

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA**  
**SESSION 2017**

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**HOUSE BILL 647**

Short Title: Task Force on Homelessness. (Public)

Sponsors: Representatives Pierce, Terry, Jordan, and Quick (Primary Sponsors).  
*For a complete list of sponsors, refer to the North Carolina General Assembly web site.*

Referred to: Homelessness, Foster Care, and Dependency

April 11, 2017

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE JOINT LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE ON  
HOMELESSNESS AND DIRECTING THE TASK FORCE TO STUDY "HOUSING  
FIRST" AND ITS APPLICATION IN NORTH CAROLINA.

Whereas, temporary housing methods that seek to guide homeless individuals to permanent housing by helping them overcome underlying obstacles have not proven effective; and

Whereas, empirical evidence supports that the sobriety and stability necessary to resolve homelessness are far more likely when individuals have permanent housing in place; and

Whereas, the Housing First approach provides permanent housing immediately, and then facilitates services to more effectively address underlying obstacles; and

Whereas, the Housing First approach is strongly endorsed by public and private authorities as the best practice for addressing homelessness; and

Whereas, the federal government has recognized Housing First as a proven method for ending all types of homelessness and the most effective approach to ending chronic homelessness; and

Whereas, homeless individuals spend considerable and costly time in public detention facilities, emergency rooms, and homeless shelters; and

Whereas, empirical evidence supports that permanent housing for the homeless is less expensive for government than continued homelessness; and

Whereas, Housing First methods have substantially alleviated the rate of homelessness in other states, while costing governments less than continued homelessness; and

Whereas, Housing First methods have proven successful and cost-effective in portions of North Carolina; Now, therefore,

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

**SECTION 1.** There is established the North Carolina Task Force on Homelessness (Task Force). The purpose of the Task Force is to (i) study methods of addressing homelessness, (ii) study the needs specific to homelessness in North Carolina, and (iii) recommend initiatives that are appropriately tailored to the needs of North Carolina. In carrying out this study, the Task Force shall examine the following:

- (1) Rates of homelessness across North Carolina and corresponding resources, with particular attention to the rate of rural homelessness as compared to the availability of resources in rural areas.



- 1 (2) Methods that have substantially alleviated homelessness in other states and  
2 localities, including localities in North Carolina.  
3 (3) Housing First principles and diverse ways in which Housing First principles  
4 have been effectively applied.  
5 (4) The financial cost of homelessness to the State and local governments of  
6 North Carolina and the comparative projected cost of implementing a  
7 Housing First approach.

8 **SECTION 2.** The Task Force shall consist of 12 members to be appointed as  
9 follows:

- 10 (1) Two Representatives and one public member appointed by the Speaker of  
11 the House of Representatives.  
12 (2) Two Senators and one public member appointed by the President Pro  
13 Tempore of the Senate.  
14 (3) The leader of the minority party in the House of Representatives, or the  
15 leader's designee, and one public member appointed by the minority party  
16 leader.  
17 (4) The leader of the minority party in the Senate, or the leader's designee, and  
18 one public member appointed by the minority party leader.  
19 (5) Two members of the public appointed by the Governor.

20 **SECTION 3.** The Task Force shall have two cochairs, one designated by the  
21 Speaker of the House of Representatives and one designated by the President Pro Tempore of  
22 the Senate. The Task Force shall meet upon the joint call of the cochairs, and the cochairs shall  
23 convene the first meeting as soon as practicable after appointments have been made.

24 **SECTION 4.** The Legislative Services Commission shall grant adequate meeting  
25 space to the Task Force in the State Legislative Building or the Legislative Office Building.  
26 The Legislative Services Commission shall allocate from a portion of the funds appropriated to  
27 the General Assembly sufficient funds for the operation of the Task Force. The Legislative  
28 Services Commission, through the Legislative Services Officer, shall assign professional staff  
29 to assist the Task Force in its work. The Directors of Legislative Assistants for the House of  
30 Representatives and the Senate shall assign clerical staff to the Task Force, and the expenses  
31 relating to the clerical employees shall be borne by the Task Force. The Task Force may  
32 contract for professional, clerical, or consultant services as provided by G.S. 120-32.02.  
33 Members of the Task Force shall receive subsistence and travel expenses at the rates provided  
34 in G.S. 120-3.1, 138-5, or 138-6, as appropriate.

35 **SECTION 5.** The Task Force shall submit a final report on the results of its study  
36 and recommendations, including any proposed legislation, to the General Assembly on or  
37 before May 1, 2018, by filing a copy of the report with the Offices of the Speaker of the House  
38 of Representatives and the President Pro Tempore of the Senate. The Task Force shall  
39 terminate on May 1, 2018, or upon the filing of the final report, whichever occurs first. In  
40 making its report, the Task Force shall include its guidance on the following proposals:

- 41 (1) Formal State endorsement of Housing First as the preferred model all  
42 entities receiving State money that impacts homelessness.  
43 (2) Requiring that a certain percentage of State money directed toward  
44 homelessness be applied to rural populations.  
45 (3) Directing the North Carolina Housing Trust to use disbursements on  
46 Housing First projects.  
47 (4) Appropriating funding or providing other incentives for the creation of more  
48 initiatives modeled after existing Housing First programs in North Carolina.

49 **SECTION 6.** This act is effective when it becomes law.