



General Assembly

**Substitute Bill No. 197**

February Session, 2022



**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2 statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof  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 [(II) a]

113 (3) A month in which a family receives temporary assistance for  
114 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 extension of  
150 benefits pursuant to subsection (c) of this section, the] 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] exemption of the sixty-month time limit for  
206 temporary family assistance, pursuant to section 17b-112, as amended  
207 by this act, provided the domestic violence experienced is of sufficient  
208 magnitude to reasonably render the individual unable to obtain or  
209 maintain employment.

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 Section 17b-112e of the general statutes is repealed and the  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

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

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

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

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



251 contract.]

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

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

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

278 Sec. 5. Subsection (b) of section 17b-688c of the general statutes is  
279 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*  
280 *2022*):

281 (b) In no event shall temporary family assistance be granted to an

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

