House Engrossed

veterans' court fund; grant program

State of Arizona
House of Representatives
Fifty-seventh Legislature
Second Regular Session
2026

CHAPTER 262

HOUSE BILL 2960

AN ACT

AMENDING TITLE 12, CHAPTER 1, ARTICLE 1, ARIZONA REVISED STATUTES, BY ADDING SECTION 12-119.06; AMENDING TITLE 41, CHAPTER 11, ARTICLE 1, ARIZONA REVISED STATUTES, BY ADDING SECTION 41-1610.04; RELATING TO VETERANS' SERVICES.

(TEXT OF BILL BEGINS ON NEXT PAGE)

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Arizona:

Section 1. Title 12, chapter 1, article 1, Arizona Revised Statutes, is amended by adding section 12-119.06, to read:

12-119.06. Veterans' specialty court grant program; veterans' treatment court fund; administration; purpose; annual reports

A. THE VETERANS' SPECIALTY COURT GRANT PROGRAM IS ESTABLISHED FOR MUNICIPALITIES AND COUNTIES IN THIS STATE TO ESTABLISH A VETERANS' COURT PROGRAM. THE ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS SHALL ADMINISTER THE VETERANS' SPECIALTY COURT GRANT PROGRAM. THE SUPREME COURT SHALL ADOPT RULES AS NECESSARY AND ESTABLISH CRITERIA TO IMPLEMENT THIS SECTION. GRANT MONIES MAY BE USED TO ESTABLISH NEW VETERANS' COURT PROGRAMS AND TO EXPAND AND ENHANCE EXISTING VETERANS' COURT PROGRAMS ESTABLISHED PURSUANT TO SECTION 22-601.

B. THE VETERANS' SPECIALTY COURT GRANT PROGRAM SHALL:

1. SUPPORT THE REHABILITATION AND REINTEGRATION OF VETERANS AS CONTRIBUTING MEMBERS OF THEIR COMMUNITIES.

2. PROMOTE COLLABORATION AMONG PROSECUTORS, DEFENSE COUNSELS, JUDGES, COMMUNITY-BASED SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS IN THIS STATE, THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AND THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' SERVICES.

3. DEVELOP AND OVERSEE INDIVIDUALIZED TREATMENT PLANS TO ADDRESS THE UNDERLYING CAUSES OF JUSTICE-INVOLVED VETERANS' BEHAVIOR, INCLUDING ANY OF THE FOLLOWING:

(a) POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER.

(b) TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY.

(c) ANGER MANAGEMENT.

(d) DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION.

(e) ALCOHOL AND DRUG ABUSE TREATMENT.

C. THE VETERANS' TREATMENT COURT FUND IS ESTABLISHED CONSISTING OF LEGISLATIVE APPROPRIATIONS. THE ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS SHALL ADMINISTER THE FUND. MONIES IN THE FUND ARE CONTINUOUSLY APPROPRIATED. THE FUND MAY BE USED TO PROVIDE MONIES TO MUNICIPALITIES AND COUNTIES IN THIS STATE TO ESTABLISH A VETERANS' COURT PROGRAM PURSUANT TO THIS SECTION AND TO EXPAND AND ENHANCE EXISTING VETERANS' COURT PROGRAMS ESTABLISHED PURSUANT TO SECTION 22-601. APPLICANTS SHALL SUBMIT AN APPLICATION ON A FORM PRESCRIBED BY THE ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS. FUND MONIES SHALL BE AWARDED ANNUALLY TO GRANTEES AND SHALL BE USED FOR ANY RELEVANT ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS, INCLUDING HIRING PERSONNEL TO ESTABLISH, MAINTAIN OR ENHANCE A VETERANS' COURT PROGRAM.

D. THE ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS SHALL COLLABORATE WITH COUNTY ATTORNEYS, MUNICIPAL PROSECUTORS, PUBLIC DEFENDERS AND ANY RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS TO ESTABLISH THE BEST PRACTICES AND STANDARDS FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF VETERANS' COURT PROGRAMS AND DATA COLLECTION IN THIS STATE.

E. ON OR BEFORE DECEMBER 31 OF EACH YEAR, EACH GRANTEE SHALL SUBMIT A REPORT TO THE ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS THAT INCLUDES ALL OF THE FOLLOWING:

1. THE NUMBER OF VETERANS SERVED, SEPARATED BY TYPE OF OFFENSE, DEMOGRAPHICS AND MILITARY SERVICE HISTORY.

2. ARREST AND RECIDIVISM RATES AMONG VETERANS' COURT PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS.

3. VETERANS' COURT PROGRAM COMPLETION RATES AND PARTICIPANT OUTCOMES.

4. USE OF MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE TREATMENT SERVICES.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR VETERANS' COURT PROGRAM AND VETERANS' SPECIALTY COURT GRANT PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT.

F. ON OR BEFORE MARCH 1 OF EACH YEAR, THE ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS SHALL SUBMIT A COMPREHENSIVE ANNUAL REPORT TO THE GOVERNOR, THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE AND THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES THAT ANALYZES THE DATA SUBMITTED PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION E OF THIS SECTION AND THAT SUMMARIZES AND INCLUDES ALL OF THE FOLLOWING:

1. STATEWIDE DATA ON VETERANS' COURT PROGRAMS THAT INCORPORATE GRANTEE-REPORTED METRICS ON PARTICIPATION, RECIDIVISM AND TREATMENT OUTCOMES.

2. CHALLENGES AND BARRIERS TO VETERANS' COURT PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION, BASED ON GRANTEE FEEDBACK AND DATA.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ENHANCING THE IDENTIFICATION AND ASSESSMENT OF VETERANS WITHIN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM OF THIS STATE, INCLUDING DATA COLLECTION PROTOCOLS AND BEST PRACTICES FOR CROSS-AGENCY COLLABORATION AND DATA SHARING AMONG FEDERAL, STATE AND LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS.

4. POLICY AND FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPROVE VETERANS' COURT PROGRAM AND VETERANS' SPECIALTY COURT GRANT PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS AND SUSTAINABILITY.

Sec. 2. Title 41, chapter 11, article 1, Arizona Revised Statutes, is amended by adding section 41-1610.04, to read:

41-1610.04. Department of veterans' services; veteran identification; anticipated release; confidentiality; annual report; definition

A. NOTWITHSTANDING ANY OTHER LAW, THE DEPARTMENT SHALL MAKE REASONABLE EFFORTS TO IDENTIFY INCARCERATED INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE VETERANS IN THIS STATE.

B. ON A MONTHLY BASIS AND TO THE EXTENT PRACTICABLE, THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS SHALL PROVIDE TO THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' SERVICES A LIST OF INCARCERATED INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE IDENTIFIED AS VETERANS AND WHO HAVE AN ANTICIPATED RELEASE DATE WITHIN NINETY DAYS. THE INFORMATION SHARED SHALL BE LIMITED TO THE MINIMUM INFORMATION NECESSARY TO IDENTIFY THE INDIVIDUAL AND FACILITATE OUTREACH.

C. INFORMATION SHARED PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION B OF THIS SECTION IS CONFIDENTIAL, IS NOT SUBJECT TO PUBLIC DISCLOSURE AND SHALL BE USED SOLELY FOR THE PURPOSE OF ENABLING THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' SERVICES TO PROVIDE BENEFITS COUNSELING, ASSIST WITH ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATIONS AND PROVIDE INFORMATION REGARDING AVAILABLE FEDERAL, STATE OR LOCAL VETERANS' BENEFITS AND SERVICES.

D. THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' SERVICES SHALL MAKE A REASONABLE EFFORT TO CONTACT INDIVIDUALS IDENTIFIED ON THE LIST BEFORE THE INDIVIDUAL'S RELEASE FROM INCARCERATION AND FOR A REASONABLE PERIOD FOLLOWING THE INDIVIDUAL'S RELEASE FROM INCARCERATION FOR THE PURPOSES DESCRIBED IN THIS SECTION.

E. THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS AND THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' SERVICES SHALL ENTER INTO A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING TO ESTABLISH PROCEDURES FOR SECURE DATA SHARING CONSISTENT WITH APPLICABLE STATE AND FEDERAL CONFIDENTIALITY LAWS.

F. ON OR BEFORE DECEMBER 31, 2026 AND EACH YEAR THEREAFTER, THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS, IN COORDINATION WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' SERVICES, SHALL SUBMIT A REPORT TO THE GOVERNOR, THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE AND THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES REGARDING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS SECTION DURING THE PRECEDING FISCAL YEAR. THE REPORT MUST INCLUDE DATA ON ALL OF THE FOLLOWING:

1. THE NUMBER OF CURRENTLY INCARCERATED INDIVIDUALS IDENTIFIED AS VETERANS AS OF JUNE 30 OF THE PRECEDING FISCAL YEAR.

2. THE TOTAL NUMBER OF VETERANS WHO WERE ANTICIPATED FOR RELEASE FROM INCARCERATION AND WHO WERE REFERRED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' SERVICES DURING THE PRECEDING FISCAL YEAR.

3. THE NUMBER OF VETERANS WHO WERE ASSISTED WITH INITIATION, REINSTATEMENT OR COORDINATION OF VETERANS BENEFITS BEFORE OR AFTER RELEASE FROM INCARCERATION DURING THE PRECEDING FISCAL YEAR.

G. FOR THE PURPOSES OF THIS SECTION, "VETERAN" HAS THE SAME MEANING PRESCRIBED IN SECTION 41-601.

APPROVED BY THE GOVERNOR JUNE 22, 2026.

FILED IN THE OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE JUNE 22, 2026.