

H.534

Introduced by Representative Wood of Waterbury

Referred to Committee on

Date:

Subject: Human services; community action agencies; duties; governance

Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to rename community service agencies to be community action agencies and make other miscellaneous changes to the charge and organization of the renamed community action agencies.

An act relating to community action agencies

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

1 contribute to the fullest extent possible to the life of our communities and the
2 State as a whole.

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

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

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

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

13 § 3902. OFFICE OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

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

18 (b) The Director may provide financial assistance to community ~~services~~
19 action agencies for the planning, conduct, administration, and evaluation of
20 community ~~service~~ action programs to provide a range of services and
21 activities having a measurable and potentially major impact on causes of

1 poverty in the community or in areas of the community where poverty is a
2 particularly acute problem. Components of those services and activities may
3 involve, without limitation of other activities and supporting facilities designed
4 to assist ~~low-income~~ participants with low income:

5 (1) to secure and retain meaningful employment;

6 (2) to obtain adequate education;

7 (3) to make better use of available income;

8 (4) to ~~provide and maintain adequate housing and a suitable living~~
9 ~~environment~~ have access to safe, secure, and permanent housing;

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

8 § 3903. DESIGNATION OF AGENCIES TO PROVIDE SERVICES AND
9 ACTIVITIES TO AMELIORATE OR ELIMINATE POVERTY

10 The Director shall designate private nonprofit ~~community-based~~
11 community-based organizations ~~who~~ that have demonstrated or ~~who~~ that can
12 demonstrate the ability to provide services and activities as defined in
13 subsection 3902(b) of this title as community ~~services~~ action agencies.

14 § 3904. COMMUNITY ~~SERVICES~~ ACTION AGENCY PLAN

15 Each designated community ~~services~~ action agency shall determine the need
16 for activities and services within the area served by the agency and shall
17 thereafter prepare a community services plan that describes the method by
18 which the agency will provide those services. The plan shall include a
19 schedule for the anticipated provision of new or additional services and shall
20 specify the resources that are needed by and available to the agency to

1 implement the plan. The community services plan shall be completed every
2 three years and updated annually.

3 § 3905. COMMUNITY ~~SERVICES~~ ACTION AGENCIES;

4 ADMINISTRATION

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

8 (b) Each board of a nonprofit ~~community-based~~ community-based
9 organization that is designated a community ~~services~~ action agency under
10 section 3903 of this chapter shall have an executive committee of not more
11 than seven members who shall be representative of the composition of the
12 board and the board shall be so constituted that:

13 * * *

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

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

20 (c) Each member of ~~the~~ a board selected to represent a specific geographic
21 area within a community shall reside in the area ~~he or she~~ the member

1 represents. ~~No person selected under subdivision (b)(2) or (3) of this section~~
2 ~~as a member of a board shall serve on such board for more than five~~
3 ~~consecutive years, or more than a total of 10 years~~ Each board shall adopt term
4 limits to govern its members.

5 Sec. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE

6 This act shall take effect on July 1, 2026.