



Senate

General Assembly

File No. 16

January Session, 2021

Senate Bill No. 817

Senate, March 4, 2021

The Committee on Aging reported through SEN. SLAP of the 5th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the Senate, 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 Section 7-127b of the general statutes is repealed and the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, 2021*):

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 benefits;
14 (2) assisting elderly persons to apply for federal and other benefits

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

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

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

35 Sec. 2. (NEW) (*Effective October 1, 2021*) (a) Any one or more
36 municipalities, or any one or more private organizations that serve older
37 persons and are designated to act as agents of one or more
38 municipalities, may establish a multipurpose senior center, as defined
39 in Title I of the Older Americans Act of 1965, as amended from time to
40 time.

41 (b) A multipurpose senior center established pursuant to subsection
42 (a) of this section may, but need not be limited to, providing: (1)
43 Nutrition services; (2) health programs, including, but not limited to,
44 mental health, behavioral health and wellness programs; (3)
45 employment assistance; (4) intergenerational initiatives; (5) community
46 service and civic engagement opportunities; (6) public benefits
47 counseling; (7) socialization and educational opportunities; (8)

48 transportation; (9) peer counseling; (10) financial and retirement
49 counseling; (11) arts and recreation programs; and (12) case
50 management services.

51 Sec. 3. (NEW) (*Effective October 1, 2021*) Within available
52 appropriations, the Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity
53 and Opportunity shall provide assistance to senior centers, which may
54 include, but need not be limited to: (1) Establishment and maintenance
55 of a list of senior centers and municipal services for older persons; (2)
56 establishment and maintenance of a list of resources for staff of senior
57 centers and municipal services for older persons; (3) development of
58 technical assistance for staff of senior centers and municipal services for
59 older persons through direct assistance or referral to expert resources;
60 (4) regular communication with staff of senior centers and municipal
61 services for older persons; (5) dissemination of information about local,
62 state and federal support and services of interest to senior centers and
63 municipal services for older persons; and (6) establishment and
64 facilitation of a state-wide senior center work group as described in
65 section 4 of this act. The executive director of the Commission on
66 Women, Children, Seniors, Equity and Opportunity shall assign or
67 appoint necessary personnel to perform such duties.

68 Sec. 4. (*Effective October 1, 2021*) (a) There is established a state-wide
69 senior center working group to develop a coordinated plan of
70 development for senior centers and municipal services for older
71 persons.

72 (b) The working group shall: (1) Develop an annual plan for the
73 support and development of senior centers and municipal services for
74 older persons, including, but not limited to, training needs and the
75 coordination of existing resources; (2) evaluate the feasibility of
76 implementing standards for the delivery of core services and make
77 recommendations for such standards, including, but not limited to,
78 standards that allow for parity of core services across municipalities
79 while maintaining flexibility for delivery of those core services; (3)
80 consult with the five area agencies on aging and other agencies; (4)

81 facilitate coordination and communication between senior centers and
82 municipal services for older persons with executive branch
83 departments, including, but not limited to, the Departments of Aging
84 and Disability Services, Housing, Mental Health and Addiction
85 Services, Public Health, Social Services, Transportation and agencies
86 and initiatives that impact older persons in the community; (5) develop
87 and provide access to best practices and procedures for senior centers
88 and municipal services for older persons; and (6) make
89 recommendations to the joint standing committees of the General
90 Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to aging, human
91 services, housing, planning and development, public health and
92 transportation for any necessary appropriations or legislative changes.

93 (c) The working group shall consist of the following members:

94 (1) Five representatives of senior centers, one from each of the five
95 planning and services areas, as described in section 17a-304 of the
96 general statutes, two appointed by the speaker of the House of
97 Representatives, two appointed by the president pro tempore of the
98 Senate, and one appointed by the majority leader of the House of
99 Representatives;

100 (2) Two representatives of the Connecticut Association of Senior
101 Center Personnel appointed by the majority leader of the Senate;

102 (3) One representative of the Connecticut Local Administrators of
103 Social Services appointed by the minority leader of the House of
104 Representatives;

105 (4) One representative from a senior center that is accredited by the
106 National Institute of Senior Centers appointed by the minority leader of
107 the Senate;

108 (5) One representative of the Connecticut Association of Municipal
109 Agents for the Elderly and one representative of a nonprofit senior
110 center, appointed by the Governor;

111 (6) The executive director of the Commission on Women, Children,

112 Seniors, Equity and Opportunity, who shall serve as chairperson of the
113 working group;

114 (7) The Commissioner of the Department of Aging and Disability
115 Services, or the commissioner's designee; and

116 (8) The Commissioner of Social Services, or the commissioner's
117 designee.

118 (d) Any member of the working group appointed under subdivision
119 (1), (2), (3) or (4) of subsection (c) of this section may be a member of the
120 General Assembly.

121 (e) All initial appointments to the working group shall be made not
122 later than thirty days after the effective date of this section. Any vacancy
123 shall be filled by the appointing authority.

124 (f) The chairperson of the working group shall schedule the first
125 meeting, which shall be held not later than sixty days after the effective
126 date of this section.

127 (g) The administrative staff of the Commission on Women, Children,
128 Seniors, Equity and Opportunity shall serve as administrative staff of
129 the working group.

130 (h) Not later than January 1, 2023, the working group shall submit a
131 report on its findings and recommendations to the joint standing
132 committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters
133 relating to aging, human services, housing, planning and development,
134 public health and transportation, in accordance with the provisions of
135 section 11-4a of the general statutes. The working group shall terminate
136 on the date that it submits such report or January 1, 2023, whichever is
137 later.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	October 1, 2021	7-127b

Sec. 2	<i>October 1, 2021</i>	New section
Sec. 3	<i>October 1, 2021</i>	New section
Sec. 4	<i>October 1, 2021</i>	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: None

Municipal Impact: None

Explanation

The bill makes several changes concerning municipal services for seniors which have no fiscal impact. It establishes a working group to develop a coordinated plan for municipal senior centers and services and requires the Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity, and Opportunity to assist the working group. This has no fiscal impact as PA 17-236 prohibits transportation allowances.

The bill also allows one or more municipalities to establish multipurpose senior centers and expands the list of potential appointees a municipality may select to serve as the municipal agent for the elderly. This has no fiscal impact, as the bill does not require a municipality to incur any cost in establishing a multipurpose senior center.

The Out Years

State Impact: None

Municipal Impact: None

OLR Bill Analysis**SB 817*****AN ACT CONCERNING SENIOR CENTERS.*****SUMMARY**

This bill establishes a 14-member statewide senior center working group to develop a coordinated plan for senior centers and municipal services for seniors. It also requires the Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity, and Opportunity, within available appropriations, to assist senior centers and assign or appoint necessary personnel to do so.

By law, municipalities must appoint a municipal agent for the elderly to help seniors learn about community resources and file for benefits. The bill expands the list of potential appointees to include senior center staff members. Current law limits potential appointees to (1) members of a municipal agency that serves the elderly or (2) municipal residents with a demonstrated interest in the elderly or who have been involved in aging programs.

The bill also authorizes any one or more municipalities, or private organizations that serve older adults and are designated to act as agents of one or more municipalities, to establish a “multipurpose senior center,” which 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. § 3002).

Lastly, the bill makes technical changes.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2021

§ 4 — STATEWIDE SENIOR CENTER WORKGROUP

Membership

The bill establishes a 14-member statewide senior center working group to develop a coordinated plan for senior centers and municipal services for older adults. The group's members must include:

1. the aging and disability services and social services commissioners, or their designees;
2. the executive director of the Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity and Opportunity;
3. two representatives of the Connecticut Association of Senior Center Personnel, appointed by the Senate majority leader, who may be legislators;
4. one representative of the Connecticut Association of Municipal Agents for the Elderly, appointed by the governor;
5. one representative of the Connecticut Local Administrators of Social Services, appointed by the House minority leader and who may be a legislator;
6. five representatives of senior centers, with one each from the state's five elderly planning and services areas, two each appointed by the House Speaker and Senate President, and one appointed by the House majority leader, who may be legislators;
7. one representative of a nonprofit senior center, appointed by the governor; and
8. one representative from a National Institute of Senior Centers (NISC)-accredited senior center, appointed by the Senate minority leader, who may be a legislator.

Appointing authorities must make initial appointments by October 31, 2021, and fill any vacancies. The commission's executive director serves as the working group's chairperson and must hold the first meeting by November 30, 2021.

The commission's administrative staff serve as the work group's administrative staff.

Duties

The bill requires the working 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 service delivery flexibility;
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 aging and disability services, housing, mental health and addiction services, public health, social 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 Aging, Housing, Human Services, Planning and Development, Public Health, and Transportation committees.

Report

By January 1, 2023, the working group must report its findings and recommendations to the Aging, Housing, Human Services, Planning and Development, Public Health, and Transportation committees. The working group terminates when it submits the report or January 1, 2023, whichever is later.

§ 3 — COMMISSION ASSISTANCE TO SENIOR CENTERS

The bill requires the Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity and Opportunity, within available appropriations, to provide assistance to senior centers and assign or appoint necessary personnel to do so. Assistance may 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. developing technical assistance for the staff, directly or by referral to experts;
3. communicating regularly with the staff about local, state, and federal support and services that interest them; and
4. facilitating the statewide senior center working group, as described above.

§ 2 — MULTIPURPOSE SENIOR CENTERS

Under the bill, a multi-purpose senior center 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 and recreation programs, and
- 12. case management services.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Aging Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 15 Nay 0 (02/16/2021)