

# SENATE BILL 531

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7lr2723  
CF HB 269

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By: **Senator Benson**

Introduced and read first time: February 1, 2017

Assigned to: Finance

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## A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Housing Counselor and Aftercare Program**

3 FOR the purpose of establishing the Housing Counselor and Aftercare Program in the  
4 Department of Human Resources to assist families and individuals who are  
5 experiencing, or who are in imminent danger of, a housing crisis in obtaining and  
6 maintaining permanent housing; allowing a family to apply for services if the family  
7 is the recipient of temporary cash assistance or is in the process of applying for  
8 temporary cash assistance; specifying certain activities that a housing counselor  
9 shall perform in assisting a family or individual client with securing and maintaining  
10 permanent, affordable housing; specifying certain purposes for which Program funds  
11 may be used; specifying certain client-related expenses; requiring a local  
12 administrative agency to be designated by the Department or a local government for  
13 certain purposes; specifying that the Program be funded by a certain fund; requiring  
14 the Governor to include a certain appropriation for the Program in the annual budget  
15 each fiscal year beginning in a certain fiscal year; altering the purpose of the  
16 Foreclosed Property Registry Fund; defining a certain term; and generally relating  
17 to the Housing Counselor and Aftercare Program.

18 BY adding to

19 Article – Human Services

20 Section 6–801 through 6–807 to be under the new subtitle “Subtitle 8. Housing  
21 Counselor and Aftercare Program”

22 Annotated Code of Maryland

23 (2007 Volume and 2016 Supplement)

24 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,

25 Article – Real Property

26 Section 14–126.1(i)

27 Annotated Code of Maryland

28 (2015 Replacement Volume and 2016 Supplement)

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EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,  
2 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

3 **Article – Human Services**

4 **SUBTITLE 8. HOUSING COUNSELOR AND AFTERCARE PROGRAM.**

5 **6–801.**

6 IN THIS SUBTITLE, “PROGRAM” MEANS THE HOUSING COUNSELOR AND  
7 AFTERCARE PROGRAM.

8 **6–802.**

9 THERE IS A HOUSING COUNSELOR AND AFTERCARE PROGRAM IN THE  
10 DEPARTMENT.

11 **6–803.**

12 THE PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM IS TO ASSIST FAMILIES AND INDIVIDUALS  
13 WHO ARE EXPERIENCING, OR WHO ARE IN IMMINENT DANGER OF, A HOUSING CRISIS  
14 IN OBTAINING AND MAINTAINING PERMANENT HOUSING.

15 **6–804.**

16 A FAMILY MAY APPLY FOR HOUSING COUNSELING AND AFTERCARE SERVICES  
17 IF THE FAMILY IS THE RECIPIENT OF OR IS IN THE PROCESS OF APPLYING FOR  
18 TEMPORARY CASH ASSISTANCE, AS DEFINED IN § 5–301 OF THIS ARTICLE.

19 **6–805.**

20 A HOUSING COUNSELOR SHALL ASSIST A FAMILY OR AN INDIVIDUAL CLIENT  
21 WITH SECURING AND MAINTAINING PERMANENT, AFFORDABLE HOUSING BY:

22 (1) ASSISTING THE CLIENT WITH SEARCHING FOR AND OBTAINING  
23 PERMANENT, AFFORDABLE HOUSING;

24 (2) DEVELOPING A COMPREHENSIVE, CURRENT LIST OF HOUSING  
25 RESOURCES AND EXPANDING THE LIST OF HOUSING RESOURCES TO INCLUDE NEW  
26 RESOURCES;

27 (3) ESTABLISHING A WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH THE CLIENT AND  
28 ADVOCATING FOR THE CLIENT WITH LANDLORDS, PROPERTY MANAGERS, REALTY  
29 COMPANIES, AND OTHER SOURCES OF LOW-INCOME HOUSING;

1           (4) WORKING WITH A CLIENT'S CASE MANAGER, WHEN APPLICABLE,  
2 TO COORDINATE SERVICES TO THE CLIENT;

3           (5) ASSISTING THE CLIENT, AS NEEDED, WITH ISSUES THAT  
4 CONTRIBUTE TO CHRONIC HOUSING PROBLEMS, SUCH AS BUDGETING AND  
5 HOUSEHOLD MANAGEMENT; AND

6           (6) PERFORMING OTHER DUTIES AS ASSIGNED BY THE DEPARTMENT.

7 **6-806.**

8           (A) PROGRAM FUNDS MAY BE USED FOR:

9           (1) SALARY AND FICA FOR HOUSING COUNSELORS AND AFTERCARE  
10 CASE MANAGERS;

11           (2) CLIENT-RELATED EXPENSES, INCLUDING:

12                   (I) FIRST AND FINAL MONTHS' RENT;

13                   (II) TRANSPORTATION FOR HOUSING SEARCHES;

14                   (III) MOVING EXPENSES;

15                   (IV) ESSENTIAL FURNISHINGS;

16                   (V) STORAGE;

17                   (VI) ARREARAGES;

18                   (VII) CREDIT CHECKS AND HOUSING APPLICATION FEES;

19                   (VIII) SECURITY DEPOSITS;

20                   (IX) UTILITY DEPOSITS; AND

21                   (X) OTHER IDENTIFIED NEEDS; AND

22           (3) OTHER ITEMS THAT THE DEPARTMENT DESIGNATES.

23           (B) A LOCAL ADMINISTRATIVE AGENCY SHALL BE DESIGNATED BY THE  
24 DEPARTMENT OR A LOCAL GOVERNMENT TO MANAGE THE PROGRAM IN A

1 PARTICULAR SUBDIVISION, PROVIDE SERVICES, AND PROVIDE FUNDS FOR  
2 ADDITIONAL COSTS, INCLUDING OPERATING COSTS, RELATED TO THE PROGRAM.

3 (C) IT IS THE INTENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY THAT THE PROGRAM BE  
4 FUNDED BY THE FORECLOSED PROPERTY REGISTRY FUND IN THE DEPARTMENT  
5 OF LABOR, LICENSING, AND REGULATION.

6 6-807.

7 BEGINNING IN FISCAL YEAR 2019 AND FOR EACH FISCAL YEAR THEREAFTER,  
8 THE GOVERNOR SHALL INCLUDE IN THE ANNUAL BUDGET AN APPROPRIATION FOR  
9 THE PROGRAM OF \$516,828.

10 Article – Real Property

11 14-126.1.

12 (i) (1) There is a Foreclosed Property Registry Fund in the Department.

13 (2) The purpose of the Fund is to support:

14 (I) [the] THE development, administration, and maintenance of the  
15 Foreclosed Property Registry established under this section; AND

16 (II) THE HOUSING COUNSELOR AND AFTERCARE PROGRAM  
17 ESTABLISHED UNDER TITLE 6, SUBTITLE 8 OF THE HUMAN SERVICES ARTICLE,  
18 WHICH ASSISTS FAMILIES AND INDIVIDUALS IN OBTAINING AND MAINTAINING  
19 PERMANENT HOUSING.

20 (3) The Department shall administer the Fund.

21 (4) (i) The Fund is a special, nonlapsing fund that is not subject to §  
22 7-302 of the State Finance and Procurement Article.

23 (ii) The State Treasurer shall hold the Fund separately, and the  
24 Comptroller shall account for the Fund.

25 (5) The Fund consists of:

26 (i) Revenue distributed to the Fund under subsection (h) of this  
27 section;

28 (ii) Investment earnings of the Fund;

29 (iii) Money appropriated in the State budget to the Fund; and

1 (iv) Any other money from any other source accepted for the benefit  
2 of the Fund.

3 (6) (i) The State Treasurer shall invest the money of the Fund in the  
4 same manner as other State money may be invested.

5 (ii) Any investment earnings of the Fund shall be paid into the Fund.

6 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect  
7 October 1, 2017.