

H.534

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 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

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

4       § 3902. OFFICE OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

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

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

17           (1) to secure and retain meaningful employment;

18           (2) to obtain adequate education;

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1       § 3903. DESIGNATION OF AGENCIES TO PROVIDE SERVICES AND  
2                   ACTIVITIES TO AMELIORATE OR ELIMINATE POVERTY

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

7       § 3904. COMMUNITY ~~SERVICES~~ ACTION AGENCY ASSESSMENT  
8                   AND PLAN

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

1     § 3905. COMMUNITY ~~SERVICES~~ ACTION AGENCIES;

2             ADMINISTRATION

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

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

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

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

19            (2) one-third of the members of the board are elected public officials  
20    currently holding office, or their designees, except that if the number of elected  
21    officials reasonably available and willing to serve is less than one-third of the

1 membership of the board, membership on the board of appointive public  
2 officials may be counted in meeting such one-third requirement; and

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

6 (c) Each member of ~~the~~ a board selected to represent a specific geographic  
7 area within a community shall reside in the area ~~he or she~~ the member  
8 represents. ~~No person selected under subdivision (b)(2) or (3) of this section~~  
9 ~~as a member of a board shall serve on such board for more than five~~  
10 ~~consecutive years, or more than a total of 10 years~~ Each board shall adopt term  
11 limits to govern its members.

12 Sec. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE

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