

SENATE No. 1219

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Edward J. Kennedy

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the adoption of the accompanying bill:

An Act raising employment and combating opioids through vocational education and rehabilitation (RECOVER).

PETITION OF:

NAME:

Edward J. Kennedy

DISTRICT/ADDRESS:

First Middlesex

SENATE No. 1219

By Mr. Kennedy, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 1219) of Edward J. Kennedy for legislation to raise employment and combating opioids through vocational education and rehabilitation (RECOVER). Labor and Workforce Development.

[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION
SEE SENATE, NO. 1087 OF 2019-2020.]

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Second General Court
(2021-2022)**

An Act raising employment and combating opioids through vocational education and rehabilitation (RECOVER).

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 77 of Chapter 6 of the of the General Laws, as appearing in the
2 2014 Official Edition, is hereby amended by striking out the definition of the term “Handicapped
3 person” and it replacing it with the following definition:-

4 “Handicapped person,” an individual who has a physical or mental disability, including
5 an individual recovering from a substance use disorder, which for such individual constitutes or
6 results in a substantial handicap to employment and can reasonably be expected to benefit in
7 terms of employability from vocational rehabilitation services or an individual whose ability to
8 function independently in his family or community may be improved significantly by the
9 provision of independent living rehabilitation services.

10 SECTION 2. Chapter 23B of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2014 Official
11 Edition, is hereby amended by inserting after section 30 the following section:-

12 Section 31. (a) Subject to appropriation, the department shall establish the Secure Jobs
13 Recovery pilot program. The purpose of the program shall be to provide job training, job search
14 services, and 12 months of housing stabilization services, if not otherwise available, to
15 individuals recovering from a substance use disorder who are receiving assistance under items
16 7004-0102, 7004-0101, 7004-0108, 7004-9024 or 7004-9316.

17 (b) The program shall be administered by agencies that have demonstrated experience
18 working in partnership with regional administering agencies, including, but not limited to:
19 Community Teamwork, Inc.; Father Bill's & MainSpring, Inc.; HAP, Inc.; Jewish Vocational
20 Services; and SER-Jobs for Progress, Inc.

21 (c) The undersecretary of housing and community development shall report annually on
22 the activities and status of the program to the clerks of the senate and the house, who shall
23 forward the report to the senate and house committees on ways and means, the joint committee
24 on mental health and substance abuse, the joint committee on labor and workforce development,
25 and the joint committee on public health. The report shall include, for each type of service or
26 program provided, information on the: (1) housing situation, including stability of housing, of
27 program participants; (2) employment status, including employment history, of program
28 participants; (3) total number of program participants; and (4) number of program participants
29 who are no longer receiving assistance under items 7004-0102, 7004-0101, 7004-0108, 7004-
30 9024 or 7004-9316.

31 (d) The department shall utilize rental assistance provided under item 7004-9024 to
32 ensure effective participation under this program.

33 (e) Participating agencies shall seek additional federal, state or private funds to ensure the
34 effective continuation of regional partnerships.

35 SECTION 3. Chapter 111 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2014 Official Edition,
36 is hereby amended by inserting after section 2I the following section:-

37 Section 2J. (a) The department shall establish the RECOVER program. The purpose of
38 the program shall be to provide grants to support partnerships between substance use disorder
39 treatment providers, including sober homes, and vocational services providers. Subject to
40 appropriation, the grants shall be used to finance all or a portion of the costs of vocational
41 programs that are designed to meet the medical, social, psychological, and employment needs of
42 participants.

43 (b) There shall be at least 1 open solicitation period each year during which the
44 department shall accept and consider new applications. Not less than 12 weeks before the annual
45 open solicitation period, the commissioner shall release the criteria upon which the applications
46 shall be judged. Preference shall be given to proposals that involve social enterprise models.

47 (c) Partnering providers may apply to the program for a grant in a specific amount to fund
48 a specified vocational training program. The grants may be made in addition to other forms of
49 local, state, and federal assistance.

50 (d) The commissioner may establish rules and regulations to govern the application and
51 distribution of grants under the program.

52 (e) The commissioner shall report annually on the activities and status of the program to
53 the clerks of the senate and the house, who shall forward the report to the senate and house
54 committees on ways and means, the joint committee on mental health and substance abuse, the
55 joint committee on labor and workforce development, and the joint committee on public health.
56 The report shall include a list and description of all programs that received grant funds, the size
57 of the grant awarded to each program, other sources of public funds that supported each
58 program, a detailed analysis of the impact of each program, including the number of individuals
59 participating, the types of services each participant received, the health, legal, and employment
60 statuses of the participants at the time they completed the program and 1, 6, 12, and 24 months
61 following their completion of the program, and the state's estimated savings due to reduced
62 incarceration rates, reduced dependence on state assistance, and any other cost factors that the
63 commissioner deems relevant.