
OLR Bill Analysis

HB 7102

AN ACT CONCERNING SENIOR CENTERS.

SUMMARY

This bill requires the Department of Rehabilitative 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 requires DORS, within available appropriations, to provide assistance to senior centers and assign or appoint necessary personnel to do so.

The bill also 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. By law, municipalities must appoint a municipal agent for the elderly to help seniors learn about community resources and file for benefits.

Lastly, the bill authorizes any one or more municipalities or 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: 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).

The bill also makes technical changes.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2019

§ 3 — STATEWIDE SENIOR CENTER WORKGROUP

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 rehabilitative 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 the Elderly;
4. one representative of the Connecticut Local Administrators of Social Services;
5. five representatives of seniors centers, with one each from the state's five elderly planning and services areas;
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 older adults, including identifying training needs and coordinating existing resources;
2. evaluate the feasibility of implementing standards for delivering core services and make recommendations for these standards, including those allowing for parity of core services across municipalities while maintaining flexibility in service delivery;
3. consult with the five area agencies on aging and other agencies;

4. facilitate coordination and communication among senior centers and municipal services for older adults with executive branch departments, including the departments of housing, mental health and addiction services, public health rehabilitative services, and transportation, as well as with community agencies and initiatives impacting older adults;
5. develop and provide access to best practices and procedures for senior centers and municipal services for older adults; and
6. recommend any necessary appropriations or legislative changes to the legislature's Housing, Human Services, Public Health, and Transportation committees.

§ 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. Assistance must include:

1. establishing and maintaining a list of senior centers and municipal services for older adults, as well as a list of resources for their staff;
2. providing technical assistance to such staff, directly or by referral to experts; and
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.

§ 2 — MULTIPURPOSE SENIOR CENTERS

Under the bill, a multi-purpose senior center must facilitate 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

Yea 11 Nay 0 (02/26/2019)