

SECOND REGULAR SESSION

[PERFECTED]

HOUSE COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR

HOUSE BILL NO. 1948

103RD GENERAL ASSEMBLY

4758H.03P

JOSEPH ENGLER, Chief Clerk

AN ACT

To amend chapters 9 and 210, RSMo, by adding thereto two new sections relating to fatherhood engagement.

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

Section A. Chapters 9 and 210, RSMo, are amended by adding thereto two new sections, to be known as sections 9.411 and 210.1150, to read as follows:

9.411. The month of June is hereby designated as "Fatherhood 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 Fatherhood Project". The Missouri fatherhood project shall be administered by the department of social services, subject to federal approval and state appropriations. The Missouri fatherhood project shall:

(1) Promote fatherhood 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 fatherhood 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 Fatherhood 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 shall issue a referral to a partnering agency, program, or
42 nonprofit organization utilizing services from a fathership project specialist. The
43 referring entity shall inform the agency, program, or nonprofit organization that the
44 father is no longer working toward the goal of reunification, and the agency, program,
45 or nonprofit organization shall dispatch a fathership project specialist to engage with
46 the father. If a father requests assistance through the Missouri family support division
47 or directly to a partnering agency, program, or nonprofit organization, the father shall
48 also be eligible for assistance from a fathership project specialist.

49 3. All grants under subsection 2 of this section shall be made from funds
50 appropriated by the general assembly and any gifts, contributions, grants, or bequests

51 received from federal, private, or other sources to the Missouri fathership project grant
52 fund established under subsection 4 of this section.

53 4. (1) There is hereby created in the state treasury the "Missouri Fathership
54 Project Grant Fund", which shall consist of moneys appropriated to it by the general
55 assembly and any gifts, contributions, grants, or bequests received from federal, private,
56 or other sources. The state treasurer shall be custodian of the fund. In accordance with
57 sections 30.170 and 30.180, the state treasurer may approve disbursements. The fund
58 shall be a dedicated fund and, upon appropriation, moneys in this fund shall be used
59 solely as provided under subsection 2 of this section. The fund shall be administered by
60 the department.

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

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

67 5. (1) Agencies, programs, or nonprofit organizations receiving grants under
68 this section shall be required to submit annual reports to the relevant state agency
69 detailing the use of the funds, the number of fathers engaged in the project, and the
70 outcomes achieved in terms of father-child reunification and case plan completion.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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