



Legislation Text

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A Local Law in relation to establishing a pilot program to assist with changing door locks on the dwelling units of survivors of domestic violence

Be it enacted by the Council as follows:

Section 1. a. Definitions. For the purposes of this section, the following terms have the following meanings:

Area median income. The term “area median income” means the income limits as defined annually by the United States department of housing and urban development (HUD) for the New York, NY HUD Metro FMR Area (HMFA).

Community-based organization. The term “community-based organization” means a community-based organization located in a pilot zip code that provides services to a survivor of domestic violence who is an English language learner, is homeless, is an immigrant, has a criminal history, has a disability, is a member of the LGBTQ community or is a member of a community of color.

Designated organizations. The term “designated organizations” means at least 10 community-based organizations, which the director designates to assist with the pilot program.

Director. The term “director” means the director of the office.

Dwelling unit. The term “dwelling unit” means a dwelling unit in a building that is either rented, leased, let or hired out to be occupied as the residence or home of 2 or more occupants living independently of each other.

Eligible household. The term “eligible household” means a household that (i) has an annual gross income between 51 and 80 percent of the area median income, adjusted for the size of the household, (ii) resides in a dwelling unit located in a pilot zip code and (iii) includes a survivor of domestic violence.

Office. The term “office” means the office to end domestic and gender-based violence.

Owner. The term “owner” means the owner of a dwelling unit.

Pilot program participant. The term “pilot program participant” means an eligible household that a designated organization selects to participate in the pilot program.

Pilot zip code. The term “pilot zip code” means 1 of 10 zip codes in the city of New York with the highest rates of domestic violence, as determined by the office.

Relevant agencies. The term “relevant agencies” means the center for innovation through data intelligence, the department of housing preservation and development, the department of social services, the mayor’s office of data analytics, the police department, any successor of an agency specified in this definition, and any other agency that the director deems relevant.

Stipend. The term “stipend” means a grant of financial assistance provided to a pilot program participant to pay for changing the entrance door locks of a dwelling unit and any fees associated with such change.

Support service. The term “support service” means a social service that a survivor advocate helps a pilot program participant access during the pilot program, including, but not limited to, counseling services, housing services, safety planning and legal services.

Survivor advocate. The term “survivor advocate” means a non-attorney advocate who provides information and support to a pilot program participant in connection with changing a dwelling unit’s entrance door locks and accessing any support services associated with such change.

Survivor of domestic violence. The term “survivor of domestic violence” means an individual who has experienced domestic violence, pursuant to documentation from an agency, a community-based organization or

an order of a court of competent jurisdiction.

b. Feasibility study and report. Subject to appropriation, not later than 90 days after the effective date of this local law, the director, in consultation with the relevant agencies and the designated organizations, shall conduct a feasibility study to determine the design of the pilot program as described in subdivision d of this section. Not later than 270 days after the effective date of this local law, the director shall submit a report on such study to the mayor and speaker of the council and post such report on the office's website. Such report shall include, but need not be limited to:

1. The design of the pilot program, including, but not limited to, the design of the baseline survey as described in subdivision c of this section, the metrics to evaluate such program and the rationale for such design components;

2. The staffing needs of the pilot program, including, but not limited to, the survivor advocates and an external entity to evaluate such program;

3. The process by which the designated organizations select the pilot program participants;

4. The plan to protect the privacy of the pilot program participants, including, but not limited to, any information that such participants provide during the pilot program;

5. The amount of a stipend and the process for providing it to such participants;

6. The process for selecting and supervising the survivor advocates; and

7. Documentation and procedures for changing a dwelling unit's entrance door locks, including, but not limited to, special documentation and procedures for when the perpetrator of domestic violence is the owner or resides with such participant.

c. Baseline survey and report. 1. The director, in consultation with the relevant agencies and the designated organizations, shall require the survivor advocates to administer baseline surveys to the pilot program participants to assess the impact of the pilot program, established pursuant to subdivision d of this section, on such participants' quality of life. The quality of life metrics that such survey assesses shall include,

but are not limited to, child wellbeing, health, housing, income, level of trauma, and safety.

2. The first baseline survey shall be administered not later than 180 days after submission of the feasibility report required by subdivision b of this section. The second baseline survey shall be administered not later than 1 year after the commencement of the pilot program. The third baseline survey shall be administered not later than 180 days after the conclusion of such program. The director shall submit a report on the findings of these baseline surveys to the mayor and speaker of the council and post such reports on the office's website.

d. Pilot program. Subject to appropriation, beginning no later than 180 days after the submission of the feasibility report required by subdivision b of this section, the director, in consultation with the relevant agencies and the designated organizations, shall establish a 2-year trauma-informed pilot program, based on the findings of the feasibility study required by subdivision b of this section, to change the entrance door locks of the dwelling units of survivors of domestic violence and provide related support services. Such program shall provide 1,000 pilot program participants with a stipend and the assistance of a survivor advocate, at a ratio of at least 1 survivor advocate to 50 pilot program participants. The pilot program shall terminate two years after its commencement. The director, in consultation with the relevant agencies and the designated organizations, shall do the following:

1. Administer such program, including, but not limited to, the provision of the stipend and the supervision of the survivor advocates; and

2. Engage an external entity to evaluate the pilot program. Such entity shall submit written findings to the director on the pilot program's effectiveness and suitability for expansion into a permanent program and any recommended modifications in connection with such expansion.

e. Progress report. Not later than 1 year after the commencement of the pilot program established pursuant to subdivision d of this section, the director, in consultation with the relevant agencies and the designated organizations, shall submit a progress report on such program to the mayor and speaker of the council and post such report on the office's website. The information in such report shall be anonymized and

include, but need not be limited to, the following:

1. The number of households participating in such pilot program and the following information about each such household:

- (a) Zip code;
- (b) The number of persons in the household;
- (c) Whether or not the household includes children under the age of 18;
- (d) The primary language spoken in the household;
- (e) The rent charged for the dwelling unit; and
- (f) The household's annual gross income;

2. A description of the impact, if any, that the survivor advocates, stipend and support services had on the pilot program participants, as indicated by the results of the baseline surveys and any interviews with such participants and such advocates; and

3. A description of the challenges implementing the pilot program and the efforts to address such challenges, if any.

f. Final report. Not later than 1 year after the conclusion of the pilot program established pursuant to subdivision d of this section, the director, in consultation with the relevant agencies and the designated organizations, shall submit a final report on such program to the mayor and speaker of the council and post it on the office's website. The information in such report shall be anonymized and include, but need not be limited to, the following:

- 1. The information in the progress report required by subdivision e of this section, updated for the final report;
- 2. The budget of the pilot program; and
- 3. Any recommendations to improve the pilot program for implementation as a permanent program, including, but not limited to, a tax abatement to incentivize owners to change the dwelling unit's entrance door

locks of survivors of domestic violence.

g. Data sharing. For the duration of the pilot program, the relevant agencies shall share relevant data regarding the pilot program participants with the office.

h. Owner liability. An owner shall not be liable to the tenants, occupants, guests or invitees of a dwelling unit for any reasonable and good faith actions that such owner takes pursuant to this section.

i. Perpetrator liability. This section shall not be construed to relieve a perpetrator of domestic violence from any obligation arising from an owner's reasonable and good faith actions to comply with this section.

§ 2. This local law takes effect immediately.

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