

FIRST REGULAR SESSION

# HOUSE BILL NO. 1441

103RD GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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INTRODUCED BY REPRESENTATIVE GRAGG.

2984H.011

JOSEPH ENGLER, Chief Clerk

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## AN ACT

To amend chapter 660, RSMo, by adding thereto one new section relating to duties of the department of social services.

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

Section A. Chapter 660, RSMo, is amended by adding thereto one new section, to be known as section 660.850, to read as follows:

**660.850. 1. As used in this section, "goal four of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program" means the goal that encourages the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.**

**2. Beginning on December 1, 2026, and every December first thereafter, the department of social services shall file a report to the general assembly and the governor identifying and detailing the following:**

**(1) All actions taken to implement goal four of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program for the current year and for the three prior years;**

**(2) All actions taken and contemplated to increase the utilization of goal four of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program for the next year; and**

**(3) Year-over-year growth in the utilization of goal four of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program.**

**3. (1) Beginning on December 1, 2026, and every December first thereafter, the department of social services shall file a report to the general assembly and the governor identifying and detailing the department's outreach to and coordination with other state agencies and departments within state government to identify policies, programs, or procedures that:**

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.

18           **(a) Negatively impact two-parent family formation or maintenance, along with**  
19 **any legislative changes that may be needed to reduce or eliminate such negative impact;**  
20 **and**

21           **(b) May be modified to encourage two-parent family formation or maintenance,**  
22 **along with any legislative changes that may be needed to implement such**  
23 **encouragement.**

24           **(2) The report under this subsection shall give specific attention to the criminal**  
25 **justice system and the ways in which fathers can assist in maximizing relationships with**  
26 **their children during incarceration or reentry periods after imprisonment.**

27           **4. Beginning on December 1, 2026, and every December first thereafter, the**  
28 **department of social services shall file a report to the general assembly and the governor**  
29 **identifying and detailing the following:**

30           **(1) The ways in which the current child support guidelines contribute to an**  
31 **obligor being unable to adequately sustain his or her own living expenses or unable to**  
32 **adequately provide for his or her child in the obligor's own home;**

33           **(2) The ways in which current child support enforcement efforts are**  
34 **unnecessarily severe or may cause the:**

35           **(a) Loss of a job or loss of housing, transportation, or earning capacity;**

36           **(b) Descent into the underground economy; or**

37           **(c) Impairment of the obligor's relationship with his or her child,**

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39 **thereby undermining the state's goal of encouraging active two-parent involvement in**  
40 **the child's life;**

41           **(3) The extent to which the current child support guidelines exceed the marginal**  
42 **cost of the child's presence in the child support recipient's household or otherwise**  
43 **include disguised alimony;**

44           **(4) The extent to which the current child support guidelines contribute to the**  
45 **accumulation of uncollectible arrearages; and**

46           **(5) Steps that may be taken to reduce the accumulation of uncollectible**  
47 **arrears, including reductions in the guideline amounts and revisions to enforcement**  
48 **methods, to ensure that enforcement does not impair an obligor's ability to earn money**  
49 **or to adequately sustain his or her own living expenses or adequately provide for his or**  
50 **her child in the obligor's own home.**

51           **5. There is hereby established in the department of social services an "Office of**  
52 **Fatherhood". The director of the department shall appoint an assistant director to head**  
53 **the office, and the assistant director shall report to the director of the department. The**  
54 **office shall consist of staff of sufficient size so that the office may promote fatherhood**

55 and father-supportive measures throughout state government and local governments  
56 within the state and to otherwise encourage the formation and maintenance of two-  
57 parent families. The office shall be funded under the block grant authorized in 42  
58 U.S.C. Section 601 and with such additional funds as the legislature may designate from  
59 time to time. The office shall assess the programs, policies, and procedures of each state  
60 department for the programs', policies', and procedures' impact on fatherhood, and  
61 each department shall provide information to the office to assist in the assessment. The  
62 office shall make an annual report to the general assembly and the governor describing:

- 63 (1) The office's activities for the past year;
- 64 (2) The office's plans for the coming year;
- 65 (3) Any barriers to father participation and equality in all programs and matters  
66 relating to children;
- 67 (4) The office's plans for removing such barriers, if any; and
- 68 (5) Any legislative action necessary to support fatherhood and to otherwise  
69 encourage two-parent family formation or maintenance.

70 6. The department of social services shall conduct a review of judicial decisions  
71 and administrative actions to assess compliance with the provisions of sections 452.375  
72 and 454.1005, including child custody determinations and child support enforcement  
73 actions, and submit a report to the general assembly and the governor no later than  
74 December 1, 2026.

75 7. The department of social services shall file any necessary waivers or changes  
76 to the department's state plan with the United States Department of Health and Human  
77 Services that may be needed to implement the provisions of this section.

78 8. The department of social services shall partner with organizations in this state  
79 to offer grants to help implement programs that encourage two-parent family formation  
80 and maintenance and two-parent reunification. Such programs shall consist of:

- 81 (1) Marriage education;
- 82 (2) Marriage and relationship skills;
- 83 (3) Public and coparent skills workshops;
- 84 (4) Public awareness campaigns regarding the value of marriage and responsible  
85 fatherhood;
- 86 (5) Premarital counseling;
- 87 (6) Couples counseling;
- 88 (7) Shared parenting mediation;
- 89 (8) Family reconciliation;
- 90 (9) Court-ordered counseling at the beginning of divorce proceedings;
- 91 (10) Programs in schools;

92           **(11) Programs in community organizations;**

93           **(12) Counseling and legal assistance in cases of parental alienation; and**

94           **(13) Family reunification assistance for released prisoners.**

95           **9. The department of social services shall ensure that a similar portion of**  
96 **temporary assistance for needy families' funds are allocated proportionally among all**  
97 **four stated goals of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program.**

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