
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 638 Session of
2023

INTRODUCED BY SANCHEZ, SHUSTERMAN, SIEGEL, HOHENSTEIN, MADDEN,
RABB, HILL-EVANS, GUENST, KRAJEWSKI, KINSEY, KINKEAD, OTTEN
AND N. NELSON, MARCH 21, 2023

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY, MARCH 21, 2023

AN ACT

1 Amending Title 54 (Names) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated
2 Statutes, establishing the Compassionate Name Change
3 Assistance Grant Program and the Compassionate Name Change
4 Assistance Grant Fund; and making an interfund transfer.

5 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
6 hereby enacts as follows:

7 Section 1. Title 54 of the Pennsylvania Consolidated
8 Statutes is amended by adding a chapter to read:

9 CHAPTER 9

10 COMPASSIONATE NAME CHANGE ASSISTANCE

11 GRANT PROGRAM

12 Sec.

13 901. Definitions.

14 902. Grant program.

15 903. Compassionate Name Change Assistance Grant Fund.

16 904. Administration.

17 § 901. Definitions.

18 The following words and phrases when used in this chapter

1 shall have the meanings given to them in this section unless the
2 context clearly indicates otherwise:

3 "Department." The Department of Community and Economic
4 Development of the Commonwealth.

5 "Eligible applicant." A nonprofit organization, county or
6 local government.

7 "Eligible assistance program." A program providing support
8 and guidance that is informational, emotional, social, legal or
9 otherwise to individuals who confront biases or inequalities
10 based on gender or sexual stereotypes in navigating the process
11 of a name change in this Commonwealth.

12 "Fund." The Compassionate Name Change Assistance Grant Fund
13 established under section 903 (relating to Compassionate Name
14 Change Assistance Grant Fund).

15 "Grant program." The Compassionate Name Change Assistance
16 Grant Program established under section 902 (relating to grant
17 program).

18 "Nonprofit organization." A corporation or other entity
19 based in this Commonwealth which is an exempt organization as
20 defined under 26 U.S.C. § 501(c)(3) (relating to exemption from
21 tax on corporations, certain trusts, etc.).

22 § 902. Grant program.

23 (a) Establishment.--The Compassionate Name Change Assistance
24 Grant Program is established as a competitive grant program
25 within the department.

26 (b) Uses for funds.--A grant award under the grant program
27 may only be used for the costs of administering an eligible
28 assistance program.

29 (c) Department powers and duties.--The department shall:

30 (1) Provide grants under the grant program in accordance

1 with this chapter to eligible applicants to administer
2 eligible assistance programs.

3 (2) Determine the form and manner by which an eligible
4 applicant may apply for a grant under section 904 (relating
5 to administration). The application form shall be posted on
6 the department's publicly accessible Internet website.

7 (3) Establish guidelines for implementing the grant
8 program under this section. The guidelines shall be posted on
9 the department's publicly accessible Internet website.

10 § 903. Compassionate Name Change Assistance Grant Fund.

11 (a) Establishment.--The Compassionate Name Change Assistance
12 Grant Fund is established as a separate fund in the State
13 Treasury.

14 (b) Appropriation.--All money deposited into the fund and
15 interest earned on the money in the fund are appropriated to the
16 department on a continuing basis to award grants under this
17 chapter.

18 (c) Transfer from General Fund.--In addition to money
19 appropriated to the department for grants under this chapter,
20 the sum of \$2,000,000 is transferred from the General Fund to
21 the Compassionate Name Change Assistance Grant Fund.

22 (d) Administrative costs.--No more than 1% of the fund may
23 be used for reasonable administrative costs of the department in
24 administering this chapter.

25 § 904. Administration.

26 (a) Applications.--An application for a grant under this
27 chapter shall be submitted by an eligible applicant in the form
28 and manner prescribed by the department.

29 (b) Application period.--Beginning no later than 180 days
30 after the effective date of this subsection, the department

1 shall begin accepting and processing applications on a rolling
2 basis until the grant program funding available for the fiscal
3 year has been exhausted.

4 (c) Review process.--

5 (1) The department shall review applications and make
6 awards subject to subsection (d) on a rolling basis.

7 (2) The department shall approve or deny an application
8 no later than 30 days after the receipt of the application.
9 If the department fails to approve or deny within 30 days,
10 the application shall be deemed denied.

11 (3) An eligible applicant may revise and resubmit a
12 denied application to the department.

13 (d) Allocation.--An eligible applicant may not receive more
14 than the following amounts in a fiscal year:

15 (1) Subject to paragraphs (2) and (3):

16 (i) The minimum grant amount awarded shall be no
17 less than \$5,000.

18 (ii) The maximum grant amount awarded may not be
19 more than \$100,000.

20 (2) The department may award a grant of no more than
21 \$75,000 to eligible applicants that are headquartered within
22 a city of the first or second class.

23 (3) The department may award a grant of between \$75,000
24 and \$100,000 to eligible applicants that are:

25 (i) headquartered outside of a city of the first or
26 second class; or

27 (ii) implementing a new eligible assistance program
28 for the first time in the same fiscal year that the grant
29 is awarded.

30 (e) Limitations.--The following apply to grant applications:

1 (1) The department may not provide grants in excess of
2 the amount of the fund.

3 (2) The department may prorate the grant amount to an
4 eligible applicant.

5 (3) The department may only award a grant to an eligible
6 applicant that establishes to the department that the
7 administration of the eligible assistance program involves at
8 least one Pennsylvanian who identifies as transgender or
9 nonbinary with specialized experience in assisting
10 individuals who confront biases or inequalities based on
11 gender or sexual stereotypes in navigating the name change
12 process in this Commonwealth.

13 (f) Evaluation.--The department shall evaluate the
14 utilization of the grant program money, including an analysis of
15 the total amount of grants awarded, each eligible applicant that
16 received a grant and the efficacy of the eligible assistance
17 programs funded through the grant program based on disaggregated
18 data. The department shall conduct the evaluation, at a minimum,
19 every three years after the establishment of the grant program
20 and shall post the evaluation on the department's publicly
21 accessible Internet website.

22 Section 2. This act shall take effect immediately.