

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2023

A N A C T

RELATING TO STATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT -- DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN,
YOUTH AND FAMILIES

Introduced By: Representatives Sanchez, Cruz, Morales, Henries, Fellela, and Vella-
Wilkinson

Date Introduced: March 03, 2023

Referred To: House Health & Human Services

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 42-72-4 of the General Laws in Chapter 42-72 entitled "Department
2 of Children, Youth and Families" is hereby amended to read as follows:

3 **42-72-4. Qualifications and duties of director.**

4 (a) The director shall meet the following minimum qualifications:

5 (1) Hold a master's degree in social work or a closely related field, and have demonstrated
6 experience in child welfare and/or children's mental health, and/or juvenile justice; and

7 (2) Have at least five (5) years of increasing responsibility in administering programs for
8 children.

9 (b) The director's duties include, but are not limited to:

10 (1) Administration and direction of the operation of the department;

11 (2) Examination of programs, services, and plans for children for the purpose of identifying
12 duplications, inefficiencies, effectiveness of programs, resources and unmet needs;

13 (3) Securing and analysis of departmental plans and budget requests affecting children's
14 programs and services;

15 (4) Review of federal funds utilized and available to the state for children's programs and
16 services;

17 (5) Collation of items in the governor's budget related to programs and services for children
18 and issuance of impact statements;

- 1 (6) Formulation of recommendations to the governor and other appropriate department
2 heads on planning and expenditures for children's programs and services;
- 3 (7) Liaison with community child advocacy groups, including parents, to receive advice on
4 resources, needs and priorities in the different localities;
- 5 (8) Provide effective public information on children's services in Rhode Island;
- 6 (9) Advise the legislature on the needs of children and their families;
- 7 (10) Establish a central registry for the purpose of reporting, collating, receiving, and
8 administering reports involving children;
- 9 (11) Liaison with other state departments, agencies, local governments, and private
10 providers of services to coordinate services and maximize resources in developing programs;
- 11 (12) Formulation of rules and regulations necessary to carry out the provisions of this
12 chapter;
- 13 (13) Preparation of an annual report and state plan to be sent to the governor and the general
14 assembly;
- 15 (14) Provision or arrangement for the provision of suitable treatment, rehabilitation, and
16 care for each child under the director's supervision by pursuing the least restrictive placement and,
17 wherever feasible, by effectuating community placements in Rhode Island;
- 18 (15) The director shall provide for a case management information system that includes
19 data regarding, but not limited to, client entry, screening, client's needs assessment, development
20 of a client service plan, services provision, evaluation, review and monitoring of client progress,
21 and client exit from the system. In addition, the director shall establish a centralized case
22 management unit to receive all service plans and using any additional expertise as may be required,
23 will review, monitor, evaluate, endorse, and/or modify as may be appropriate, each client service
24 plan;
- 25 (16) Administer in a coordinated and integrated manner all institutions and facilities which
26 are or may come under the jurisdiction of the department; ~~and~~
- 27 (17) Develop a comprehensive program for the prevention of problems of children and
28 provide a flexible, innovative, and effective program for the placement, care, and treatment of
29 children committed by any court to the department, transferred to the department by other
30 departments, or voluntarily admitted to the department; ~~and~~
- 31 (18) Establish an informal procedure to handle complaints filed by persons regarding
32 actions or inactions of the department before appeal to the hearing officer for disposition. The
33 informal process shall include the development of a form to be provided on the department's
34 website along with an explanation of the procedural requirements necessary and the appeal process.

1 (i) For the purposes of this subsection, a complaint is defined as any written request for
2 remedy made to a DCYF staff person in the field or office or to supervisory or administrative staff,
3 concerning to the administration of agency policies and programs, in which the legal rights, duties
4 or privileges of a specific person are required by law to be determined by the department. Such
5 complaints may include, but are not necessarily limited to:

6 (A) Visitation;

7 (B) Placement or removal of children from foster homes;

8 (C) Disagreement in case planning;

9 (D) Claims of discrimination based on age, handicap, sex, race, religion, national origin or
10 color;

11 (E) Licensing issues;

12 (F) Certification issues; and

13 (G) Indicated child abuse or neglect findings.

14 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF

A N A C T

RELATING TO STATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT -- DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN,
YOUTH AND FAMILIES

- 1 This act would require the director of the department of children, youth and families to
2 establish an informal procedure to handle complaints filed by persons regarding actions or inactions
3 of the department prior to an appeal to the department's hearing officer for disposition.
4 This act would take effect upon passage.

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