177
section 5903.03 of the Revised Code; 178

(FF) Administering the provision of grants from the 179
military injury relief fund under section 5902.05 of the Revised 180
Code; 181

(GG) Adopting rules pursuant to Chapter 119. of the 182
Revised Code to establish, develop, and monitor the safe shelter 183
initiative program under section 5902.25 of the Revised Code; 184

(HH) Taking any other actions required by this chapter. 185

Sec. 5902.25. (A) As used in this section, "veteran" has 186
the same meaning as in section 5903.01 of the Revised Code. 187

(B) There is hereby created within the department of 188
veterans services the safe shelter initiative program to ensure 189
that no veteran in this state will be involuntarily homeless. 190
The program shall be under the supervision of the director of 191
veterans services. 192

(C) The director of veterans services shall adopt rules in 193
accordance with Chapter 119. of the Revised Code to implement 194

the safe shelter initiative program. The rules shall establish a 195
program that does all of the following: 196

(1) Wherever possible, integrates veterans who need 197
housing into housing and shelter programs that are in operation 198
in this state; 199

(2) Includes a method to provide vouchers to state and 200
local entities that provide housing services to veterans; 201

(3) Participates and coordinates with various state and 202
local agencies to ensure that no Ohio veteran is involuntarily 203
homeless, including the development services agency, Ohio 204
housing finance agency, department of job and family services, 205
department of mental health and addiction services, county 206
veterans service commissions, and other such agencies the 207
director or the governor designates; 208

(4) Includes a method to allocate funding from the 209
veterans safe shelter initiative program fund established in 210
division (D) of this section to provide nightly vouchers, 211
funding for shelters, monthly apartment rentals, and such other 212
means as the director determines necessary for purposes of the 213
program. 214

(D) There is hereby created in the state treasury the 215
veterans safe shelter initiative program fund consisting of 216
money appropriated to the fund by the general assembly. The 217
director of veterans services shall administer the fund for 218
purposes of the safe shelter initiative program. 219

(E) The governor may order any agency of this state to 220
work with the director of veterans services for purposes of the 221
safe shelter initiative program. The governor may also request 222
that county veterans service commissions work with the director 223

of veterans services for purposes of the safe shelter initiative 224
program. 225

(F) If asked by the director of veterans services to 226
participate in the safe shelter initiative program, the 227
development services agency, Ohio housing finance agency, 228
department of job and family services, department of mental 229
health and addiction services, or any other applicable agency 230
shall participate in the program. 231

Section 2. That existing section 5902.02 of the Revised 232
Code is hereby repealed. 233