



House of Representatives

General Assembly

File No. 33

January Session, 2019

House Bill No. 7102

House of Representatives, March 7, 2019

The Committee on Aging reported through REP. SERRA of the 33rd Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the 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 Section 7-127b of the general statutes is repealed and the
2 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2019*):

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

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

15 benefits available to such persons; and (3) reporting to the chief elected
16 official or chief executive officer of the municipality and the
17 Department of Rehabilitation Services any needs and problems of the
18 elderly and any recommendations for action to improve services to the
19 elderly.

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

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

36 Sec. 2. (NEW) (*Effective October 1, 2019*) (a) Any one or more
37 municipalities, or any one or more private organizations that serve
38 older persons and are designated to act as agents of one or more
39 municipalities, may establish a multipurpose senior center, as defined
40 in Title I of the Older Americans Act of 1965, as amended from time to
41 time. Such senior center shall facilitate evaluation, planning,
42 coordination and implementation of programs and services, including,
43 but not limited to, those relating to (1) health, including mental and
44 behavioral health; (2) social, nutritional and educational services; and
45 (3) recreational activities for older persons.

46 (b) A multipurpose senior center established pursuant to subsection
47 (a) of this section may provide, but need not be limited to, the

48 following services: (1) Nutrition services; (2) health and wellness
49 programs; (3) employment assistance; (4) intergenerational initiatives;
50 (5) community service and civic engagement opportunities; (6) public
51 benefits counseling; (7) socialization and educational opportunities; (8)
52 transportation; (9) peer counseling; (10) financial and retirement
53 counseling; (11) arts programs; and (12) case management services.

54 Sec. 3. (NEW) (*Effective October 1, 2019*) (a) Within available
55 appropriations, the Department of Rehabilitation Services shall
56 provide assistance to senior centers including, but not limited to, the
57 following duties: (1) Establishment and maintenance of a list of senior
58 centers and municipal services for older persons; (2) establishment and
59 maintenance of a list of resources for staff of senior centers and
60 municipal services for older persons; (3) technical assistance to staff of
61 senior centers and municipal services for older persons through direct
62 assistance or referral to expert resources; (4) regular communication to
63 staff of senior centers and municipal services for older persons of
64 information about local, state and federal support, and services of
65 interest to senior centers and municipal services for older persons; and
66 (5) establishment and facilitation of a state-wide senior center work
67 group as described in subsection (b) of this section. The Commissioner
68 of Rehabilitation Services shall assign or appoint necessary personnel
69 to perform such duties.

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

82 accredited by the National Institute of Senior Centers.

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

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	October 1, 2019	7-127b
Sec. 2	October 1, 2019	New section
Sec. 3	October 1, 2019	New section

AGE Joint Favorable

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 20 \$	FY 21 \$
Rehabilitation Services, Dept.	GF - Cost	56,450	73,200
State Comptroller - Fringe Benefits ¹	GF - Cost	21,581	27,984

Note: GF=General Fund

Municipal Impact: None

Explanation

The bill requires the Department of Rehabilitation Services (DORS), 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 20 (partial year) and \$73,200 in FY 21 (annualized) for a Field Representative position to provide the specified assistance.

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

¹The 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 38.23% of payroll in FY 20 and FY 21.

The Out Years

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future subject to inflation.

Sources: Senior Center Task Force Final Report

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)