



General Assembly

**Substitute Bill No. 6635**

January Session, 2021



**AN ACT CONCERNING TEMPORARY FAMILY ASSISTANCE.**

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

1 Section 1. Section 17b-112 of the general statutes is repealed and the  
2 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2021*):

3 (a) The Department of Social Services shall administer a temporary  
4 family assistance program under which cash assistance shall be  
5 provided to eligible families in accordance with the temporary  
6 assistance for needy families program, established pursuant to the  
7 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of  
8 1996. The Commissioner of Social Services may operate portions of the  
9 temporary family assistance program as a solely state-funded program,  
10 separate from the federal temporary assistance for needy families  
11 program, if the commissioner determines that doing so will enable the  
12 state to avoid fiscal penalties under the temporary assistance for needy  
13 families program. Families receiving assistance under the solely state-  
14 funded portion of the temporary family assistance program shall be  
15 subject to the same conditions of eligibility as those receiving assistance  
16 under the federal temporary assistance for needy families program.  
17 Under the temporary family assistance program, benefits shall be  
18 provided to a family for not longer than [twenty-one] sixty months,  
19 except as provided in [subsections (b) and (c)] subsection (b) of this

20 section. For the purpose of calculating said [twenty-one-month] sixty-  
21 month time limit: [, months]

22 (1) Months of assistance received on and after January 1, 1996,  
23 pursuant to time limits under the aid to families with dependent  
24 children program, shall be included, provided any months of temporary  
25 family assistance received during the public health emergency declared  
26 by Governor Ned Lamont related to the COVID-19 pandemic shall not  
27 be included. For purposes of this section, "family" means one or more  
28 individuals who apply for or receive assistance together under the  
29 temporary family assistance program. If the commissioner determines  
30 that federal law allows individuals not otherwise in an eligible covered  
31 group for the temporary family assistance program to become covered,  
32 such family may also, at the discretion of the commissioner, be  
33 composed of [(1)] (A) a pregnant woman, or [(2)] (B) a parent, both  
34 parents or other caretaker relative and at least one child who is under  
35 the age of eighteen, or who is under the age of nineteen and a full-time  
36 student in a secondary school or its equivalent. A caretaker relative shall  
37 be related to the child or children by blood, marriage or adoption or  
38 shall be the legal guardian of such a child or pursuing legal proceedings  
39 necessary to achieve guardianship. If the commissioner elects to allow  
40 state eligibility consistent with any change in federal law, the  
41 commissioner may administratively transfer any qualifying family  
42 cases under the cash assistance portion of the state-administered general  
43 assistance program to the temporary family assistance program without  
44 regard to usual eligibility and enrollment procedures. If such families  
45 become an ineligible coverage group under the federal law, the  
46 commissioner shall administratively transfer such families back to the  
47 cash assistance portion of the state-administered general assistance  
48 program without regard to usual eligibility and enrollment procedures  
49 to the degree that such families are eligible for the state program; [.]

50 [(b) The Commissioner of Social Services shall exempt a family from  
51 such time-limited benefits for circumstances including, but not limited  
52 to: (1) A family with a needy caretaker relative who is incapacitated or

53 of an advanced age, as defined by the commissioner, if there is no other  
54 nonexempt caretaker relative in the household; (2) a family with a needy  
55 caretaker relative who is needed in the home because of the incapacity  
56 of another member of the household, if there is no other nonexempt  
57 caretaker relative in the household; (3) a family with a caretaker relative  
58 who is not legally responsible for the dependent children in the  
59 household if such relative's needs are not considered in calculating the  
60 amount of the benefit and there is no other nonexempt caretaker relative  
61 in the household; (4) a family with a caretaker relative caring for a child  
62 who is under one year of age and who was born not more than ten  
63 months after the family's enrollment if there is no other nonexempt  
64 caretaker relative in the household; (5) a family with a pregnant or  
65 postpartum caretaker relative if a physician has indicated that such  
66 relative is unable to work and there is no other nonexempt caretaker  
67 relative in the household; (6) a family with a caretaker relative  
68 determined by the commissioner to be unemployable and there is no  
69 other nonexempt caretaker relative in the household; and (7) minor  
70 parents attending and satisfactorily completing high school or high  
71 school equivalency programs.

72 (c) A family who is subject to time-limited benefits may petition the  
73 Commissioner of Social Services for six-month extensions of such  
74 benefits. The commissioner shall grant not more than two extensions to  
75 such family who has made a good faith effort to comply with the  
76 requirements of the program and despite such effort has a total family  
77 income at a level below the payment standard, or has encountered  
78 circumstances preventing employment including, but not limited to: (1)  
79 Domestic violence or physical harm to such family's children; or (2)  
80 other circumstances beyond such family's control. The commissioner  
81 shall disregard ninety dollars of earned income in determining  
82 applicable family income. The commissioner may grant a subsequent  
83 six-month extension if each adult in the family meets one or more of the  
84 following criteria: (A) The adult is precluded from engaging in  
85 employment activities due to domestic violence or another reason  
86 beyond the adult's control; (B) the adult has two or more substantiated

87 barriers to employment including, but not limited to, the lack of  
88 available child care, substance abuse or addiction, severe mental or  
89 physical health problems, one or more severe learning disabilities,  
90 domestic violence or a child who has a serious physical or behavioral  
91 health problem; (C) the adult is working thirty-five or more hours per  
92 week, is earning at least the minimum wage and continues to earn less  
93 than the family's temporary family assistance payment standard; or (D)  
94 the adult is employed and works less than thirty-five hours per week  
95 due to (i) a documented medical impairment that limits the adult's  
96 hours of employment, provided the adult works the maximum number  
97 of hours that the medical condition permits, or (ii) the need to care for a  
98 disabled member of the adult's household, provided the adult works the  
99 maximum number of hours the adult's caregiving responsibilities  
100 permit. Families receiving temporary family assistance shall be notified  
101 by the department of the right to petition for such extensions.  
102 Notwithstanding the provisions of this section, the commissioner shall  
103 not provide benefits under the state's temporary family assistance  
104 program to a family that is subject to the twenty-one month benefit limit  
105 and has received benefits beginning on or after October 1, 1996, if such  
106 benefits result in that family's receiving more than sixty months of time-  
107 limited benefits unless that family experiences domestic violence, as  
108 defined in Section 402(a)(7)(B), P.L. 104-193. For the purpose of  
109 calculating said sixty-month limit: (I)]

110 (2) A month shall count toward the limit if the family receives  
111 assistance for any day of the month; [J] and

112 [(II) a] (3) A month in which a family receives temporary assistance  
113 for needy families benefits that are issued from a jurisdiction other than  
114 Connecticut shall count toward the limit.

115 (b) The Commissioner of Social Services may exempt a family from  
116 time-limited benefits for circumstances including, but not limited to: (1)  
117 A family with a needy caretaker relative who is incapacitated or of an  
118 advanced age, as defined by the commissioner, if there is no other  
119 nonexempt caretaker relative in the household; (2) a family with a needy

120 caretaker relative who is needed in the home because of the incapacity  
121 of another member of the household, if there is no other nonexempt  
122 caretaker relative in the household; (3) a family with a caretaker relative  
123 who is not legally responsible for the dependent children in the  
124 household if such relative's needs are not considered in calculating the  
125 amount of the benefit and there is no other nonexempt caretaker relative  
126 in the household; (4) a family with a caretaker relative caring for a child  
127 who is under one year of age if there is no other nonexempt caretaker  
128 relative in the household; (5) a family with a pregnant or postpartum  
129 caretaker relative if a physician has indicated that such relative is unable  
130 to work and there is no other nonexempt caretaker relative in the  
131 household; (6) a family with a caretaker relative determined by the  
132 commissioner to be unemployable and there is no other nonexempt  
133 caretaker relative in the household; (7) minor parents attending and  
134 satisfactorily completing high school or high school equivalency  
135 programs; and (8) a family that has encountered circumstances  
136 preventing employment including, but not limited to, domestic  
137 violence.

138 [(d)] (c) Under said program, [(1)] no family shall be eligible that has  
139 total gross earnings exceeding the federal poverty level, however, in the  
140 calculation of the benefit amount for eligible families and previously  
141 eligible families that become ineligible temporarily because of receipt of  
142 workers' compensation benefits by a family member who subsequently  
143 returns to work immediately after the period of receipt of such benefits,  
144 earned income shall be disregarded up to the federal poverty level. ];  
145 and (2) the increase in benefits to a family in which an infant is born after  
146 the initial ten months of participation in the program shall be limited to  
147 an amount equal to fifty per cent of the average incremental difference  
148 between the amounts paid per each family size. Except when  
149 determining eligibility for a six-month extension of benefits pursuant to  
150 subsection (c) of this section, the] The commissioner shall disregard the  
151 first fifty dollars per month of income attributable to current child  
152 support that a family receives in determining eligibility and benefit  
153 levels for temporary family assistance. Any current child support in

154 excess of fifty dollars per month collected by the department on behalf  
155 of an eligible child shall be considered in determining eligibility but  
156 shall not be considered when calculating benefits and shall be taken as  
157 reimbursement for assistance paid under this section, except that when  
158 the current child support collected exceeds the family's monthly award  
159 of temporary family assistance benefits plus fifty dollars, the current  
160 child support shall be paid to the family and shall be considered when  
161 calculating benefits.

162 [(e)] (d) A family receiving assistance under said program shall  
163 cooperate with child support enforcement, under title IV-D of the Social  
164 Security Act. A family shall be ineligible for benefits for failure to  
165 cooperate with child support enforcement.

166 [(f)] (e) A family leaving assistance at the end of [(1) said twenty-one-  
167 month time limit, including a family with income above the payment  
168 standard, or (2)] the sixty-month limit shall have an interview for the  
169 purpose of being informed of services that may continue to be available  
170 to such family, including employment services available through the  
171 Labor Department. [Said] Such interview shall [contain] include a  
172 determination of: [benefits] (1) Benefits available to [said] the family  
173 provided by the Department of Social Services, [. Said interview shall  
174 also include a determination of] and (2) whether such family is eligible  
175 for supplemental nutrition assistance or Medicaid. Information and  
176 referrals shall be made to such a family for services and benefits  
177 including, but not limited to, the earned income tax credit, rental  
178 subsidies, emergency housing, employment services and energy  
179 assistance.

180 (f) Notwithstanding section 17b-104, commencing on July 1, 2021, the  
181 Commissioner of Social Services shall provide an annual cost-of-living  
182 adjustment in temporary family assistance benefits equal to the most  
183 recent percentage increase in the consumer price index for urban  
184 consumers whenever funds appropriated for temporary family  
185 assistance lapse at the close of any fiscal year and are sufficient to cover  
186 such adjustment. The commissioner shall provide a prorated benefit

187 increase from available lapsed funds in any fiscal year when such funds  
188 are not sufficient to cover a cost-of-living adjustment in accordance with  
189 this subsection.

190 (g) An applicant or recipient of temporary family assistance who is  
191 adversely affected by a decision of the Commissioner of Social Services  
192 may request and shall be provided a hearing in accordance with section  
193 17b-60.

194 Sec. 2. Subsection (a) of section 17b-112b of the general statutes is  
195 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*  
196 *2021*):

197 (a) An applicant or recipient who is a past or present victim of  
198 domestic violence or at risk of further domestic violence, pursuant to  
199 subsection (c) of section 17b-112a, shall, for good cause: (1) Be excused  
200 from failing to participate in a work activity; or (2) be exempted from  
201 child support enforcement requirements pursuant to subsection [(e)] (d)  
202 of section 17b-112, as amended by this act. Such an applicant or recipient  
203 may, for good cause, be granted an extension of cash assistance, [beyond  
204 twenty-one months,] provided the domestic violence experienced is of  
205 sufficient magnitude to reasonably render the individual unable to  
206 obtain or maintain employment.

207 Sec. 3. Section 17b-112e of the general statutes is repealed and the  
208 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2021*):

209 (a) The Department of Social Services shall provide safety net services  
210 for certain families identified as having significant barriers to  
211 employment and families who are at risk of losing benefits under the  
212 temporary family assistance program or no longer receiving program  
213 benefits. To be eligible for safety net services, such families shall: (1)  
214 Have been identified as having significant barriers to employment  
215 during the initial assessment by the department's eligibility worker or  
216 during the first twelve months of employment services by an  
217 employment services case manager; (2) have made a good faith effort to

218 seek and maintain employment but have not been able to do so or be at  
219 risk of failing to complete the employment services program; or (3) have  
220 exhausted their eligibility for temporary family assistance program  
221 benefits. [; or (4) not be eligible for six-month extensions of temporary  
222 family assistance benefits due to: (A) The receipt of two sanctions from  
223 the department during the first twenty months of the twenty-one-month  
224 time limit of said temporary family assistance program; or (B) the  
225 determination by the department that such a family has not made a  
226 good faith effort to seek and maintain employment.]

227 (b) Said safety net shall consist of services provided through the  
228 existing community service delivery network with additional resources  
229 provided by the Department of Social Services. Services shall be  
230 provided in-kind or through vendor or voucher payment. Services may  
231 include the following: (1) Food, shelter, clothing and employment  
232 assistance; (2) eviction prevention; (3) an in-depth family needs  
233 assessment; (4) intensive case management that includes visits to the  
234 family's home; (5) continuous monitoring for child abuse or neglect; and  
235 (6) for families at risk of losing benefits under the temporary family  
236 assistance program, individual performance contracts administered by  
237 the Labor Department that require job training, job searching, volunteer  
238 work, participation in parenting programs or counseling or any other  
239 requirements deemed necessary by the Labor Commissioner.

240 (c) Families successfully meeting the program requirements  
241 established by the individual performance contracts in subdivision (6)  
242 of subsection (b) of this section [prior to the end of the twenty-one-  
243 month time limit] shall be considered to have made a good faith effort  
244 to comply with the requirements of the program, [for the purposes of  
245 qualifying for a six-month extension,] provided they have made a good  
246 faith effort to comply with the individual performance contract or have  
247 not incurred a sanction subsequent to completing the individual  
248 performance contract.

249 (d) The Commissioner of Social Services shall implement policies and  
250 procedures necessary for the purposes of this section while in the



251 process of adopting such policies and procedures in regulation form,  
252 provided the commissioner [prints] posts notice of intention to adopt  
253 the regulations [in the Connecticut Law Journal within twenty days of]  
254 on the eRegulations System and the department's Internet web site not  
255 later than twenty days after implementing such policies and procedures.  
256 Policies and procedures implemented pursuant to this subsection shall  
257 be valid until the time final regulations are effective.

258 Sec. 4. Subsection (b) of section 17b-688c of the general statutes is  
259 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*  
260 *2021*):

261 (b) In no event shall temporary family assistance be granted to an  
262 applicant for such assistance, who is not exempt from participation in  
263 the employment services program, prior to the applicant's attendance at  
264 an initial scheduled employment services assessment interview and  
265 participation in the development of an employment services plan. The  
266 Department of Social Services shall not delay temporary family  
267 assistance to an applicant in cases where the department schedules the  
268 initial employment services assessment interview more than ten  
269 business days after the date on which application for assistance is made,  
270 or in cases where the Labor Department does not complete an  
271 employment services plan for the benefit of the applicant within ten  
272 business days of the date on which the applicant attends an employment  
273 services assessment interview. The Commissioner of Social Services  
274 shall refer any applicant denied temporary family assistance, who may  
275 be in need of emergency benefits, to other services offered by the  
276 Department of Social Services or community services that may be  
277 available to such applicant. The Department of Social Services shall  
278 reduce the benefits awarded to a family under the temporary family  
279 assistance program when a member of the family who is required to  
280 participate in employment services fails to comply with an employment  
281 services requirement without good cause. The first instance of  
282 noncompliance with an employment services requirement shall result  
283 in a twenty-five per cent reduction of such benefits for three consecutive

284 months. The second instance of noncompliance with such requirement  
 285 shall result in a thirty-five per cent reduction of such benefits for three  
 286 consecutive months. A third or subsequent instance of noncompliance  
 287 with such requirement shall result in the termination of such benefits  
 288 for three consecutive months. If only one member of a family is eligible  
 289 for temporary family assistance and such member fails to comply with  
 290 an employment services requirement, the department shall terminate all  
 291 benefits of such family for three consecutive months. Notwithstanding  
 292 the provisions of this subsection, the department shall terminate the  
 293 benefits awarded to a family under the temporary family assistance  
 294 program if a member of the family who is not exempt from the [twenty-  
 295 one-month] sixty-month time limit specified in subsection (a) of section  
 296 17b-112 fails, without good cause, to: (1) Attend any scheduled  
 297 assessment appointment or interview relating to the establishment of an  
 298 employment services plan, except that such individual's benefits shall  
 299 be reinstated if the individual attends a subsequently scheduled  
 300 appointment or interview within thirty days of the date on which the  
 301 department has issued notification to the individual that benefits have  
 302 been terminated, or (2) comply with an employment services  
 303 requirement. [during a six-month extension of benefits.] Any individual  
 304 who fails to comply with the provisions of subdivision (1) of this  
 305 subsection may submit a new application for such benefits at any time  
 306 after termination of benefits.

307 Sec. 5. Section 17b-112k of the general statutes is repealed. (*Effective*  
 308 *from passage*)

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>July 1, 2021</i>	17b-112
Sec. 2	<i>July 1, 2021</i>	17b-112b(a)
Sec. 3	<i>July 1, 2021</i>	17b-112e
Sec. 4	<i>July 1, 2021</i>	17b-688c(b)
Sec. 5	<i>from passage</i>	Repealer section

**HS**      *Joint Favorable Subst.*

**APP**     *Joint Favorable*