

FIRST REGULAR SESSION  
[PERFECTED]  
HOUSE COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR  
**HOUSE BILL NO. 927**  
**103RD GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

1830H.02P

JOSEPH ENGLER, Chief Clerk

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**AN ACT**

To repeal section 452.402, RSMo, and to enact in lieu thereof three new sections relating to domestic relations.

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*Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the state of Missouri, as follows:*

Section A. Section 452.402, RSMo, is repealed and three new sections enacted in lieu thereof, to be known as sections 9.411, 210.1150, and 452.402, to read as follows:

**9.411. The month of June is hereby designated as "Fathership Month" in the state of Missouri. The citizens of this state are encouraged to engage in appropriate events and activities to raise awareness about the importance of fathers being part of their children's lives.**

**210.1150. 1. There is hereby established within the department of social services the "Missouri Fathership Project". The Missouri fathership project shall be administered by the department of social services, subject to federal approval and state appropriations. The Missouri fathership project shall:**

**(1) Promote fathership by helping fathers achieve greater self-esteem and better awareness of their responsibilities to their families and community; and**

**(2) Empower fathers to become successful in fathership by building life skills and through family reunification, education and career training, employment support, and child-support compliance.**

**2. (1) There is hereby established within the department of social services the "Missouri Fathership Project Grant Program" to provide grants to agencies, programs, or nonprofit organizations that support and facilitate involvement of fathers in the community, subject to federal approval and state appropriations. The department shall**

EXPLANATION — Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets [thus] in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted from the law. Matter in **bold-face** type in the above bill is proposed language.

14 be the administrative body for the implementation of the program established by this  
15 subsection.

16 (2) The family support division shall prescribe the form and the method for  
17 filing grant applications; determine agencies, programs, or nonprofit organizations  
18 eligible for the grant; and supervise the processing of the program. The application  
19 process under this subdivision shall ensure that grant funds are used to fulfill the  
20 objectives of the Missouri fathership project under this section.

21 (3) (a) Family-focused community agencies, faith-based agencies, family  
22 advocacy programs, and nonprofit organizations may apply for a grant under this  
23 subsection. Agencies, programs, and organizations selected to receive a grant under this  
24 subsection shall use such moneys to hire, train, and facilitate fathership project  
25 specialists.

26 (b) Fathership project specialists shall serve as a one-on-one point of contact for  
27 fathers who are seeking to reestablish and strengthen their relationships with their  
28 children. Fathership project specialists shall work directly with fathers to address  
29 challenges that have caused a breakdown of their parenting relationships and help  
30 fathers navigate the system to reunify with their children.

31 (c) Fathership project specialists shall:

32 a. Serve as a liaison between fathers and any relevant state agencies or  
33 organizations, including the family court system and the Missouri family support  
34 division;

35 b. Assist fathers in developing and implementing personalized plans to  
36 reestablish and maintain a relationship with their children; and

37 c. Provide guidance, support, and resources to fathers to help fathers overcome  
38 compliance barriers with court-ordered case plans and other obstacles preventing  
39 reunification with their children.

40 (d) If a father ceases to engage with or comply with a court-ordered visitation  
41 and custody order, the court or family support division shall issue a referral to a  
42 partnering agency, program, or nonprofit organization utilizing services from a  
43 fathership project specialist. The referring entity shall inform the agency, program, or  
44 nonprofit organization that the father is no longer working toward the goal of  
45 reunification, and the agency, program, or nonprofit organization shall dispatch a  
46 fathership project specialist to engage with the father. If a father requests assistance  
47 through the Missouri family support division or directly to a partnering agency,  
48 program, or nonprofit organization, the father shall also be eligible for assistance from a  
49 fathership project specialist.

50           **3. All grants under subsection 2 of this section shall be made from funds**  
51 **appropriated by the general assembly and any gifts, contributions, grants, or bequests**  
52 **received from federal, private, or other sources to the Missouri fathership project grant**  
53 **fund established under subsection 4 of this section.**

54           **4. (1) There is hereby created in the state treasury the "Missouri Fathership**  
55 **Project Grant Fund", which shall consist of moneys appropriated to it by the general**  
56 **assembly and any gifts, contributions, grants, or bequests received from federal, private,**  
57 **or other sources. The state treasurer shall be custodian of the fund. In accordance with**  
58 **sections 30.170 and 30.180, the state treasurer may approve disbursements. The fund**  
59 **shall be a dedicated fund and, upon appropriation, moneys in this fund shall be used**  
60 **solely as provided under subsection 2 of this section. The fund shall be administered by**  
61 **the department.**

62           **(2) Notwithstanding the provisions of section 33.080 to the contrary, any moneys**  
63 **remaining in the fund at the end of the biennium shall not revert to the credit of the**  
64 **general revenue fund.**

65           **(3) The state treasurer shall invest moneys in the fund in the same manner as**  
66 **other funds are invested. Any interest and moneys earned on such investments shall be**  
67 **credited to the fund.**

68           **5. (1) Agencies, programs, or nonprofit organizations receiving grants under**  
69 **this section shall be required to submit annual reports to the relevant state agency**  
70 **detailing the use of the funds, the number of fathers engaged in the project, and the**  
71 **outcomes achieved in terms of father-child reunification and case plan completion.**

72           **(2) The department shall establish performance metrics to measure the success**  
73 **of the Missouri fathership project including, but not limited to, the number of fathers**  
74 **who successfully completed their case plans, the number of father-child reunifications**  
75 **facilitated, and the overall improvement in father involvement in the lives of children.**

76           **6. Any father participating in the project established under this section who has**  
77 **been making regular child support payments in accordance with an agreement entered**  
78 **into with the family support division or who has been complying with a court-ordered**  
79 **visitation and custody order, such father shall:**

80           **(1) Be eligible for limited driving privileges or the return of such participant's**  
81 **license as described under section 302.309; and**

82           **(2) Not be subject to the suspension of a:**

83           **(a) Hunting and fishing license, as such procedure is described under section**  
84 **454.1027; or**

85           **(b) Professional or occupational license, as such procedure is described under**  
86 **section 454.1003.**

87           **7. The department of social services shall promulgate all necessary rules and**  
88 **regulations for the administration of this section. Any rule or portion of a rule, as that**  
89 **term is defined in section 536.010, that is created under the authority delegated in this**  
90 **section shall become effective only if it complies with and is subject to all of the**  
91 **provisions of chapter 536 and, if applicable, section 536.028. This section and chapter**  
92 **536 are nonseverable and if any of the powers vested with the general assembly**  
93 **pursuant to chapter 536 to review, to delay the effective date, or to disapprove and annul**  
94 **a rule are subsequently held unconstitutional, then the grant of rulemaking authority**  
95 **and any rule proposed or adopted after August 28, 2025, shall be invalid and void.**

          452.402. 1. The court may grant reasonable visitation rights to the grandparents of  
2 the child and issue any necessary orders to enforce the decree when a grandparent has been  
3 unreasonably denied visitation for a period exceeding sixty days, and:

4           (1) The parents of the child have filed for a dissolution of their marriage. A  
5 grandparent shall have the right to intervene in any dissolution action solely on the issue of  
6 visitation rights. Grandparents shall also have the right to file a motion to modify the original  
7 decree of dissolution to seek visitation rights when visitation has been denied to them;

8           (2) One parent of the child is deceased and the surviving parent denies reasonable  
9 visitation to a parent of the deceased parent of the child; ~~[or]~~

10           **(3) The parents of the child were never married and the parent with custodial**  
11 **rights has denied reasonable visitation to a grandparent; or**

12           ~~[(3)]~~ (4) The child has resided in the grandparent's home for at least six months within  
13 the twenty-four month period immediately preceding the filing of the petition.

14

15 ~~[Except as otherwise provided in subdivision (1) of this subsection, if the natural parents are~~  
16 ~~legally married to each other and are living together with the child, a grandparent may not file~~  
17 ~~for visitation pursuant to this subsection.]~~

18           **2. Notwithstanding any provision of law, if a grandparent has been denied**  
19 **reasonable visitation with a child for a period exceeding sixty days and an action**  
20 **involving custody or visitation has been adjudicated, the grandparent may file seeking**  
21 **visitation with the child. A grandparent also has the right to file a motion for an**  
22 **independent action if no prior custody or visitation order exists to seek visitation rights**  
23 **if reasonable visitation has been denied.**

24           **3. Before ordering visitation, the court shall, in addition to the requirements of**  
25 **subsection 1 of this section, determine if the visitation by the grandparent would be in the**  
26 **child's best interests. Visitation may only be ordered when the court finds such visitation to**  
27 **be in the best interests of the child. The court may order reasonable conditions or restrictions**  
28 **on grandparent visitation.**

29           ~~[3-]~~ 4. If the court finds it to be in the best interests of the child, the court may appoint  
30 a guardian ad litem for the child. The guardian ad litem shall be an attorney licensed to  
31 practice law in Missouri. The guardian ad litem may, for the purpose of determining the  
32 question of grandparent visitation rights, participate in the proceedings as if such guardian ad  
33 litem were a party. The court shall enter judgment allowing a reasonable fee to the guardian  
34 ad litem.

35           ~~[4-]~~ 5. A home study, as described by section 452.390, may be ordered by the court to  
36 assist in determining the best interests of the child.

37           ~~[5-]~~ 6. The court may, in its discretion, consult with the child regarding the child's  
38 wishes in determining the best interest of the child.

39           ~~[6-]~~ 7. The right of a grandparent to maintain visitation rights pursuant to this section  
40 may terminate upon the adoption of the child.

41           ~~[7-]~~ 8. The court may award reasonable attorneys fees and expenses to the prevailing  
42 party.

43           **9. Visitation provided to a grandparent after filing an action under this section**  
44 **shall not terminate or extinguish a grandparent's right to seek relief under this section.**  
45 **If the parties reach an agreement regarding grandparent visitation, the court may enter**  
46 **an order confirming such agreement if the agreement is found to be in the best interests**  
47 **of the child. The court may impose additional conditions or restrictions as found to be**  
48 **appropriate by the court.**

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