

116TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 257

To provide for rental assistance for homeless or at-risk Indian veterans,
and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JANUARY 29, 2019

Mr. TESTER (for himself, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. UDALL, and Mr. ISAKSON) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Indian Affairs

A BILL

To provide for rental assistance for homeless or at-risk
Indian veterans, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Tribal HUD–VASH
5 Act of 2019”.

6 **SEC. 2. RENTAL ASSISTANCE FOR HOMELESS OR AT-RISK**
7 **INDIAN VETERANS.**

8 Section 8(o)(19) of the United States Housing Act
9 of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437f(o)(19)) is amended by adding
10 at the end the following:

1 “(D) INDIAN VETERANS HOUSING RENTAL
2 ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.—

3 “(i) DEFINITIONS.—In this subpara-
4 graph:

5 “(I) ELIGIBLE INDIAN VET-
6 ERAN.—The term ‘eligible Indian vet-
7 eran’ means an Indian veteran who
8 is—

9 “(aa) homeless or at risk of
10 homelessness; and

11 “(bb) living—

12 “(AA) on or near a res-
13 ervation; or

14 “(BB) in or near any
15 other Indian area.

16 “(II) ELIGIBLE RECIPIENT.—
17 The term ‘eligible recipient’ means a
18 recipient eligible to receive a grant
19 under section 101 of the Native
20 American Housing Assistance and
21 Self-Determination Act of 1996 (25
22 U.S.C. 4111).

23 “(III) INDIAN; INDIAN AREA.—
24 The terms ‘Indian’ and ‘Indian area’
25 have the meanings given those terms

1 in section 4 of the Native American
2 Housing Assistance and Self-Deter-
3 mination Act of 1996 (25 U.S.C.
4 4103).

5 “(IV) INDIAN VETERAN.—The
6 term ‘Indian veteran’ means an In-
7 dian who is a veteran.

8 “(V) PROGRAM.—The term ‘Pro-
9 gram’ means the Tribal HUD–VASH
10 program carried out under clause (ii).

11 “(VI) TRIBAL ORGANIZATION.—
12 The term ‘tribal organization’ has the
13 meaning given the term in section 4
14 of the Indian Self-Determination and
15 Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C.
16 5304).

17 “(ii) PROGRAM SPECIFICATIONS.—
18 The Secretary shall use not less than 5
19 percent of the amounts made available for
20 rental assistance under this paragraph to
21 carry out a rental assistance and sup-
22 ported housing program, to be known as
23 the ‘Tribal HUD–VASH program’, in con-
24 junction with the Secretary of Veterans Af-

1 fairs, by awarding grants for the benefit of
2 eligible Indian veterans.

3 “(iii) MODEL.—

4 “(I) IN GENERAL.—Except as
5 provided in subclause (II), the Sec-
6 retary shall model the Program on the
7 rental assistance and supported hous-
8 ing program authorized under sub-
9 paragraph (A) and applicable appro-
10 priations Acts, including administra-
11 tion in conjunction with the Secretary
12 of Veterans Affairs.

13 “(II) EXCEPTIONS.—

14 “(aa) SECRETARY OF HOUS-
15 ING AND URBAN DEVELOP-
16 MENT.—After consultation with
17 Indian tribes, eligible recipients,
18 and any other appropriate tribal
19 organizations, the Secretary may
20 make necessary and appropriate
21 modifications to facilitate the use
22 of the Program by eligible recipi-
23 ents to serve eligible Indian vet-
24 erans.

1 “(bb) SECRETARY OF VET-
 2 ERANS AFFAIRS.—After consulta-
 3 tion with Indian tribes, eligible
 4 recipients, and any other appro-
 5 priate tribal organizations, the
 6 Secretary of Veterans Affairs
 7 may make necessary and appro-
 8 priate modifications to facilitate
 9 the use of the Program by eligi-
 10 ble recipients to serve eligible In-
 11 dian veterans.

12 “(iv) ELIGIBLE RECIPIENTS.—The
 13 Secretary shall make amounts for rental
 14 assistance and associated administrative
 15 costs under the Program available in the
 16 form of grants to eligible recipients.

17 “(v) FUNDING CRITERIA.—The Sec-
 18 retary shall award grants under the Pro-
 19 gram based on—

20 “(I) need;

21 “(II) administrative capacity; and

22 “(III) any other funding criteria
 23 established by the Secretary in a no-
 24 tice published in the Federal Register

1 after consulting with the Secretary of
 2 Veterans Affairs.

3 “(vi) ADMINISTRATION.—Grants
 4 awarded under the Program shall be ad-
 5 ministered in accordance with the Native
 6 American Housing Assistance and Self-De-
 7 termination Act of 1996 (25 U.S.C. 4101
 8 et seq.), except that recipients shall—

9 “(I) submit to the Secretary, in a
 10 manner prescribed by the Secretary,
 11 reports on the utilization of rental as-
 12 sistance provided under the Program;
 13 and

14 “(II) provide to the Secretary in-
 15 formation specified by the Secretary
 16 to assess the effectiveness of the Pro-
 17 gram in serving eligible Indian vet-
 18 erans.

19 “(vii) CONSULTATION.—

20 “(I) GRANT RECIPIENTS; TRIBAL
 21 ORGANIZATIONS.—The Secretary, in
 22 coordination with the Secretary of
 23 Veterans Affairs, shall consult with el-
 24 igible recipients and any other appro-
 25 priate tribal organization on the de-

1 sign of the Program to ensure the ef-
2 fective delivery of rental assistance
3 and supportive services to eligible In-
4 dian veterans under the Program.

5 “(II) INDIAN HEALTH SERV-
6 ICE.—The Director of the Indian
7 Health Service shall provide any as-
8 sistance requested by the Secretary or
9 the Secretary of Veterans Affairs in
10 carrying out the Program.

11 “(viii) WAIVER.—

12 “(I) IN GENERAL.—Except as
13 provided in subclause (II), the Sec-
14 retary may waive or specify alter-
15 native requirements for any provision
16 of law (including regulations) that the
17 Secretary administers in connection
18 with the use of rental assistance made
19 available under the Program if the
20 Secretary finds that the waiver or al-
21 ternative requirement is necessary for
22 the effective delivery and administra-
23 tion of rental assistance under the
24 Program to eligible Indian veterans.

1 “(II) EXCEPTION.—The Sec-
 2 retary may not waive or specify alter-
 3 native requirements under subclause
 4 (I) for any provision of law (including
 5 regulations) relating to labor stand-
 6 ards or the environment.

7 “(ix) RENEWAL GRANTS.—The Sec-
 8 retary may—

9 “(I) set aside, from amounts
 10 made available for tenant-based rental
 11 assistance under this subsection and
 12 without regard to the amounts used
 13 for new grants under clause (ii), such
 14 amounts as may be necessary to
 15 award renewal grants to eligible re-
 16 cipients that received a grant under
 17 the Program in a previous year; and

18 “(II) specify criteria that an eli-
 19 gible recipient must satisfy to receive
 20 a renewal grant under subclause (I),
 21 including providing data on how the
 22 eligible recipient used the amounts of
 23 any grant previously received under
 24 the Program.

25 “(x) REPORTING.—

1 “(I) IN GENERAL.—Not later
2 than 1 year after the date of enact-
3 ment of the Tribal HUD–VASH Act
4 of 2019, and every 5 years thereafter,
5 the Secretary, in coordination with the
6 Secretary of Veterans Affairs and the
7 Director of the Indian Health Service,
8 shall—

9 “(aa) conduct a review of
10 the implementation of the Pro-
11 gram, including any factors that
12 may have limited its success; and

13 “(bb) submit a report de-
14 scribing the results of the review
15 under item (aa) to—

16 “(AA) the Committee
17 on Indian Affairs, the Com-
18 mittee on Banking, Housing,
19 and Urban Affairs, the
20 Committee on Veterans’ Af-
21 fairs, and the Committee on
22 Appropriations of the Sen-
23 ate; and

24 “(BB) the Sub-
25 committee on Indian, Insu-

lar and Alaska Native Affairs of the Committee on Natural Resources, the Committee on Financial Services, the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives.

“(II) ANALYSIS OF HOUSING STOCK LIMITATION.—The Secretary shall include in the initial report submitted under subclause (I) a description of—

“(aa) any regulations governing the use of formula current assisted stock (as defined in section 1000.314 of title 24, Code of Federal Regulations (or any successor regulation)) within the Program;

“(bb) the number of recipients of grants under the Program that have reported the regulations described in item (aa) as

1 a barrier to implementation of
2 the Program; and
3 “(cc) proposed alternative
4 legislation or regulations devel-
5 oped by the Secretary in con-
6 sultation with recipients of
7 grants under the Program to
8 allow the use of formula current
9 assisted stock within the Pro-
10 gram.”.

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