



General Assembly

February Session, 2022

***Raised Bill No. 289***

LCO No. 428



Referred to Committee on HUMAN SERVICES

Introduced by:  
(HS)

***AN ACT CONCERNING OVERSIGHT AND FUNDING OF THE CONNECTICUT FATHERHOOD INITIATIVE.***

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 low-  
5 income children, and (B) identifies services that effectively encourage  
6 and enhance responsible and skillful parenting and increase the ability  
7 of fathers to meet the financial and emotional needs of their children;  
8 and (2) "CFI objectives" means efforts to: (A) Promote public education  
9 concerning the financial and emotional responsibilities of fatherhood,  
10 (B) assist men in preparation for the legal, financial and emotional  
11 responsibilities of fatherhood, (C) promote the establishment of  
12 paternity at childbirth, (D) encourage fathers, regardless of marital  
13 status, to foster their emotional connection to and financial support of  
14 their children, (E) establish support mechanisms for fathers in their  
15 relationship with their children, regardless of their marital and financial  
16 status, and (F) integrate state and local services available for families.

17 (b) There is established within the Department of Social Services the  
18 Office of the Connecticut Fatherhood Initiative. The office shall be  
19 overseen by the Commissioner of Social Services and shall perform  
20 administrative duties on behalf of the CFI in accordance with a strategic  
21 plan developed and implemented by the CFI with the approval of the  
22 council established pursuant to section 2 of this act.

23 Sec. 2. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) (a) There is established a CFI  
24 Council to approve the work of the CFI, including, but not limited to,  
25 implementation of CFI objectives through a strategic plan developed by  
26 the CFI. The council shall actively participate in efforts that further CFI  
27 objectives, including, but not limited to: (1) Fostering collaboration  
28 between state agencies that provide services for fathers and families; (2)  
29 (A) coordinating comprehensive services, (B) ensuring the continuity of  
30 services, (C) heightening the impact of services, and (D) avoiding  
31 duplication of services; and (3) supporting fathers of children eligible or  
32 formerly eligible for services under the temporary assistance for needy  
33 families block grant.

34 (b) The membership of the council shall include, but need not be  
35 limited to:

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

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

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

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

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

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

- 46 (7) The Commissioner of Housing, or the commissioner's designee;
- 47 (8) The Labor Commissioner, or the commissioner's designee;
- 48 (9) The Commissioner of Mental Health and Addiction Services, or  
49 the commissioner's designee;
- 50 (10) The Commissioner of Public Health, or the commissioner's  
51 designee;
- 52 (11) The Commissioner of Veterans Affairs, or the commissioner's  
53 designee;
- 54 (12) The chairperson of the Board of Pardons and Parole, or the  
55 chairperson's designee;
- 56 (13) The executive directors of the Support Enforcement Services  
57 Division and the Court Support Services Division of the Judicial Branch,  
58 or their respective designees;
- 59 (14) The Chief Family Support Magistrate, or the Chief Family  
60 Support Magistrate's designee;
- 61 (15) The president of the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities,  
62 or the president's designee;
- 63 (16) The director of the Office of Child Support Services within the  
64 Department of Social Services, or the director's designee; and
- 65 (17) At least eleven members appointed by the Commissioner of  
66 Social Services, including:
- 67 (A) One with expertise in the area of legal assistance to low-income  
68 populations;
- 69 (B) One representative of the Connecticut Employment and Training  
70 Commission;
- 71 (C) One representative of a regional workforce development board;

- 72 (D) One member with expertise in family relations;
- 73 (E) One or more representatives of a local fatherhood program;
- 74 (F) One member with expertise in male mental and physical health;
- 75 (G) One member representing the interests of custodial parents;
- 76 (H) One member representing the interests of noncustodial parents;
- 77 (I) One member representing the interests of children;
- 78 (J) One member with expertise in the area of domestic violence; and
- 79 (K) One member with expertise in child development.

80 (c) The Commissioner of Social Services shall serve as a chairperson  
81 of the council and shall designate a cochairperson from among the  
82 membership of the council. The commissioner shall convene the council  
83 not later than thirty days after the effective date of this section, and the  
84 council shall meet at least quarterly thereafter. The commissioner shall  
85 fill any vacancy on the council.

86 (d) The Commissioner of Social Services may designate a working  
87 group from among the members of the council to carry out specific  
88 duties required under this section and section 1 of this act. The  
89 commissioner shall seek the advice and participation of any person,  
90 organization or state or federal agency the commissioner deems  
91 necessary to carry out the provisions of this section and section 1 of this  
92 act.

93 (e) The Commissioner of Social Services, in consultation with the  
94 council and within available resources, shall apply for any available  
95 federal and private funds for programs that promote CFI objectives in  
96 accordance with this section and section 1 of this act. The commissioner  
97 shall award grants from any such available funds to entities that provide  
98 (1) employment and training opportunities for low-income fathers to  
99 increase the earning capacity of such fathers; (2) classes in parenting and

100 financial literacy; and (3) other support services and programs that  
101 promote responsible parenting, economic stability and communication  
102 and interaction between fathers and their children.

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

116 (g) Not later than December 1, 2022, and annually thereafter, the  
117 commissioner, in consultation with the council, shall report, in  
118 accordance with section 11-4a of the general statutes, to the joint  
119 standing committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of  
120 matters relating to appropriations and the budgets of state agencies,  
121 human services and children on the grant program's effectiveness in  
122 achieving CFI objectives.

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

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

**Statement of Purpose:**

To establish funding and oversight of the Connecticut Fatherhood Initiative and objectives for the initiative.

*[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.]*