

HCS HB 1948 -- FATHERHOOD ENGAGEMENT (Gragg)

COMMITTEE OF ORIGIN: Standing Committee on Children and Families

This bill designates the month of June as "Fathership Month" in Missouri, encouraging events and activities to raise awareness about the importance of fathers being a part of their children's lives.

Subject to Federal approval and state appropriations, the bill establishes within the Department of Social Services the "Missouri Fathership Project", to promote fatherhood engagement and empower fathers to become successful in fatherhood engagement.

The bill establishes the "Missouri Fathership Project Grant Program" which is a program and accompanying fund for family-focused community agencies, faith-based agencies, family advocacy programs, and nonprofit organizations to apply for in order to hire, train, and facilitate Fathership Project specialists, who are to serve as a point of contact for fathers who want to reestablish and strengthen relationships with their children. When participating in the Project and meeting the requirements specified in the bill, fathers are eligible for limited driving privileges and are not subject to suspension or revocation of hunting and fishing licenses, as well as professional or occupational licenses.

The bill specifies the duties of Fathership Project specialists, including, but not limited to, being dispatched to engage with a father who does not comply with a court-ordered case plan, at which point a court or the Division is required to issue a referral to a partnering entity utilizing services from a Fathership Project specialist.

This bill is similar to HB 927 (2025).