



Senate Bill No. 817

Public Act No. 21-7

AN ACT CONCERNING SENIOR CENTERS AND SENIOR CRIME PREVENTION EDUCATION.

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

Section 1. Section 7-127b of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2021*):

(a) The chief elected official or the chief executive officer if by ordinance of each municipality shall appoint a municipal agent for elderly persons. Such agent shall be a staff member of a senior center, a member of an agency that serves elderly persons in the municipality or a responsible resident of the municipality who has demonstrated an interest in the elderly or has been involved in programs in the field of aging.

(b) The duties of the municipal agent may include, but shall not be limited to: [L] (1) [disseminating] Disseminating information to elderly persons, assisting such persons in learning about the community resources available to them and publicizing such resources and benefits; (2) assisting elderly persons to apply for federal and other benefits available to such persons; and (3) reporting to the chief elected official or chief executive officer of the municipality and the Department of Aging and Disability Services any needs and problems of the elderly

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and any recommendations for action to improve services to the elderly.

(c) Each municipal agent shall serve for a term of two or four years, at the discretion of the appointing authority of each municipality, and may be reappointed. If more than one agent is necessary to carry out the purposes of this section, the appointing authority, in its discretion, may appoint one or more assistant agents. The town clerk in each municipality shall notify the Department of Aging and Disability Services immediately of the appointment of a new municipal agent. Each municipality may provide to its municipal agent resources sufficient for such agent to perform the duties of the office.

(d) The Department of Aging and Disability Services shall adopt and disseminate to municipalities guidelines as to the role and duties of municipal agents and such informational and technical materials as may assist such agents in performance of their duties. The department, in cooperation with the area agencies on aging, may provide training for municipal agents within the available resources of the department and of the area agencies on aging.

Sec. 2. (NEW) (*Effective October 1, 2021*) (a) Any one or more municipalities, or any one or more private organizations that serve older persons and are designated to act as agents of one or more municipalities, may establish a multipurpose senior center, as defined in Title I of the Older Americans Act of 1965, as amended from time to time.

(b) A multipurpose senior center established pursuant to subsection (a) of this section may, but need not be limited to, providing: (1) Nutrition services; (2) health programs, including, but not limited to, mental health, behavioral health and wellness programs; (3) employment assistance; (4) intergenerational initiatives; (5) community service and civic engagement opportunities; (6) public benefits counseling; (7) socialization and educational opportunities; (8)

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transportation; (9) peer counseling; (10) financial and retirement counseling; (11) arts and recreation programs; and (12) case management services.

Sec. 3. (NEW) (*Effective October 1, 2021*) Within available appropriations, the Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity and Opportunity shall provide assistance to senior centers, which may include, but need not be limited to: (1) Establishment and maintenance of a list of senior centers and municipal services for older persons; (2) establishment and maintenance of a list of resources for staff of senior centers and municipal services for older persons; (3) development of technical assistance for staff of senior centers and municipal services for older persons through direct assistance or referral to expert resources; (4) regular communication with staff of senior centers and municipal services for older persons; (5) dissemination of information about local, state and federal support and services of interest to senior centers and municipal services for older persons; and (6) establishment and facilitation of a state-wide senior center work group as described in section 4 of this act. The executive director of the Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity and Opportunity shall assign or appoint necessary personnel to perform such duties.

Sec. 4. (*Effective October 1, 2021*) (a) There is established a state-wide senior center working group to develop a coordinated plan of development for senior centers and municipal services for older persons.

(b) The working group shall: (1) Develop an annual plan for the support and development of senior centers and municipal services for older persons, including, but not limited to, training needs and the coordination of existing resources; (2) evaluate the feasibility of implementing standards for the delivery of core services and make recommendations for such standards, including, but not limited to, standards that allow for parity of core services across municipalities

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while maintaining flexibility for delivery of those core services; (3) consult with the five area agencies on aging and other agencies; (4) facilitate coordination and communication between senior centers and municipal services for older persons with executive branch departments, including, but not limited to, the Departments of Aging and Disability Services, Housing, Mental Health and Addiction Services, Public Health, Social Services, Transportation and agencies and initiatives that impact older persons in the community; (5) develop and provide access to best practices and procedures for senior centers and municipal services for older persons; and (6) make recommendations to the joint standing committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to aging, human services, housing, planning and development, public health and transportation for any necessary appropriations or legislative changes.

(c) The working group shall consist of the following members:

(1) Five representatives of senior centers, one from each of the five planning and services areas, as described in section 17a-304 of the general statutes, two appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives, two appointed by the president pro tempore of the Senate, and one appointed by the majority leader of the House of Representatives;

(2) Two representatives of the Connecticut Association of Senior Center Personnel appointed by the majority leader of the Senate;

(3) One representative of the Connecticut Local Administrators of Social Services appointed by the minority leader of the House of Representatives;

(4) One representative from a senior center that is accredited by the National Institute of Senior Centers appointed by the minority leader of the Senate;

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(5) One representative of the Connecticut Association of Municipal Agents for the Elderly and one representative of a nonprofit senior center, appointed by the Governor;

(6) The executive director of the Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity and Opportunity, who shall serve as chairperson of the working group;

(7) The Commissioner of the Department of Aging and Disability Services, or the commissioner's designee; and

(8) The Commissioner of Social Services, or the commissioner's designee.

(d) Any member of the working group appointed under subdivision (1), (2), (3) or (4) of subsection (c) of this section may be a member of the General Assembly.

(e) All initial appointments to the working group shall be made not later than thirty days after the effective date of this section. Any vacancy shall be filled by the appointing authority.

(f) The chairperson of the working group shall schedule the first meeting, which shall be held not later than sixty days after the effective date of this section.

(g) The administrative staff of the Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity and Opportunity shall serve as administrative staff of the working group.

(h) Not later than January 1, 2023, the working group shall submit a report on its findings and recommendations to the joint standing committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to aging, human services, housing, planning and development, public health and transportation, in accordance with the provisions of

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section 11-4a of the general statutes. The working group shall terminate on the date that it submits such report or January 1, 2023, whichever is later.

Sec. 5. Section 54-261 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2021*):

(a) The Court Support Services Division, in conjunction with state-wide experts in law enforcement, the treatment of sexual offenders and sexual assault victim services, shall, within available appropriations, develop a community response education program to be offered to neighborhoods and municipalities that have been notified pursuant to section 54-258 that a person who has registered under said section is or will be residing in that community.

(b) The purpose of such program shall be to assist neighborhoods, senior centers and other facilities serving or housing senior citizens in such neighborhoods, parents and children to learn how to better protect themselves from sexual abuse and sexual assault. The program shall develop educational materials and community information resources on prevention and risk reduction concerning sexual abuse and sexual assault and the enforcement of requirements concerning the registration and supervision of sexual offenders and the notification of communities where such offenders reside.

(c) The program may include the following:

(1) An initial community meeting following a community notification, sponsored by the Court Support Services Division and held in conjunction with the chief of police, chief elected officials, the superintendent of schools and other municipal officials of the community, to discuss the implementation of the statutory requirements concerning the registration of a sexual offender and the notification of the community where such offender resides, to provide

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information on the crime or crimes involved and to provide information on how the offender will be monitored by the Court Support Services Division and the specific conditions of probation applicable to the offender;

(2) Information on how and where concerned residents may report observed violations by an offender of the conditions of such offender's probation;

(3) Resources to educate families, [and] children and senior citizens in the prevention and avoidance of sexual abuse and sexual assault and for parents seeking supportive methods for discussing relevant issues with their children;

(4) Resources on when and how a community may wish to establish a network of "Safe Houses" for neighborhood children to use when they seek safe shelter or the creation of a neighborhood block watch or crime watch;

(5) Resources for police departments and boards of education to use in consulting with parents on appropriate school-based classroom programs stressing safety, prevention and risk reduction and to use in developing educational programs for parents to discuss relevant issues with their children; [and]

(6) Resources for police departments and municipal officials to provide programs stressing safety, prevention and risk reduction for senior citizens living in the community or receiving services at a senior center or other facility located in the community; and

[(6)] (7) Compilation and distribution of a list of child protective agencies, child guidance clinics and rape crisis centers for families seeking more in-depth counseling after a community notification has occurred.

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(d) The Court Support Services Division may apply for and receive grants from the federal government or any agency thereof or from any foundation, corporation, association or individual for purposes of the development of the community response education program under this section.

Approved May 13, 2021