

1 H.534

2 Introduced by Representative Wood of Waterbury

3 Referred to Committee on

4 Date:

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

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

10 An act relating to community action agencies

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

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

13 CHAPTER 59. COMMUNITY SERVICES ACTION AGENCIES

14 § 3901. FINDINGS AND PURPOSE

15 (a) Recognizing that the economic well-being and social equity of every
16 Vermonter has long been a fundamental concern of the State, it remains
17 evident that ~~poverty continues to be the lot of a substantial number of~~
18 Vermont's population continues to experience poverty. It is the policy of ~~this~~
19 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
4 in 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
6 as 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.~~

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
Vermonters 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.