

**Proposed Substitute
Bill No. 912**

LCO No. 6106

**AN ACT CONCERNING FUNDING AND OVERSIGHT OF
FATHERHOOD INITIATIVES.**

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

1 Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) (a) As used in this section and
2 section 2 of this act, (1) "Connecticut Fatherhood Initiative", or "CFI",
3 means an initiative that (A) promotes the positive involvement and
4 interaction of fathers with their children with an emphasis on children
5 eligible or formerly eligible for services funded under the Temporary
6 Assistance for Needy Families block grant, and (B) identifies services
7 that effectively encourage and enhance responsible and skillful
8 parenting and increase the ability of fathers to meet the financial and
9 emotional needs of their children; and

10 (2) "CFI objectives" means:

11 (A) Promoting public education concerning the financial and
12 emotional responsibilities of fatherhood;

13 (B) Assisting men in preparation for the legal, financial and emotional
14 responsibilities of fatherhood;

- 15 (C) Promoting the establishment of paternity at childbirth;
- 16 (D) Encouraging fathers, regardless of marital status, to foster their
17 emotional connection to and financial support of their children;
- 18 (E) Establishing support mechanisms for fathers in their relationship
19 with their children, regardless of their marital and financial status; and
- 20 (F) Integrating state and local services available for families.

21 (b) There is established within the Department of Social Services the
22 Office of the Connecticut Fatherhood Initiative. The office shall be
23 overseen by the Commissioner of Social Services and shall conduct
24 administrative duties for the CFI in accordance with a strategic plan
25 developed and implemented by the CFI with the approval of the council
26 established pursuant to section 2 of this act.

27 Sec. 2. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) (a) There is established a CFI
28 Council to approve the work of the CFI, including, but not limited to,
29 implementation of CFI objectives through a strategic plan developed by
30 the CFI. The council shall actively participate in efforts that further CFI
31 objectives, including, but not limited to, (1) fostering collaboration
32 between state agencies that provide services for fathers and families; (2)
33 seeking opportunities to coordinate comprehensive services, ensuring
34 the continuity of services, heightening the impact of services and
35 avoiding duplication of services; and (3) supporting fathers of children
36 eligible or formerly eligible for services under the Temporary Assistance
37 for Needy Families block grant program, including, but not limited to:
38 (A) Providing assistance to needy families so that children can be cared
39 for in their own homes or in the homes of relatives; (B) promoting the
40 independence and self-sufficiency of needy parents by promoting job
41 preparation, work and marriage; (C) preventing and reducing the
42 incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies; and (D) encouraging the
43 formation and maintenance of two-parent families.

44 (b) The membership of the council shall include, but need not be

45 limited to:

46 (1) The Commissioner of Social Services, or the commissioner's
47 designee;

48 (2) The Commissioner of Children and Families, or the
49 commissioner's designee;

50 (3) The Commissioner of Correction, or the commissioner's designee;

51 (4) The Commissioner of Early Childhood, or the commissioner's
52 designee;

53 (5) The Commissioner of Education, or the commissioner's designee;

54 (6) The Commissioner of Developmental Services, or the
55 commissioner's designee;

56 (7) The Commissioner of Housing, or the commissioner's designee;

57 (8) The Labor Commissioner, or the commissioner's designee;

58 (9) The Commissioner of Mental Health and Addiction Services, or
59 the commissioner's designee;

60 (10) The Commissioner of Public Health, or the commissioner's
61 designee;

62 (11) The commissioner of Veterans Affairs, or the commissioner's
63 designee;

64 (12) The chairperson of the Board of Pardons and Parole, or the
65 chairperson's designee;

66 (13) The executive directors of Judicial Support Enforcement Services
67 and the Court Support Services Division, or their respective designees;

68 (14) The Chief Family Support Magistrate, or the Chief Family

69 Support Magistrate's designee;

70 (15) The president of the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities,
71 or the president's designee;

72 (16) The director of the Office of Child Support Services within the
73 Department of Social Services, or the director's designee; and

74 (17) At least eleven members appointed by the Commissioner of
75 Social Services:

76 (A) One with expertise in the area of legal assistance to low-income
77 populations;

78 (B) One representative of the Connecticut Employment and Training
79 Commission;

80 (C) One representative of a regional workforce development board;

81 (D) One member with expertise in family relations;

82 (E) One or more representatives of a local fatherhood program;

83 (F) One member with expertise in male psychology and health;

84 (G) One member representing the interests of custodial parents;

85 (H) One member representing the interests of noncustodial parents;

86 (I) One member representing the interests of children;

87 (J) One member with expertise in the area of domestic violence; and

88 (K) One member with expertise in child development.

89 (c) The Commissioner of Social Services shall be a chairperson of the
90 council and shall designate a cochairperson. The commissioner shall
91 convene the council not later than thirty days after the effective date of
92 this section, and the council shall meet at least quarterly. The

93 commissioner shall fill any vacancies.

94 (d) The Commissioner of Social Services may designate a working
95 group from among the members of the council to carry out specific
96 duties required under this section and section 1 of this act. The
97 commissioner shall seek the advice and participation of any person,
98 organization or state or federal agency the commissioner deems
99 necessary to carry out the provisions of this section and section 1 of this
100 act.

101 (e) The Commissioner of Social Services, in consultation with the
102 council and within available resources, shall seek to obtain any available
103 federal and private funds for programs that promote CFI objectives in
104 accordance with this section and section 1 of this act. The commissioner
105 shall award grants from any such available funds to entities that provide
106 (1) employment and training opportunities for low-income fathers to
107 increase the earning capacity of such fathers; (2) classes in parenting and
108 financial literacy; and (3) other support services and programs that
109 promote responsible parenting, economic stability and communication
110 and interaction between fathers and their children.

111 (f) Applicants for grants provided pursuant to subsection (e) of this
112 section shall apply to the Commissioner of Social Services at such time
113 and in such manner as the commissioner prescribes. The commissioner
114 shall, in consultation with the council, establish criteria for eligibility for
115 grants and for the awarding of grants. At a minimum, grantees shall be
116 required to (1) implement accountability measures and results-based
117 outcomes as a condition of being awarded a grant; (2) leverage funds
118 through existing resources and collaboration with community-based
119 and nonprofit organizations; and (3) consult with experts in domestic
120 violence to ensure that, when appropriate, the programs and services
121 provided to fathers and families pursuant to this section and section 1
122 of this act address issues concerning domestic violence.

123 (g) Not later than December 1, 2021, and annually thereafter, the

124 commissioner, in consultation with the council, shall report, in
125 accordance with section 11-4a of the general statutes, to the joint
126 standing committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of
127 matters relating to human services and children on the grant program's
128 effectiveness in achieving CFI objectives.

129 Sec. 3. Section 17b-27a of the general statutes is repealed. (*Effective*
130 *from passage*)

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
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Section 1	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 2	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 3	<i>from passage</i>	Repealer section