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## OFA Bill Analysis

### HB 6902

#### ***AN ACT CONCERNING YOUTH SERVICE BUREAUS AND ESTABLISHMENT OF A JUVENILE DIVERSIONARY PROGRAM.***

#### **SUMMARY:**

**Section 1** of the bill requires the Department of Children and Families (DCF) and the Court Support Services Division of the Judicial Branch (CSSD) to jointly establish and operate a Diversion First program in one or more municipalities with a population of over 90,000 people. The Diversion First program must provide services that include but are not limited to: (A) anger management, (B) family counseling, (C) substance abuse education, (D) assessment and treatment for substance abuse, (E) domestic violence identification and prevention, and (F) community service opportunities. DCF and CSSD must collaborate with school districts in the municipalities in which the program operates to provide program participants with tutoring services, special education, and truancy prevention services.

**Section 2** of the bill requires DCF to develop and implement performance improvement plans for Youth Service Bureaus (YSBs) that do not meet certain minimum performance standards, expanding DCF responsibilities to YSBs and statutory requirements of YSBs. It also requires municipalities with a population of less than 70,000 to establish a YSB if they do not already have one. Pursuant to this section of the bill, YSBs may: (1) screen youth using a validated risk and needs assessment screening tool to develop a plan for services; (2) provide comprehensive case management and coordination services; (3) provide restorative justice practices; and (4) provide educational advocacy and educational supports.

EFFECTIVE DATE: January 1, 2024

## **BACKGROUND**

### ***Youth Services Bureaus***

Per CGS Sec. 10-19m, any one or more municipalities, or any one or more private youth-serving organizations, designated to act as agents of one or more municipalities, may establish a multipurpose YSB for the purposes of evaluation, planning, coordination and implementation of services, including prevention and intervention programs for delinquent, predelinquent, pregnant, parenting and troubled youths referred to such bureau by schools, police, juvenile courts, adult courts, local youth-serving agencies, parents and self-referrals. A YSB shall be the coordinating unit of community-based services to provide comprehensive delivery of prevention, intervention, treatment, and follow-up services.

A YSB may provide, but shall not be limited to the delivery of, the following services: (1) Individual and group counseling; (2) parent training and family therapy; (3) work placement and employment counseling; (4) alternative and special educational opportunities; (5) recreational and youth enrichment programs; (6) outreach programs to insure participation and planning by the entire community for the development of regional and community-based youth services; (7) preventive programs, including youth pregnancy, youth suicide, violence, alcohol and drug prevention; and (8) programs that develop positive youth involvement. Such services shall be designed to meet the needs of youths by the diversion of troubled youths from the justice system as well as by the provision of opportunities for all youths to function as responsible members of their communities.

In FY 20, DCF assumed responsibility for administering statutory formula grants to YSBs from the Department of Education. The agency does not perform YSB program evaluations. There are currently 103 YSBs, serving 138 towns across Connecticut, that receive DCF grant funding.

## **COMMITTEE ACTION**

Appropriations Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 48 Nay 1 (04/21/2023)