

HB 1753-FN - AS INTRODUCED

2026 SESSION

26-2986

07/06

HOUSE BILL ***1753-FN***

AN ACT establishing the New Hampshire first for veterans program and authority.

SPONSORS: Rep. Creighton, Hills. 30; Rep. Gagne, Hills. 16; Rep. Moffett, Merr. 4; Rep. Rollins, Sull. 3; Rep. Roy, Rock. 31; Sen. Innis, Dist 7

COMMITTEE: State-Federal Relations and Veterans Affairs

ANALYSIS

This bill establishes the first for veterans program, a program designed to attract, retain, and support veterans in the state.

Explanation: Matter added to current law appears in ***bold italics***.
Matter removed from current law appears ~~[in brackets and struckthrough.]~~
Matter which is either (a) all new or (b) repealed and reenacted appears in regular type.

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

In the Year of Our Lord Two Thousand Twenty-Six

AN ACT establishing the New Hampshire first for veterans program and authority.

Be it Enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court convened:

1 1 New Subdivision; First for Veterans Program. Amend RSA 110-B by inserting after section 91
2 the following new subdivision:

3 First for Veterans Program

4 110-B:92 Declaration of Purpose. The general court declares it to be the purpose of this
5 subdivision to:

6 I. Maintain the state's ability to attract and retain veterans to New Hampshire and attain
7 and maintain a position as the most veteran-friendly state.

8 II. Acknowledge and address demand signals for critical resources, service, and support.

9 III. Recognize the gaps and the importance of public and private partnerships to identify,
10 develop, and resource solutions to facilitate overcoming barriers to veterans, service members and
11 their families.

12 IV. Learn, adapt, seek, and resource new and more transformational concepts that raise
13 awareness of the state's veteran-friendly advocacy, policy, and laws.

14 V. Develop veteran employment support and improve focus on veteran well-being.

15 VI. Provide strategic messaging and transition assistance programs and reinforce critical
16 gaps, including mental healthcare access, suicide prevention, substance use disorder, physical well
17 being, employment, and housing stability.

18 110-B:93 Definitions. In this subdivision:

19 I. "Authority" means the New Hampshire first for veterans authority.

20 II. "Board" means the board of directors of the New Hampshire first for veterans authority.

21 III. "Grant obligations" means the legal obligation arising from the use of program funds.

22 110-B:94 New Hampshire First for Veterans Program Established.

23 I. There is hereby established the New Hampshire first for veterans program. The program
24 shall provide funding to promote the general welfare of the state's veterans, service members and
25 their families by providing quality services.

26 II. The program will prioritize efforts that:

27 (a) Contribute to ending veteran homelessness in New Hampshire;

28 (b) Attract and retain veterans to New Hampshire and match their unique skills with
29 veteran-friendly businesses and organizations and provide them with employment support;

30 (c) Improve access to physical and mental healthcare, suicide prevention measures, oral
31 healthcare options, and substance use disorder treatment;

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1 (d) Support military skills transfer, training, and certification; and

2 (e) Address a broad range of educational opportunities, including institutions of higher
3 learning, on-the-job training, and apprenticeships and initiatives focused on the trades.

4 110-B-95 New Hampshire First For Veterans Authority.

5 I. There is hereby established the New Hampshire first for veterans authority, which shall
6 act as a both a public and private entity. The authority shall be constituted as a public
7 instrumentality of the state. The authority and power conferred by this subdivision shall be deemed
8 and held to be the performance of public and essential governmental functions. The authority shall
9 be a nonprofit corporation organized under RSA 292.

10 II. The authority shall be governed by a board of directors composed of 22 members. Voting
11 members shall not appoint designees to act in their places. A chairperson shall be elected from
12 among the members.

13 III. Board members with voting powers shall be as follows:

14 (a) One member of the senate, appointed by the president of the senate.

15 (b) Two members of the house of representatives, appointed by the speaker of the house
16 of representatives.

17 (c) Five members of the veterans council, appointed by the governor.

18 (d) The commissioner of the department of military affairs and veteran services, or
19 designee.

20 IV. Board members without voting powers shall be as follows:

21 (a) A representative from the New Hampshire first for veteran board, or designee.

22 (b) The commissioner of the employment security, or designee.

23 (c) The commissioner of the department of safety, or designee.

24 (d) The commissioner of the department of business and economic affairs, or designee.

25 (e) Persons belonging to the state veterans advisory committee or the military
26 leadership team, appointed by the governor, with each having expertise, knowledge of, or experience
27 in one of the following areas:

28 (1) Housing stability.

29 (2) Physical healthcare.

30 (3) Mental healthcare and suicide prevention.

31 (4) Military skills transfer, licensing, and certifications.

32 (5) Veteran-friendly businesses or organizations.

33 (6) Oral healthcare professions.

34 (7) Substance use disorder programs.

35 (8) Educational institutions.

36 (9) Apprenticeships, on the job training, or the trades.

1 V.(a) The terms of state agency members, member of the senate, and members of the house
2 of representatives shall be coterminous with their respective terms in office.

3 (b) Members appointed by the governor may be removed from office for cause by the
4 governor. Cause for removal shall include incapacity or failure to perform a member's duties.
5 Vacancies shall be filled for the unexpired term of the office in the same manner as the original
6 appointment. Legislative members shall be entitled to mileage reimbursement at the legislative
7 rate.

8 VI. Seven voting members shall constitute a quorum. Decisions shall be made by a majority
9 of those present and voting. The board shall meet quarterly and at such other times as may be
10 deemed necessary by the chairperson.

11 VII. Board members shall not be subject to civil liability for acts performed in accordance
12 with their duties under this subdivision.

13 110-B:96 Powers and Duties of the Authority. The authority shall have all the powers necessary
14 and convenient to carry out and effectuate the purposes and provisions of this subdivision and shall:

15 I. Adopt bylaws for the regulation of its affairs and the conduct of its business.

16 II. Adopt criteria and guidelines for:

17 (a) The acquisition of resource assets;

18 (b) The restoration or rehabilitation of cultural and historical buildings or structures;

19 and

20 (c) The stewardship and monitoring of resource assets on which program funds are
21 expended.

22 III. Adopt policies deemed important or necessary to carry out the purposes of this
23 subdivision.

24 IV. Oversee and direct the expenditure of funds deposited in the New Hampshire first for
25 veterans fund in accordance with the purposes of this subdivision, which shall include the authority
26 to draw upon funds for program purposes and for administrative costs of the program.

27 V. Make and execute contracts for services necessary to carry out the purposes of this
28 subdivision.

29 VI. Enforce grant obligations through contract, acceptance of rights to enforcement, or other
30 legal actions as necessary to carry out the purposes of this subdivision.

31 VII. Prepare an annual report to be presented and filed, by no later than December 1, to the
32 president of the senate, the speaker of the house of representatives, the governor, and the state
33 library. The report shall detail the activities and administrative costs of the authority, as well as a
34 complete financial accounting of the funds established under RSA 110-B:99 and 110-B:100. The
35 report shall also include a historical summary of the program's activities to date. A copy of the
36 report shall be made available by the authority to any interested person.

1 VIII. Conduct an independent audit by an certified public accountant of its books and
2 accounts each fiscal year.

3 IX. Should the authority deem it appropriate:

4 (a) Adopt an official seal.

5 (b) Maintain an office and hire staff.

6 (c) Apply for, or accept from any source, gifts and donations of:

7 (1) Money, including money from appropriate fundraising activities;

8 (2) Labor, equipment, and supplies;

9 (3) Federal, local, private, and other matching funds and incentives; and

10 (4) Other assets to be deposited in the fund that may aid the authority in the
11 conduct of its affairs.

12 (d) Employ or retain, as independent contractors attorneys, accountants, and other
13 advisors, consultants, or agents as may be necessary without regard to any personnel or civil service
14 law of the state to prescribe their duties and qualifications, and to fix and pay their compensation, if
15 any.

16 (e) Appoint qualified individuals to serve as unpaid volunteers under such terms and
17 conditions as deemed necessary. Said volunteers or advisors may be paid a stipend and/or
18 reimbursed for any incidental expenses determined by the authority to be necessary and incurred
19 while performing the business of the authority.

20 110-B:97 Executive Director. The board of directors shall nominate one for appointment by the
21 governor to serve as an executive director. The executive director shall serve a term of 5 years, with
22 reappointment or a vacancy to be filled in the same manner as the original appointment. At the
23 request of the board, the governor may remove the executive director for cause. The chairperson of
24 the authority shall not serve concurrently as the executive director. The executive director shall:

25 I. Coordinate the activities of state agencies directly involved with the administration of the
26 program in accordance with this subdivision.

27 II. Evaluate the eligible resources proposed for protection or restoration under this program,
28 and determine if these resources meet the criteria of the program, subsequent to instruction by the
29 board.

30 III. At the direction of the board, administer the affairs of the program and be directly
31 responsible for executing all policies of the board.

32 110-B:98 Status of Employees.

33 I. The authority may hire, fix, and pay compensation, prescribe duties and qualifications,
34 and establish personnel policies without regard to any personnel or civil service law or personnel or
35 civil service rule of the state. The employees of the authority shall not be classified employees of the
36 state within the meaning of RSA 21-I:49. Any individual employed by the authority shall be deemed
37 an employee at will and shall serve at the pleasure of the authority.

1 II. Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph I, any individual employed by the authority
2 whose employment calls for 30 hours or more work in a normal calendar week, and whose position is
3 anticipated to have a duration of 6 months or more, shall be entitled to elect to receive such health,
4 dental, life insurance, deferred compensation, and retirement benefits as are afforded to classified
5 employees of the state provided, however, that the election is made in writing within 30 days of the
6 start of employment. Upon election by such individual, the authority shall pay from its revenues the
7 state's share of such benefits. Any remaining costs of health, dental, life insurance, deferred
8 compensation, and retirement benefits which an individual elects to receive pursuant to this section,
9 shall be withheld from such individual's salary as a payroll deduction. Written notice of the
10 availability of these benefit options shall be provided to each individual upon employment by the
11 authority.

12 110-B:99 Trust Fund Established; Administration.

13 I. There is established in the office of the state treasurer the New Hampshire first for
14 veterans trust fund. Moneys in the fund and any interest earned on the fund shall only be used for
15 the purpose of this subdivision. The trust fund shall be non-lapsing interest bearing funds and shall
16 be continually appropriated to the department of military affairs and veterans services.

17 II. The state treasurer shall invest the sums deposited in the fund in a prudent manner
18 consistent with the purposes of this subdivision. Interest earned on moneys in the fund shall accrue
19 to the fund to the extent allowed under law.

20 III. No funds of any state agency shall be transferred to the trust fund without authorization
21 from the general court. Federal funds accepted by the joint fiscal committee or governor for purposes
22 similar to those of this subdivision may be deposited in the trust fund.

23 110-B:100 Administrative Fund.

24 I. There is established in the authority a separate fund to be known as the first for veterans
25 administrative fund. Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, the commissioner
26 of the department of safety shall credit any revenue generated pursuant to RSA 261:75 through
27 261:97 into this fund. The total revenues generated to the administrative fund from this source shall
28 not exceed \$200,000 for each fiscal year. Any revenue generated from this source in excess of the
29 \$200,000 maximum per year shall be credited by the New Hampshire first for veterans trust fund in
30 RSA 110-B:99. In its annual report, the authority shall include the amount of revenues exceeding
31 the maximum which are credited to the New Hampshire first for veterans trust fund.

32 II. All sums so credited shall be appropriated to the authority for the following purposes:

33 (a) To pay the costs of administering and operating the authority, including all wages,
34 salaries, benefits, and other expenses authorized by the board or the executive director. The
35 authority may enter into a contract or agreement for provision of services to withhold on a monthly
36 basis all payroll and benefit costs for employees.

1 (b) For the payment of all expenses incident to the management and operation of the
2 authority consistent with its statutory purpose and as the board or the executive director may
3 determine.

4 III. This fund shall constitute a continuing appropriation for the benefit of the authority.
5 Any amount remaining to the credit of the authority at the close of any fiscal year, and any interest
6 accrued, shall be nonlapsing and shall be carried over and credited to the fund for the succeeding
7 year.

8 110-B:101 Program Administration; Matching Funds.

9 I. The authority shall distribute funds to further the purposes of this subdivision only to
10 eligible applicants. Eligible applicants shall include:

11 (a) Municipalities or other political subdivisions of the state; and

12 (b) Publicly-supported nonprofit corporations exempt from federal income taxation
13 under section 501(c) of the Internal Revenue Code.

14 II. Other parties wishing to participate in the program may partner with one or more
15 eligible applicants. At the option of eligible applicants and with the approval of the board, state
16 agencies may hold rights in resource assets acquired through the program by eligible applicants.
17 The applicant must demonstrate the commitment of the owner of the assets to participate in the
18 proposed action.

19 III. Financial assistance to eligible applicants shall be provided through grants, block
20 grants, and loans. Up to 50 percent of financial assistance provided each year may be provided
21 through loans. Principal and interest paid on such loans shall be deposited in the land and
22 community heritage investment program administrative fund established in RSA 227-M:7.
23 Financial assistance may only be expended on eligible resources for the following purposes:

24 (a) Ending veteran homelessness in New Hampshire;

25 (b) Attracting and retaining veterans to New Hampshire;

26 (c) Matching veteran skills with workforce development needs;

27 (d) Businesses and organizations that honor and positively impact veterans, service
28 members, and their families;

29 (e) Employment support;

30 (f) Improving access to physical and mental healthcare;

31 (g) Suicide prevention measures;

32 (h) Providing oral healthcare options;

33 (i) Substance use disorder treatment;

34 (j) Support military skills transfer, training, and certification; or

35 (k) Addressing a range of educational opportunities including institutes of higher
36 learning, on the job training, apprenticeships and initiatives focused on the trades.

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1 2 New Subparagraph; The State and Its Government; State Treasurer; Application of Receipts.
2 Amend RSA 6:12, I(b) by inserting after subparagraph (410) the following new subparagraph:

3 (411) Moneys deposited into the New Hampshire first for veterans trust fund
4 established in RSA 110-B:99.

5 (412) Moneys deposited into the first for veterans administrative fund established in
6 RSA 110-B:110.

7 3 Effective Date. This act shall take effect 60 days after its passage.

HB 1753-FN- FISCAL NOTE
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AN ACT establishing the New Hampshire first for veterans program and authority.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Estimated State Impact				
	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029
Revenue	\$0	(\$4,815,840) Safety Plate Funds	(\$4,966,316) Safety Plate Funds	(\$5,121,305) Safety Plate Funds
		\$4,815,840 (Various Funds)	\$4,966,316 (Various Funds)	\$5,121,305 (Various Funds)
<i>Revenue Fund(s)</i>	Various Dept. of Safety Dedicated Funds Including ReflectORIZED Plate Inventory Fund and Conservation Plate Fund (RSA 261:75-97), Highway Fund, Land and Community Heritage Investment (LCHIP) Administrative Fund, NH First for Veterans Trust Fund (FVTF), and First for Veterans Administrative Fund (FVAF)			
Expenditures*	\$0	Indeterminable Increase between \$105,000 and \$4,815,840	Indeterminable Increase between \$107,000 and \$4,966,316	Indeterminable Increase between \$112,000 and \$5,121,305
<i>Funding Source(s)</i>	NH First for Veterans Trust Fund and First for Veterans Administrative Fund and General Fund			
Appropriations*	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<i>Funding Source(s)</i>	None			

*Expenditure = Cost of bill

*Appropriation = Authorized funding to cover cost of bill

Estimated Political Subdivision Impact				
	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029
County Revenue	\$0	Indeterminable	Indeterminable	Indeterminable
County Expenditures	\$0	Indeterminable	Indeterminable	Indeterminable
Local Revenue	\$0	Indeterminable	Indeterminable	Indeterminable
Local Expenditures	\$0	Indeterminable	Indeterminable	Indeterminable

METHODOLOGY:

This bill establishes the New Hampshire First for Veterans Program and creates the New Hampshire First for Veterans Authority as a public instrumentality of the state to provide grants, block grants, and loans to support veterans, service members, and their families. The bill creates two nonlapsing funds, the First for Veterans Administrative Fund and the New Hampshire First for Veterans Trust Fund, and redirects revenues collected under RSA 261:75-97 into these new funds. The bill also provides that principal and interest repayments on loans issued by the authority be deposited into the Land and Community Heritage Investment Program Administrative Fund.

The Department of Safety states this bill would result in a loss of revenues currently deposited into existing motor vehicle plate related funds, including funds used to support license plate production and associated operations. The Department estimates the loss of revenues to the plate funds would be \$4,815,840 in FY 2027, \$4,966,316 in FY 2028, and \$5,121,305 in FY 2029. The Department states that under this bill these revenues would instead be credited to the First for Veterans Administrative Fund and the New Hampshire First for Veterans Trust Fund and disbursed in accordance with the bill. As a result, revenues to the newly established funds would increase by corresponding amounts, while revenues to the funds that currently receive RSA 261:75-97 proceeds, including the Reflectorized Plate Inventory Fund, the Conservation Plate Fund and the Park Plate Fund, would decrease by the same amounts. The net impact on state revenues is indeterminable because the bill does not provide replacement funding for the affected plate related funds. The Department further notes that the redirection of these revenues could impact the existing plate production operations absent an alternative funding source.

The Department of Military Affairs and Veterans Services anticipates an increase in general fund expenditures due to the need for a new permanent full-time position to manage the program, with projected costs of \$105,000 in FY 2027, \$107,000 in FY 2028, and \$112,000 in FY 2029. However, because the legislation does not define staffing levels, administrative structure, program scope, or grant funding amounts, the full cost of operating the authority cannot be determined.

Local expenditures and revenues may change only if municipalities or counties voluntarily apply for and accept grants or loans from the authority. Because local participation is optional, and the scope of available grant funding is unknown, the local impact is indeterminable.

AGENCIES CONTACTED:

Department of Military Affairs and Veteran Services and Department of Safety