



# Senate

General Assembly

**File No. 104**

February Session, 2018

Substitute Senate Bill No. 259

*Senate, March 28, 2018*

The Committee on Aging reported through SEN. MCCRORY of the 2nd Dist. and SEN. KELLY of the 21st Dist., Chairpersons of the Committee on the part of the Senate, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

## ***AN ACT CONCERNING SENIOR CENTERS.***

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Section 7-127b of the 2018 supplement to the general  
2 statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof  
3 (*Effective October 1, 2018*):

4 (a) The chief elected official or the chief executive officer if by  
5 ordinance of each municipality shall appoint a municipal agent for  
6 elderly persons. Such agent shall be a staff member of a senior center, a  
7 member of an agency that serves elderly persons in the municipality,  
8 or a responsible resident of the municipality who has demonstrated an  
9 interest in the elderly or has been involved in programs in the field of  
10 aging.

11 (b) The duties of the municipal agent may include, but shall not be  
12 limited to: [ ] (1) [~~disseminating~~] Disseminating information to elderly  
13 persons, assisting such persons in learning about the community  
14 resources available to them and publicizing such resources and  
15 benefits; (2) assisting elderly persons to apply for federal and other  
16 benefits available to such persons; (3) reporting to the chief elected

17 official or chief executive officer of the municipality and the  
18 Department of [Social Services] Rehabilitation Services any needs and  
19 problems of the elderly and any recommendations for action to  
20 improve services to the elderly.

21 (c) Each municipal agent shall serve for a term of two or four years,  
22 at the discretion of the appointing authority of each municipality, and  
23 may be reappointed. If more than one agent is necessary to carry out  
24 the purposes of this section, the appointing authority, in its discretion,  
25 may appoint one or more assistant agents. The town clerk in each  
26 municipality shall notify the Department of [Social Services]  
27 Rehabilitation Services immediately of the appointment of a new  
28 municipal agent. Each municipality may provide to its municipal agent  
29 resources sufficient for such agent to perform the duties of the office.

30 (d) The Department of [Social Services] Rehabilitation Services shall  
31 adopt and disseminate to municipalities guidelines as to the role and  
32 duties of municipal agents and such informational and technical  
33 materials as may assist such agents in performance of their duties. The  
34 department, in cooperation with the area agencies on aging, may  
35 provide training for municipal agents within the available resources of  
36 the department and of the area agencies on aging.

37 Sec. 2. (NEW) (*Effective October 1, 2018*) (a) Any one or more  
38 municipalities, or any one or more private organizations that serve  
39 older persons and are designated to act as agents of one or more  
40 municipalities, may establish a multipurpose senior center, as defined  
41 in Title I of the Older Americans Act of 1965, as amended from time to  
42 time. Such senior center shall facilitate evaluation, planning,  
43 coordination and implementation of programs and services, including,  
44 but not limited to, health, including mental and behavioral health,  
45 social, nutritional and educational services and recreational activities  
46 for older persons.

47 (b) A multipurpose senior center established pursuant to subsection  
48 (a) of this section may provide, but need not be limited to, the  
49 following services: (1) Nutrition services, (2) health and wellness

50 programs, (3) employment assistance, (4) intergenerational initiatives,  
51 (5) community service and civic engagement opportunities, (6) public  
52 benefits counseling, (7) socialization and educational opportunities, (8)  
53 transportation, (9) peer counseling, (10) financial and retirement  
54 counseling, (11) arts programs, and (12) case management services.

55 Sec. 3. (NEW) (*Effective October 1, 2018*) (a) Within available  
56 appropriations, the Department of Rehabilitation Services shall  
57 provide assistance to senior centers including, but not limited to, the  
58 following duties: (1) Establishment and maintenance of a list of senior  
59 centers and municipal services for older persons; (2) establishment and  
60 maintenance of a list of resources for staff of senior centers and  
61 municipal services for older persons; (3) technical assistance to staff of  
62 senior centers and municipal services for older persons through direct  
63 assistance or referral to expert resources; (4) regular communication to  
64 staff of senior centers and municipal services for older persons of  
65 information about local, state and federal support, and services of  
66 interest to senior centers and municipal services for older persons; and  
67 (5) establishment and facilitation of a state-wide senior center work  
68 group as described in subsection (b) of this section. The Commissioner  
69 of Rehabilitation Services shall assign or appoint necessary personnel  
70 to perform such duties.

71 (b) The Department of Rehabilitation Services shall establish a state-  
72 wide senior center work group comprised of, but not limited to: (1)  
73 The Commissioner of Rehabilitation Services, or the commissioner's  
74 designee; (2) the Commissioner of Social Services, or the  
75 commissioner's designee; (3) two representatives of the Connecticut  
76 Association of Senior Center Personnel; (4) one representative of the  
77 Connecticut Association of Municipal Agents for the Elderly; (5) one  
78 representative of the Connecticut Local Administrators of Social  
79 Services; (6) five representatives of senior centers, with one from each  
80 of the five area agencies on aging, as described in section 17a-304 of the  
81 general statutes; (7) one representative from a nonprofit senior center;  
82 and (8) one representative from a senior center that is accredited by the  
83 National Institute of Senior Centers.

84 (c) The senior center work group shall ensure a coordinated plan of  
 85 development for senior centers and municipal services for older  
 86 persons and shall: (1) Develop an annual plan for the support and  
 87 development of senior centers and municipal services for older  
 88 persons, including, but not limited to, training needs and the  
 89 coordination of existing resources; (2) evaluate the feasibility of  
 90 implementing standards for the delivery of core services and make  
 91 recommendations for such standards, including, but not limited to,  
 92 recommending standards that allow for parity of core services across  
 93 municipalities while maintaining flexibility for delivery of those core  
 94 services; (3) consult with the five area agencies on aging and other  
 95 agencies; (4) facilitate coordination and communication between senior  
 96 centers and municipal services for older persons with executive branch  
 97 departments, including, but not limited to, the Departments of  
 98 Rehabilitation Services, Public Health, Transportation, Housing and  
 99 Mental Health and Addiction Services, and agencies and initiatives  
 100 that impact older persons in the community; (5) develop and provide  
 101 access to best practices and procedures for senior centers and  
 102 municipal services for older persons; and (6) make recommendations  
 103 to the General Assembly for any necessary appropriations or  
 104 legislative changes.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	October 1, 2018	7-127b
Sec. 2	October 1, 2018	New section
Sec. 3	October 1, 2018	New section

**Statement of Legislative Commissioners:**

In Sections 3(a)(2) to (3)(a)(4), inclusive, "staff of" was inserted before "senior centers", and in section 3(b)(4) "Connecticut Association of Municipal Agents for Elderly" was changed to "Connecticut Association of Municipal Agents for the Elderly" for accuracy.

**AGE** Joint Favorable Subst.

The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.

**OFA Fiscal Note**

**State Impact:**

Agency Affected	Fund-Effect	FY 19 \$	FY 20 \$
Rehabilitation Services, Dept.	GF - Potential Cost	56,450	73,200
State Comptroller - Fringe Benefits <sup>1</sup>	GF - Potential Cost	19,890	26,520

Note: GF=General Fund

**Municipal Impact:** None

**Explanation**

The bill requires the Department of Rehabilitation Services (DORS), within available appropriations, to provide specific assistance to senior centers in Connecticut and to establish a statewide senior center work group. There are approximately 168 senior centers throughout the state.

Currently, the DORS Unit on Aging has one position that is partially dedicated to supporting the state's senior centers, which is insufficient to meet the requirements of the bill. The agency would require \$56,450 in FY 19 (partial year) and \$73,200 in FY 20 (annualized) for a Field Representative position to provide the specified assistance. It should be noted that the bill requires the senior center assistance work be provided within available appropriations. It does not appear that this mandates the agency to perform the activity

<sup>1</sup>The fringe benefit costs for most state employees are budgeted centrally in accounts administered by the Comptroller. The estimated active employee fringe benefit cost associated with most personnel changes is 36.33% of payroll in FY 19 and FY 20.

regardless of available funding, therefore the cost described above is potential.

The bill also codifies current practice by allowing municipalities to establish multipurpose senior centers, which has no fiscal impact.

***The Out Years***

***State Impact:*** None

***Municipal Impact:*** None

*Sources: Senior Center Task Force Final Report*

**OLR Bill Analysis****sSB 259*****AN ACT CONCERNING SENIOR CENTERS.*****SUMMARY**

This bill requires the Department of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) to establish a 13-member statewide senior center work group to ensure a coordinated development plan for senior centers and municipal services for seniors. It also requires DORS, within available appropriations, to provide assistance to senior centers and assign or appoint necessary personnel to do so.

The bill transfers, from the Department of Social Services (DSS) to DORS, the authority for overseeing municipal agents for the elderly. It expands the list of potential municipal agent appointees for the elderly to include senior center staff members. Under existing law, potential appointees include (1) members of a municipal agency for the elderly or (2) municipal residents with a demonstrated interest in the elderly or who have been involved in aging programs.

Lastly, the bill authorizes any one or more (1) municipalities or (2) private organizations that serve seniors and are designated to act as agents of one or more municipalities, to establish a “multipurpose senior center.” The bill incorporates the federal definition of a multipurpose senior center, that is, a community facility that organizes and provides a broad spectrum of senior services, including recreational activities and health (including mental and behavioral health), social, nutritional, and educational services (42 U.S.C.A. § 3002).

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2018

**§ 3 — STATEWIDE SENIOR CENTER WORK GROUP*****Membership***

The bill requires DORS to establish a 13-member statewide senior center work group to ensure a coordinated development plan for senior centers and municipal services for seniors. The work group's members must include:

1. the rehabilitation services and social services commissioners, or their designees;
2. two representatives of the Connecticut Association of Senior Center Personnel;
3. one representative of the Connecticut Association of Municipal Agents for Elderly;
4. one representative of the Connecticut Local Administrators of Social Services;
5. five representatives of senior centers, with one from each of the five area agencies on aging;
6. one representative from a nonprofit senior center; and
7. one representative from a National Institute of Senior Centers-accredited senior center.

***Duties***

The bill requires the work group to:

1. develop an annual plan to support and develop senior centers and municipal services for seniors, including training needs and coordinating existing resources;
2. evaluate the feasibility of implementing standards for delivering core services and make recommendations for such standards, including those allowing for parity of core services across municipalities while maintaining flexibility for delivering the services;
3. consult with the five area agencies on aging and other agencies;



4. facilitate coordination and communication between senior centers and municipal services for seniors with executive branch departments, including the departments of Rehabilitation Services, Public Health, Transportation, Housing, and Mental Health and Addiction Services, and community agencies and initiatives impacting seniors;
5. develop and provide access to best practices and procedures for senior centers and municipal services for seniors; and
6. make recommendations to the legislature for any necessary appropriations or legislative changes.

### **§ 3 — DORS ASSISTANCE TO SENIOR CENTERS**

The bill requires DORS, within available appropriations, to provide assistance to senior centers and assign or appoint necessary personnel to do so. Under the bill, the assistance must include:

1. establishing and maintaining a list of senior centers and municipal services for seniors, as well as a list of resources for them;
2. providing technical assistance to them, directly or by referral to experts;
3. communicating regularly with these centers and services about local, state, and federal support and services that interest them; and
4. establishing and facilitating a statewide senior center work group, as described above.

### **§ 1 — MUNICIPAL AGENTS FOR THE ELDERLY**

The law requires municipalities to appoint a municipal agent for the elderly to help seniors learn about community resources and filing for benefits. The bill transfers oversight of these agents from DSS to DORS. Specifically, the bill:

1. requires DORS to adopt and disseminate guidelines concerning the agents' roles and duties and informational and technical materials to assist the agents;
2. requires municipal agents to report to DORS about any needs and problems of the elderly and any recommendations for action to improve services;
3. requires town clerks to immediately notify DORS about a new municipal agent's appointment; and
4. authorizes DORS, in cooperation with the state's five area agencies on aging, to provide training for municipal agents if they have the resources.

**§ 2 — MULTIPURPOSE SENIOR CENTERS**

Under the bill, a multipurpose senior center must facilitate the evaluation, planning, coordination, and implementation of programs and services for seniors and may provide the following services:

1. nutrition services,
2. health and wellness programs,
3. employment assistance,
4. intergenerational initiatives,
5. community service and civic engagement opportunities,
6. public benefits counseling,
7. socialization and educational opportunities,
8. transportation,
9. peer counseling,
10. financial and retirement counseling,

- 11. arts programs, and
- 12. case management services.

**COMMITTEE ACTION**

Aging Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 12 Nay 0 (03/15/2018)