

No. 99. An act relating to community action agencies.

(H.534)

It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

Sec. 1. 3 V.S.A. chapter 59 is amended to read:

CHAPTER 59. COMMUNITY ~~SERVICES~~ ACTION AGENCIES

§ 3901. FINDINGS AND PURPOSE

(a) Recognizing that the economic well-being and social equity of every Vermonter has long been a fundamental concern of the State, it remains evident that ~~poverty continues to be the lot of~~ a substantial number of Vermont's population continues to experience poverty. It is the policy of ~~this~~ the State to help develop the full potential of each of its citizens so they can contribute to the fullest extent possible to the life of our communities and the State as a whole.

(b) It is the purpose of this chapter to strengthen, supplement, and coordinate efforts that further this policy through:

(1) the strengthening of community capabilities for planning, coordinating, and managing federal, State, and other sources of assistance related to the problem of poverty;

(2) the better organization and utilization of a range of services related to the needs of ~~the poor~~ individuals with low income; and

(3) the broadening of the resource base of programs to secure a more active role in assisting ~~the poor~~ individuals with low income from business, labor, and other groups from the private sector.

§ 3902. OFFICE OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

(a) The Director of the Office of Economic Opportunity is hereby authorized to allocate available financial assistance for community ~~services~~ action agencies and programs in accordance with State and federal law and regulation.

(b) The Director may provide financial assistance to community ~~services~~ action agencies for the planning, conduct, administration, and evaluation of community ~~service~~ action programs to provide a range of services and activities having a measurable and potentially major impact on causes of poverty in the community or in areas of the community where poverty is a particularly acute problem. Components of those services and activities may involve, without limitation of other activities and supporting facilities designed to assist ~~low-income~~ participants with low income:

(1) to secure and retain meaningful employment;

(2) to obtain adequate education;

(3) to make better use of available income;

(4) to ~~provide and maintain adequate housing and a suitable living~~

~~environment~~ have access to safe, secure, and permanent housing;

(5) to obtain prevention, intervention, treatment, and recovery services for the prevention of narcotics addiction, alcoholism, and for the rehabilitation of ~~narcotic addicts and alcoholics~~ individuals with substance use disorder;

(6) to obtain emergency assistance through loans and grants to meet immediate and urgent individual and family needs, including the need for health services, nutritious food, housing, and unemployment-related assistance;

(7) to remove obstacles and solve personal and family problems that block achievement of self-sufficiency;

(8) to achieve greater participation in the affairs of the community;

(9) to make more frequent and effective use of other programs related to the purposes of this chapter; and

(10) to coordinate and establish linkages between governmental and other social service programs to ensure the effective delivery of such services to ~~low income~~ persons; with low income and to encourage the use of entities in the private sector of the community in efforts to ameliorate poverty in the community.

(c) The Director is authorized to adopt rules pursuant to chapter 25 of this title appropriate to the carrying out of this chapter and its purposes thereof.

§ 3903. DESIGNATION OF AGENCIES TO PROVIDE SERVICES AND
ACTIVITIES TO AMELIORATE OR ELIMINATE POVERTY

The Director shall designate private nonprofit ~~community-based~~ community-based organizations ~~who~~ that have demonstrated or ~~who~~ that can

demonstrate the ability to provide services and activities as defined in subsection 3902(b) of this title as community ~~services~~ action agencies.

§ 3904. COMMUNITY ~~SERVICES~~ ACTION AGENCY ASSESSMENT
AND PLAN

Each designated community ~~services~~ action agency shall determine the need for activities and services within the area served by the agency ~~and shall~~ thereafter ~~prepare a community services plan that describes the method by which the agency will provide those services every three years, complete an assessment, and incorporate that information into an annual community action plan.~~ The plan shall include a schedule for the anticipated provision of new or ~~additional~~ ongoing services and shall specify the resources that are needed by and available to the agency to implement the plan. ~~The community services plan shall be updated annually.~~

§ 3905. COMMUNITY ~~SERVICES~~ ACTION AGENCIES;

ADMINISTRATION

(a) Each community ~~services~~ action agency shall administer its programs as set out in the community ~~services~~ action plan and as approved by its board of directors.

(b) Each board of a nonprofit ~~community-based~~ community-based organization that is designated a community ~~services~~ action agency under section 3903 of this chapter shall have an executive committee of not more

than seven members who shall be representative of the composition of the board and the board shall be so constituted that:

~~(1) one third of the members of the board are elected public officials currently holding office, or their designees, except that if the number of elected officials reasonably available and willing to serve is less than one third of the membership of the board, membership on the board of appointive public officials may be counted in meeting such one-third requirement;~~

~~(2) a minimum of one-third of the members of the board are persons chosen in accordance with election procedures adequate to ensure that they are representative of ~~the poor~~ individuals with low income in the area served; and~~

~~(2) one-third of the members of the board are elected public officials currently holding office, or their designees, except that if the number of elected officials reasonably available and willing to serve is less than one-third of the membership of the board, membership on the board of appointive public officials may be counted in meeting such one-third requirement; and~~

(3) the remainder of the members of the board are officials or members of business, industry, labor, religious, welfare, education, or other major groups and interests in the community.

(c) Each member of ~~the~~ a board selected to represent a specific geographic area within a community shall reside in the area ~~he or she~~ the member represents. ~~No person selected under subdivision (b)(2) or (3) of this section as a member of a board shall serve on such board for more than five~~

~~consecutive years, or more than a total of 10 years~~ Each board shall adopt term limits to govern its members.

Sec. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2026.

Date Governor signed bill: May 18, 2026