



House of Representatives

General Assembly

File No. 745

January Session, 2023

House Bill No. 6902

House of Representatives, May 8, 2023

The Committee on Appropriations reported through REP. WALKER of the 93rd Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the bill ought to pass.

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

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

1 Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective January 1, 2024*) (a) The Commissioner of
2 Children and Families and the Chief Court Administrator shall develop,
3 in consultation with The Consultation Center at Yale, a program to
4 divert from the juvenile justice and court system juveniles who (1) have
5 committed a first or second criminal offense, (2) have been charged with
6 a minor criminal offense, or (3) are chronically absent from school.

7 (b) Such program shall be administered by the Commissioner of
8 Children and Families and the Chief Court Administrator and shall be
9 known as the Diversion First program. The program shall first be
10 implemented in one or more municipalities in the state having a
11 population of ninety thousand or more. The program shall: (1) Serve as
12 a single point of contact for program participants seeking services
13 provided by a network of community-based agencies; and (2) include a
14 centralized decision-making process regarding program eligibility,

15 service coordination, referrals for services to such agencies and tracking
16 of program participant outcomes. Such agencies shall provide services
17 that include, but need not be limited to, (A) anger management, (B)
18 family counseling, (C) substance abuse education, (D) assessment and
19 treatment for substance abuse, (E) domestic violence identification and
20 prevention, and (F) community service opportunities. The
21 Commissioner of Children and Families and the Chief Court
22 Administrator shall collaborate with school districts in the
23 municipalities in which the program operates to provide program
24 participants with tutoring services, special education and truancy
25 prevention services.

26 (c) The Commissioner of Children and Families and the Chief Court
27 Administrator shall develop the program to utilize existing community
28 services in the municipality in which the program operates. Said
29 commissioner and administrator, in consultation with municipal police
30 departments and youth service bureaus, as described in section 10-19m
31 of the general statutes, as amended by this act, serving the municipality
32 in which the program operates, shall identify (1) all community services
33 that are available to children who are referred to the program and
34 members of their families; and (2) gaps in such services. Said
35 commissioner and administrator, in consultation with such municipal
36 police departments and youth service bureaus, shall take steps to
37 eliminate such service gaps.

38 (d) Municipal police departments in which the Diversion First
39 program operates shall consider referring to the program juveniles
40 involved in criminal activity or who are chronically absent from school.
41 The program shall provide opportunities for victim input utilizing a
42 restorative justice model and allow for identification of measurable
43 outcomes.

44 Sec. 2. Section 10-19m of the general statutes is repealed and the
45 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective January 1, 2024*):

46 (a) For the purposes of this section, "youth" means a person from birth
47 to eighteen years of age. Any one or more municipalities having a

48 population of less than seventy thousand or any one or more private
49 youth-serving organizations, designated to act as agents of one or more
50 municipalities [, may] having a population of less than seventy
51 thousand, shall establish a multipurpose youth service bureau for the
52 purposes of evaluation, planning, coordination and implementation of
53 services, including prevention and intervention programs for
54 delinquent, predelinquent, pregnant, parenting and troubled youths
55 referred to such bureau by schools, police, juvenile courts, adult courts,
56 local youth-serving agencies, parents and self-referrals. A youth service
57 bureau shall be the coordinating unit of community-based services to
58 provide comprehensive delivery of prevention, intervention, treatment
59 and follow-up services.

60 (b) A youth service bureau established pursuant to subsection (a) of
61 this section may provide, but shall not be limited to the delivery of, the
62 following services: (1) [Individual] Screening using a validated risk and
63 needs assessment screening tool to develop a plan for services; (2)
64 comprehensive case management and coordination services; (3)
65 individual and group counseling; [(2)] (4) parent training and family
66 therapy; [(3)] (5) restorative justice practices; (6) work placement and
67 employment counseling; [(4)] (7) educational advocacy and educational
68 supports; (8) alternative and special educational opportunities; [(5)] (9)
69 recreational and youth enrichment programs; [(6)] (10) outreach
70 programs to [insure] ensure participation and planning by the entire
71 community for the development of regional and community-based
72 youth services; [(7)] (11) preventive programs, including youth
73 pregnancy, youth suicide, violence, alcohol and drug prevention; and
74 [(8)] (12) programs that develop positive youth involvement. Such
75 services shall be designed to [meet the needs of youths by the diversion
76 of troubled] divert youths from the justice system [as well as by the
77 provision of] and provide opportunities for all youths to function as
78 responsible members of their communities. If the youth service bureau
79 has identified services that are needed by a youth but cannot be
80 provided by the youth service bureau, the youth service bureau shall
81 refer such youth to an appropriate service provider in the community
82 who can provide the needed services. Not later than fifteen days after

83 such referral, the referring youth service bureau shall consult with the
84 provider to whom it referred such youth for a service status report. If
85 the youth service bureau determines that the diversion to community
86 services was unsuccessful, the youth service bureau shall refer such
87 youth back to the juvenile justice and court system.

88 (c) The Commissioner of Children and Families shall adopt
89 regulations, in accordance with the provisions of chapter 54,
90 establishing minimum performance standards for such youth service
91 bureaus and the criteria for qualifying for state cost-sharing grants,
92 including, but not limited to, allowable sources of funds covering the
93 local share of the costs of operating such bureaus, acceptable in-kind
94 contributions and application procedures. The commissioner shall, [on
95 December 1, 2011] not later than December 1, 2024, and biennially
96 thereafter, submit a state-wide performance report to the [General
97 Assembly] Juvenile Justice Policy and Oversight Committee established
98 pursuant to section 46b-121n on the referral or diversion of children and
99 youth under the age of eighteen years from the juvenile justice system
100 and the court system. Such report shall include, but not be limited to, (1)
101 demographic data on age, race, ethnicity and gender of children and
102 youth receiving services from youth service bureaus, (2) results of any
103 screenings conducted, (3) data on the types of services provided, (4) data
104 on program completion and outcomes, (5) the number of times any child
105 or youth is so diverted, (6) the number of children and youth diverted,
106 (7) the type of service provided to any such child [, by whom] or youth,
107 (8) identification of the juvenile justice or court system from which such
108 child or youth was diverted, (9) the ages of the children and youth
109 diverted, (10) identification of any youth service bureau not meeting
110 established minimum performance standards, established by the
111 commissioner pursuant to this subsection, and (11) an outline of a
112 performance improvement plan, developed in accordance with
113 subsection (d) of this section, for such youth service bureau, and such
114 other information and statistics as the General Assembly may request
115 from time to time. Any such report shall contain no identifying
116 information about any particular child or youth.

117 (d) The Commissioner of Children and Families shall develop and
 118 implement a performance improvement plan for each youth service
 119 bureau not meeting the minimum performance standards established
 120 by the commissioner and shall offer technical and other needed
 121 assistance to such youth service bureau directly or through a third party
 122 to comply with such performance standards.

123 (e) Each youth service bureau shall, not later than September 1, 2024,
 124 and annually thereafter, report the following information to the
 125 Commissioner of Children and Families: (1) Demographic data on
 126 children and youth served, including age, race, ethnicity and gender; (2)
 127 results of any screening conducted; (3) services provided; (4) service
 128 completion; and (5) outcome data. Any such report shall not contain
 129 identifying information about any particular child or youth.

130 (f) For purposes of this section, "divert" means to provide an
 131 alternative to a court referral for a juvenile arrested for the first or second
 132 time of an infraction or misdemeanor, including, but not limited to: (1)
 133 Simple trespass under section 53a-110a; (2) creating a public disturbance
 134 under section 53a-181a; (3) disorderly conduct under section 53a-182; (4)
 135 fifth degree larceny under section 53a-125a; (5) sixth degree larceny
 136 under section 53a-125b; and (6) breach of the peace under section 53a-
 137 181.

| | | |
|---|-----------------|-------------|
| This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections: | | |
| Section 1 | January 1, 2024 | New section |
| Sec. 2 | January 1, 2024 | 10-19m |

APP *Joint Favorable*

The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact:

| Agency Affected | Fund-Effect | FY 24 \$ | FY 25 \$ |
|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Children & Families, Dept. | GF - Cost | Significant | Significant |
| Judicial Department - Court Support Services Division | GF - Cost | Significant | Significant |

Note: GF=General Fund

Municipal Impact:

| Municipalities | Effect | FY 24 \$ | FY 25 \$ |
|------------------------|----------------|-----------|-----------|
| Various Municipalities | Potential Cost | See Below | See Below |

Explanation

Section 1, which requires the Department of Children and Families (DCF) and the Court Support Services Division of the Judicial Branch to jointly establish and operate a Diversion First program in one or more municipalities with a population of over 90,000 people, results in a significant cost to both agencies. The extent of the agencies' costs will vary based on the number of municipalities chosen for the program to operate in, the number of juveniles diverted to the program, and the array of services that the program will provide.

Section 2, which requires DCF to implement performance improvement plans for Youth Service Bureaus (YSBs) that do not meet certain minimum performance standards, results in a significant cost to DCF beginning in FY 24 for staff or consultants to perform YSB evaluations and develop these plans. DCF does not currently perform YSB program evaluations. There is also a potential cost beginning in FY 24 to certain municipalities with a population of less than 70,000 to establish a YSB, to the extent that they do not already have one. This cost

may be partially mitigated by state or federal funding. There are also potential costs to municipalities beginning in FY 24 that have an established YSB to meet the additional requirements outlined in this section of the bill. There are currently 103 municipalities that are covered by a partially state funded YSB. This leaves 31 municipalities that are unfunded by state allocations.

The Out Years

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future subject to inflation.

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)