



General Assembly

February Session, 2022

Raised Bill No. 197

LCO No. 701



Referred to Committee on HUMAN SERVICES

Introduced by:
(HS)

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 2022 supplement to the general
2 statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof
3 (*Effective July 1, 2022*):

4 (a) The Department of Social Services shall administer a temporary
5 family assistance program under which cash assistance shall be
6 provided to eligible families in accordance with the temporary
7 assistance for needy families program, established pursuant to the
8 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of
9 1996. The Commissioner of Social Services may operate portions of the
10 temporary family assistance program as a solely state-funded program,
11 separate from the federal temporary assistance for needy families
12 program, if the commissioner determines that doing so will enable the
13 state to avoid fiscal penalties under the temporary assistance for needy
14 families program. Families receiving assistance under the solely state-
15 funded portion of the temporary family assistance program shall be
16 subject to the same conditions of eligibility as those receiving assistance

17 under the federal temporary assistance for needy families program.
18 Under the temporary family assistance program, benefits shall be
19 provided to a family for not longer than [twenty-one] sixty months,
20 except as provided in [subsections (b) and (c)] subsection (b) of this
21 section. For the purpose of calculating said [twenty-one-month] sixty-
22 month time limit: [, months]

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

49 [(b) The Commissioner of Social Services shall exempt a family from
50 such time-limited benefits for circumstances including, but not limited

51 to: (1) A family with a needy caretaker relative who is incapacitated or
52 of an advanced age, as defined by the commissioner, if there is no other
53 nonexempt caretaker relative in the household; (2) a family with a needy
54 caretaker relative who is needed in the home because of the incapacity
55 of another member of the household, if there is no other nonexempt
56 caretaker relative in the household; (3) a family with a caretaker relative
57 who is not legally responsible for the dependent children in the
58 household if such relative's needs are not considered in calculating the
59 amount of the benefit and there is no other nonexempt caretaker relative
60 in the household; (4) a family with a caretaker relative caring for a child
61 who is under one year of age if there is no other nonexempt caretaker
62 relative in the household; (5) a family with a pregnant or postpartum
63 caretaker relative if a physician has indicated that such relative is unable
64 to work and there is no other nonexempt caretaker relative in the
65 household; (6) a family with a caretaker relative determined by the
66 commissioner to be unemployable and there is no other nonexempt
67 caretaker relative in the household; and (7) minor parents attending and
68 satisfactorily completing high school or high school equivalency
69 programs.

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

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

108 (2) A month shall count toward the limit if the family receives
109 assistance for any day of the month, [provided] except that any months
110 of temporary family assistance received during the public health
111 emergency declared by Governor Ned Lamont related to the COVID-19
112 pandemic shall not be included; [,] and

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

116 (b) The Commissioner of Social Services may exempt a family from
117 time-limited benefits for circumstances, including, but not limited to: (1)

118 A family with a needy caretaker relative who is incapacitated or of an
119 advanced age, as defined by the commissioner, if there is no other
120 nonexempt caretaker relative in the household; (2) a family with a needy
121 caretaker relative who is needed in the home because of the incapacity
122 of another member of the household, if there is no other nonexempt
123 caretaker relative in the household; (3) a family with a caretaker relative
124 who is not legally responsible for the dependent children in the
125 household if such relative's needs are not considered in calculating the
126 amount of the benefit and there is no other nonexempt caretaker relative
127 in the household; (4) a family with a caretaker relative caring for a child
128 who is under one year of age if there is no other nonexempt caretaker
129 relative in the household; (5) a family with a pregnant or postpartum
130 caretaker relative if a physician has indicated that such relative is unable
131 to work and there is no other nonexempt caretaker relative in the
132 household; (6) a family with a caretaker relative determined by the
133 commissioner to be unemployable and there is no other nonexempt
134 caretaker relative in the household; (7) minor parents attending and
135 satisfactorily completing high school or high school equivalency
136 programs; and (8) a family that has encountered circumstances
137 preventing employment, including, but not limited to, (A) domestic
138 violence or physical harm to such family's children; or (B) other
139 circumstances beyond such family's control. The commissioner shall
140 disregard ninety dollars of earned income in determining applicable
141 family income.

142 [(d)] (c) Under said program, no family shall be eligible that has total
143 gross earnings exceeding the federal poverty level, however, in the
144 calculation of the benefit amount for eligible families and previously
145 eligible families that become ineligible temporarily because of receipt of
146 workers' compensation benefits by a family member who subsequently
147 returns to work immediately after the period of receipt of such benefits,
148 earned income shall be disregarded up to the federal poverty level.
149 Except when determining eligibility for [a six-month] an extension of
150 benefits pursuant to subsection [(c)] (b) of this section, the commissioner
151 shall disregard the first fifty dollars per month of income attributable to

152 current child support that a family receives in determining eligibility
153 and benefit levels for temporary family assistance. Any current child
154 support in excess of fifty dollars per month collected by the department
155 on behalf of an eligible child shall be considered in determining
156 eligibility but shall not be considered when calculating benefits and
157 shall be taken as reimbursement for assistance paid under this section,
158 except that when the current child support collected exceeds the family's
159 monthly award of temporary family assistance benefits plus fifty
160 dollars, the current child support shall be paid to the family and shall be
161 considered when 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] the sixty-month time limit, including a family with income
168 above the payment standard, [or (2) the sixty-month limit] shall have an
169 interview for the purpose of being informed of services that may
170 continue to be available to such family, including employment services
171 available through the Labor Department. Such interview shall include
172 [(A)] (1) a determination of benefits available to the family provided by
173 the Department of Social Services; and [(B)] (2) a determination of
174 whether such family is eligible for supplemental nutrition assistance or
175 Medicaid. Information and referrals shall be made to such a family for
176 services and benefits including, but not limited to, the earned income
177 tax credit, rental subsidies emergency housing, employment services
178 and energy assistance.

179 [(g)] (f) Notwithstanding section 17b-104, commencing on July 1,
180 2023, the Commissioner of Social Services shall provide an annual cost-
181 of-living adjustment in temporary family assistance benefits equal to the
182 most recent percentage increase in the consumer price index for urban
183 consumers whenever funds appropriated for temporary family
184 assistance lapse at the close of any fiscal year and such adjustment has

185 not otherwise been included in the budget for the temporary family
186 assistance program, provided the increase would not create a budget
187 deficiency in succeeding years. The commissioner shall provide a
188 prorated benefit increase from such available lapsed funds in any fiscal
189 year when such funds are not sufficient to cover a cost-of-living
190 adjustment in accordance with this subsection.

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

195 Sec. 2. Subsection (a) of section 17b-112b of the general statutes is
196 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*
197 *2022*):

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

208 Sec. 3. Section 17b-112e of the general statutes is repealed and the
209 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2022*):

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

217 during the first twelve months of employment services by an
218 employment services case manager; (2) have made a good faith effort to
219 seek and maintain employment but have not been able to do so or be at
220 risk of failing to complete the employment services program; (3) have
221 exhausted their eligibility for temporary family assistance program
222 benefits; or (4) not be eligible for [six-month] extensions of temporary
223 family assistance benefits due to [: (A) The receipt of two sanctions from
224 the department during the first twenty months of the twenty-one-month
225 time limit of said temporary family assistance program; or (B)] the
226 determination by the department that such a family has not made a
227 good faith effort to seek and maintain employment.

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

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

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

259 Sec. 4. Subsection (d) of section 17b-112g of the 2022 supplement to
260 the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu
261 thereof (*Effective July 1, 2022*):

262 (d) A family receiving diversion assistance shall be ineligible to
263 receive monthly temporary family assistance payments for a period of
264 three months from the date of application for temporary family
265 assistance, except that such family shall be eligible to receive temporary
266 family assistance payments within such period if the Commissioner of
267 Social Services, or the commissioner's designee, in the commissioner's
268 sole discretion, determines that the family has experienced undue
269 hardship. A family that is subject to the [twenty-one-month] sixty-
270 month benefit limit under temporary family assistance shall have
271 diversion assistance count as three months toward such limit. Nothing
272 in this section shall prohibit a family receiving diversion assistance that
273 later qualifies for temporary family assistance from qualifying for [a six-
274 month] an extension available to recipients of temporary family
275 assistance who did not receive diversion assistance.

276 Sec. 5. Subsection (b) of section 17b-688c of the general statutes is
277 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*
278 *2022*):

279 (b) In no event shall temporary family assistance be granted to an
280 applicant for such assistance, who is not exempt from participation in
281 the employment services program, prior to the applicant's attendance at

282 an initial scheduled employment services assessment interview and
283 participation in the development of an employment services plan. The
284 Department of Social Services shall not delay temporary family
285 assistance to an applicant in cases where the department schedules the
286 initial employment services assessment interview more than ten
287 business days after the date on which application for assistance is made,
288 or in cases where the Labor Department does not complete an
289 employment services plan for the benefit of the applicant within ten
290 business days of the date on which the applicant attends an employment
291 services assessment interview. The Commissioner of Social Services
292 shall refer any applicant denied temporary family assistance, who may
293 be in need of emergency benefits, to other services offered by the
294 Department of Social Services or community services that may be
295 available to such applicant. The Department of Social Services shall
296 reduce the benefits awarded to a family under the temporary family
297 assistance program when a member of the family who is required to
298 participate in employment services fails to comply with an employment
299 services requirement without good cause. The first instance of
300 noncompliance with an employment services requirement shall result
301 in a twenty-five per cent reduction of such benefits for three consecutive
302 months. The second instance of noncompliance with such requirement
303 shall result in a thirty-five per cent reduction of such benefits for three
304 consecutive months. A third or subsequent instance of noncompliance
305 with such requirement shall result in the termination of such benefits
306 for three consecutive months. If only one member of a family is eligible
307 for temporary family assistance and such member fails to comply with
308 an employment services requirement, the department shall terminate all
309 benefits of such family for three consecutive months. Notwithstanding
310 the provisions of this subsection, the department shall terminate the
311 benefits awarded to a family under the temporary family assistance
312 program if a member of the family who is not exempt from the [twenty-
313 one-month] sixty-month time limit specified in subsection (a) of section
314 17b-112, as amended by this act, fails, without good cause, to: (1) Attend
315 any scheduled assessment appointment or interview relating to the
316 establishment of an employment services plan, except that such

317 individual's benefits shall be reinstated if the individual attends a
318 subsequently scheduled appointment or interview within thirty days of
319 the date on which the department has issued notification to the
320 individual that benefits have been terminated, or (2) comply with an
321 employment services requirement. [during a six-month extension of
322 benefits.] Any individual who fails to comply with the provisions of
323 subdivision (1) of this subsection may submit a new application for such
324 benefits at any time after termination of benefits.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>July 1, 2022</i>	17b-112
Sec. 2	<i>July 1, 2022</i>	17b-112b(a)
Sec. 3	<i>July 1, 2022</i>	17b-112e
Sec. 4	<i>July 1, 2022</i>	17b-112g(d)
Sec. 5	<i>July 1, 2022</i>	17b-688c(b)

Statement of Purpose:

To increase from twenty-one to sixty months the amount of time a person can receive temporary family assistance.

[Proposed deletions are enclosed in brackets. Proposed additions are indicated by underline, except that when the entire text of a bill or resolution or a section of a bill or resolution is new, it is not underlined.]