

LEGISLATURE OF NEBRASKA
ONE HUNDRED FIFTH LEGISLATURE
FIRST SESSION

LEGISLATIVE BILL 534

Introduced by Vargas, 7; Bolz, 29.

Read first time January 18, 2017

Committee: Health and Human Services

1 A BILL FOR AN ACT relating to behavioral health; to provide for a housing
2 coordinator; to provide powers and duties; to provide for funding
3 for programs and services; and to state intent relating to
4 appropriations.

5 Be it enacted by the people of the State of Nebraska,

1 Section 1. The Director of Behavioral Health of the Division of
2 Behavioral Health of the Department of Health and Human Services shall
3 hire a housing coordinator. The housing coordinator shall work with the
4 behavioral health regions established pursuant to section 71-807 to (1)
5 coordinate efforts of the regions as they relate to systemic housing
6 goals, (2) provide assistance and expertise to the regions in finding
7 resources, including, but not limited to, federal, state, and nonprofit
8 housing assistance, (3) share best practices and promising actions found
9 nationally and locally, (4) serve in a leadership capacity within the
10 division in order to advocate for consumers' needs in housing, and (5)
11 disburse funds as authorized in section 2 of this act, which authority
12 the housing coordinator may delegate to the regions.

13 Sec. 2. The Division of Behavioral Health of the Department of
14 Health and Human Services shall disburse funds to nonprofit entities and
15 programs which provide integrated housing services and support for
16 individuals with serious mental illness. Such funds may be issued for
17 drop-in centers, peer-operated supportive housing, and services designed
18 to maintain independence in housing for people with serious mental
19 illnesses. Funds shall be disbursed first to the housing coordinator for
20 purposes of section 1 of this act, then shall be disbursed competitively
21 to behavioral health regions for the following purposes:

22 (1) Peer support services that follow evidence-based models and
23 training;

24 (2) Trauma-informed services;

25 (3) Assisting individuals who are transitioning out of civil
26 commitments as authorized pursuant to the Nebraska Mental Health
27 Commitment Act or inpatient residential housing or are at risk of civil
28 commitment under such act or inpatient residential housing;

29 (4) Housing for individuals with co-occurring disorders, including
30 serious mental illness, developmental disabilities, and substance abuse
31 disorders;

1 (5) Housing for individuals with serious mental illness who have
2 been released from jail or prison or have been placed on probation within
3 the preceding two years;

4 (6) Planning for the purposes described in subdivisions (1) through
5 (6) of this section;

6 (7) Evaluation; and

7 (8) Partnerships with the Department of Correctional Services.

8 The criteria that shall be used by the division in disbursement of
9 such funds to the regions shall include demonstrated need, identified
10 partners in the provision of services, and sustainability of long-term
11 plans for provision of such services.

12 The Director of Behavioral Health may adopt and promulgate rules and
13 regulations providing for the application process for such grants which
14 shall include the content required to be included in the application,
15 deadlines for submitting applications, and such other matters as the
16 director deems necessary.

17 Sec. 3. It is the intent of the Legislature to appropriate one
18 million one hundred thousand dollars for fiscal year 2017-18 to the
19 Division of Behavioral Health of the Department of Health and Human
20 Services to carry out the purposes of sections 1 and 2 of this act.