



Legislation Text

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A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to promoting housing stability for seniors by entitling any person who is 60 years of age or older to full legal representation in eviction or termination of tenancy proceedings in housing court, expanding rental arrears assistance for persons 60 years of age or older and establishing a housing support program for persons 60 years of age or older who are at risk of eviction or foreclosure

Be it enacted by the Council as follows:

Section 1. The definition of the term “income-eligible individual” in section 26-1301 of the administrative code of the city of New York, as added by local law number 136 for the year 2017, is amended to read as follows:

Income-eligible individual. The term “income-eligible individual” means a covered individual who is 60 years of age or older or whose annual gross household income is not in excess of 200 percent of the federal poverty guidelines as updated periodically in the federal register by the United States department of health and human services pursuant to subsection (2) of section 9902 of title 42 of the United States code.

§ 2. Chapter 2 of title 21 of the administrative code of the city of New York is amended by adding a new section 21-210 to read as follows:

§ 21-210 Financial assistance for rental arrears. a. Subject to appropriation and any applicable requirements of the social services law, the department shall provide financial assistance for the purpose of paying rental arrears to persons 60 years of age or older who are ineligible to receive other forms of rental arrears assistance. Such assistance shall be given at the discretion of the commissioner upon consideration of

need and other factors the commissioner determines are relevant to an applicant's inability to pay rent.

b. The commissioner shall make rules to carry out this section, which shall include, but need not be limited to, provisions establishing eligibility criteria for persons applying for financial assistance, whether and under what circumstances any financial assistance provided must be repaid, and any other terms and conditions of receiving financial assistance.

§ 3. Chapter 2 of title 21 of the administrative code of the city of New York is amended by adding a new section 21-211 to read as follows:

§ 21-211 Housing support. a. The department shall establish a housing support program for the purpose of helping persons 60 years of age or older who are at risk of eviction or foreclosure identify and access relevant aid and other support to remain in their residence.

b. Such program shall provide case management services designed to provide situation-specific advice and support to each participating person. Such services shall be provided at no cost and, at minimum, include:

1. An intake session, which may be conducted at the participating person's residence, for the purpose of identifying and assessing the factors contributing to such person's risk of eviction or foreclosure, and how such factors could be addressed under relevant assistance, services or programs;

2. Referrals for assistance, services or programs that could address factors contributing to such person's risk of eviction or foreclosure;

3. Assistance completing applications for financial assistance or enrollment in services or programs; and

4. Ongoing support to monitor such person's risk of eviction or foreclosure, the effect of referred assistance, services or programs on reducing or eliminating such risk and any factors contributing to such risk that could be ameliorated with further advice and support.

c. In assessing a person's risk for eviction or foreclosure to administer the program required in this section, the department shall consider any relevant factor, including, but not limited to, such person's health status and whether other persons, including family members, also live in such person's residence.

d. In administering the program required in this section, the department shall:

1. Maintain an online portal, accessible to program participants, for the purpose of tracking events and progress of individual cases and storing information relevant to each case;

2. Operate a help center, accessible to the public, for the purpose of providing in person assistance to persons seeking to enroll or enrolled in such program; and

3. Establish a phone number for the purpose of taking questions about the department's housing support services and providing assistance to persons seeking to enroll or enrolled in such program.

e. The department shall conduct ongoing outreach and education to promote awareness of the program required in this section. Such outreach shall include, but not be limited to, an annual mailing to persons who may benefit from enrollment in such program or who may care for or serve such persons.

f. The department shall administer the program required in this section in accordance with section 23-1102.

§ 4. This local law takes effect immediately.

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