

Connecticut Commission on
Women, Children *and* Seniors



CWCS

2018 ANNUAL & RBA REPORT

OUR MANDATE (excerpted)

Sec. 131. (NEW) (Effective July 1, 2016) (a) There is established a Commission on Women, Children and the Elderly, which shall be part of the Legislative Department. The commission shall focus on issues affecting each of the following underrepresented and underserved populations: Women, children and the family and elderly persons. The Commission on Women, Children and the Elderly shall constitute a successor to the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women, Commission on Children, and Commission on Aging in accordance with the provisions of subsections (b) to (d), inclusive, and subsection (f) of section 4-38d and section 4-38e of the general statutes.

Sec. 132. (NEW) (Effective July 1, 2016) (a) The Commission on Women, Children and the Elderly shall:

(1) Focus its efforts on the following quality of life desired results for women, children and the family and elderly persons in the state: That they are (A) healthy, safe and achieve educational success; (B) free from poverty; and (C) free from discrimination;

(2) Make recommendations to the General Assembly and the Governor for new or enhanced policies, programs and services that will foster progress in achieving the desired results described in subdivision (1) of this subsection. Such recommendations shall, when applicable, include, but need not be limited to: (A) Systems innovations, model policies and practices which embed two-generational practice in program, policy and systems change on the state and local levels; (B) strategies for reducing family poverty, promoting parent leadership and family civics; (C) the promotion of youth leadership opportunities that keep youth engaged in the community; and (D) strategies and programs that address equitable access, impede bias, and narrow the opportunity gap for women, children and the family and elderly persons in the state. Such recommendations may include other state and national best practices, and recommendations on federal funding maximization;

(3) Review and comment, as necessary, on any specific proposed state legislation or recommendations that may affect women, children and the family and elderly persons in the state and provide copies of any such comments to members of the General Assembly;

(4) Advise the General Assembly concerning the coordination and administration of state programs that affect women, children and the family and elderly persons in the state;

(5) Gather and maintain, as necessary, current information regarding women, children and the family and elderly persons in the state that can be used to better understand the status, condition, and contributions of such groups. Such information, as appropriate and pertinent to the desired results delineated in subdivision (1) of this subsection, shall be included in the annual report submitted in accordance with subsection (b) of this section and shall be made available to legislators and other interested parties upon request;

(6) Maintain liaisons between women, children and the family and elderly persons of the state and government agencies, including the General Assembly; and

(7) Conduct educational and outreach activities intended to raise awareness of and address critical issues for women, children and the family and elderly persons of the state.



December 31, 2018

Joint Committee on Appropriations
Legislative Office Building
300 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Honorable Appropriations Committee Members:

I am pleased to present the Commission on Women, Children and Seniors' (CWCS) 2018 Results-Based Accountability (RBA) and Annual Report to the General Assembly.

This year, CWCS staff have continued to work diligently to advocate for women, children and older adults. Despite losing more staff through attrition, we have been able to rely on volunteer fellows and interns to continue our work. We have also continued to follow our basic principles that guides our work. They remain:

- Any position we take, or advice and support we give, on an issue or policy will be informed by data, best practices, or both;
- When necessary, we will ask the tough questions that test the status quo, which may lead to reform or innovation; and
- We will strive for efficiencies, both systemic and programmatic, which will benefit our constituencies while saving the state time, money and effort.

It continues to be a privilege to work on behalf of our three underrepresented, and at times underserved, populations.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steven Hernández".

Steven Hernández, Esq.
Executive Director

Mission Statement and Priorities

The Commission on Women, Children and Seniors (CWCS) is a non-partisan arm of the Connecticut General Assembly. As staff to the legislature, the CWCS researches best practices, coordinates stakeholders, and promotes public policies that are in the best interest of Connecticut's underserved and underrepresented women, children and older adults.

The agency recognizes that the experiences and needs of each population, while interconnected, are unique and may require individual public policy action. Therefore, the commission's legislative priority areas are meant to:

For Women:

- Enhance women's economic security through leadership development and such family-friendly workplace policies as paid family leave and pay equity;
- Ensure wellness throughout the lifespan, including access to the full range of reproductive healthcare; and
- Eliminate gender-based discrimination in the work-place and in government.

For Children:

- Empower families and community leaders to be change agents on behalf of children;
- Remove the economic and academic obstacles that prevent children and their families from reaching their full potential; and
- Promote the physical, social and emotional wellbeing of children.

For Seniors:

- Promote economic security, choice and independence for older adults in both work and retirement;
- Support livable and accessible communities where older adults can retain their dignity and age in place; and

COMMISSION OFFICERS

Karen Jarmoc, *Chair*
Cynthia DeMatteis Cartier, *Secretary*
Paul Davis, *At Large*
Nancy Heaton, *At Large*
Antonia Moran, *At Large*

COMMISSIONERS

Denise Cesareo
Jordan E. Grossman
Gerard Kerins
Melanie O'Brien
Barbara J. Ruhe
Helene Shay

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Steven Hernández, Esq.

STAFF

Melvette Hill
State Coordinator, Parent Leadership Training Institute
Christianne Kovel (*until January, 2018*)
Senior Policy Analyst, Older Adults

Rosemary Lopez
Senior Resource Coordinator

Christine Palm (*until February, 2018*)
Communications and Women's Policy Analyst

Heather Petit (*until May, 2018*)
Children's Policy Analyst

- Enhance the safety and wellbeing of seniors by pre-venting physical abuse and financial exploitation.

2018 Legislative Priorities (As of Dec. 11, 2017)

Legislative priorities are policy measures that the CWCS takes the lead on by convening key stakeholders and working with legislators directly on specific bills that will move forward an agenda that serves our three populations.

Women:

Women's Healthcare Access and Reproductive Rights

Enhance women's healthcare by retaining and protecting current access and provisions available under the ACA, including co-pay-free birth control, as well as access to safe and legal abortions. Increase coverage and privacy, ensuring that preventive care includes a diversity of needs, and that care is not compromised as hospital and healthcare systems are acquired and merged.

Children:

School Climate and Social-Emotional Learning

Make Connecticut the first state in the country to fully embrace best practices in our schools in the form of social and emotional skills building, which is a proven method of reducing bullying, tapping into children's potential, narrowing the achievement gap, increasing safety, and promoting relational success in life. Strengthen the state's role as a leader in a multi-state collaborative that includes the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence, UConn's Neag School of Education, CCSU and the Dalio Foundation.

Seniors:

Senior Centers-Recommendations from the Task Force

CWCS chairs the Senior Center Task Force (SA 16-7), which will report in February 2018 on findings concerning the status of the state's roughly 160 senior centers, including resource, training and capacity needs for senior center directors. We will actively work to advance recommendations that come out of that report, especially those that enhance the physical and financial safety, emotional well-being and overall independence of the state's older adults.

Legislative Support Issues

CWCS will collaborate with – and support – stakeholders and legislators by serving on coalitions, providing data, and giving testimony on general policy topics that affect our three constituent populations.

- Establish a system of Paid Family and Medical Leave that can support Connecticut's working families.
- Enhance current anti-trafficking laws by expanding the age limit for a "minor child."
- Prevent opioid abuse by promoting a proven education strategy that engages schools, parents and community as partners to teach children about the perils of drug use and abuse.
- Improve access to high-quality child care for children experiencing homelessness by extending the 90-day grace period for compliance with immunization and other health and safety requirements.
- Support housing policies for seniors that allow older adults to age safely and productively at home.
- Protect the "safety net" of seniors' services, such as Medicare, Meals on Wheels, and the CT Home Care Program.

2018 LEGISLATIVE SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

For Women¹

Paid Family & Medical Leave

This year marked the fourth consecutive legislative session that the General Assembly introduced comprehensive paid leave legislation. Though H.B. 5387 passed both the Labor and Finance Committees, it was not called for a vote. Momentum and urgency for paid leave continues to grow across the state. Currently, more than 100 businesses are signed on in support of the Campaign.

Sexual Harassment Training and Protections

In response to the #MeToo and Time's Up movements, the General Assembly introduced S.B. 132 to expand sexual harassment trainings in workplaces across the state, increase protections for victims and eliminate the statute of limitations in certain criminal sexual assault cases. Though S.B. 132 passed the Senate with bipartisan support, the House failed to call it for a vote.

Access to Health Care

Public Act No. 18-10 codifies into Connecticut law the Affordable Care Act's "10 Essential Benefits" and ensures that, regardless of actions at the federal level, women in Connecticut will continue to have access to critical health care services, including contraception, cancer screenings and maternity coverage.

Pay Equity

P.A. 18-8: An Act Concerning Pay Equity. Connecticut now joins only four other states that prohibit employers from asking about salary history in the application process, a practice that perpetuates gender and racial wage gaps.

Reproductive Freedom

P.A. 11-18, allows pregnant women to exercise living wills, and P.A. 18-43, allows women to obtain health insurance when they become pregnant. Both bills are critical components of reproductive freedom.

Incarcerated Women

Connecticut took a clear stand to support incarcerated women with the passage of P.A. 18-4: An Act Concerning the Fair Treatment of Incarcerated Persons. The law is among the strongest protections in the nation for pregnant women and transgender individuals who are incarcerated.

Domestic Violence

Lawmakers addressed Connecticut's high rate of dual arrests with the passage of P.A. 18-5, which requires law enforcement to adopt a dominant aggressor standard to help prevent dual arrests of victims of domestic violence.

For Children²

Insurance Coverage for Children's Health Care Services

A new law requires certain health insurance policies to cover 10 essential health benefits, including pediatric services. It also requires policies to cover immunizations and preventive care services for children and youths (PA 18-10, effective January 1, 2019).

Safe Care of Substance Exposed Newborns

By January 1, 2019, a new law requires the Department of Children and Families (DCF) commissioner, in consultation with other departments, agencies, or entities concerned with the health and well-being of children, to develop guidelines for the safe care of newborns who exhibit (1) symptoms consistent with prenatal substance exposure; (2) related withdrawal symptoms; or (3) fetal alcohol syndrome. The guidelines must include instructions to providers on participation in the discharge planning process,

¹ Excerpted from CWEALFS 2018 Legislative Report, <https://www.cwealf.org/media/1506/2018-legislative-report-final.pdf>.

² Excerpted from the Office of Legislative Research's "Acts Affecting Children," Jessica Callahan, Legislative Analyst I, 2018-R-0152 (June 15, 2018).

including creating written plans of safe care, which must be developed between the providers and mothers of the newborns as part of that process.

Under the new law, a provider involved in the delivery or care of a newborn who, in the provider's estimation, exhibits symptoms consistent with prenatal substance exposure, associated withdrawal symptoms, or fetal alcohol spectrum disorder must notify DCF of these conditions in the newborn. Providers for these purposes include the following licensed health professionals: physicians, surgeons, homeopathic physicians, physician assistants, nurse-midwives, practical nurses, registered nurses, and advanced practice registered nurses (PA 18-111, § 5, effective July 1, 2018).

Services for Children with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

A new law requires the DCF commissioner, in collaboration with the early childhood, developmental services, and social services commissioners, to develop investigation, assessment, and case planning procedures that are responsive to the needs of children with intellectual and developmental disabilities. By February 1, 2019, the new law requires the DCF commissioner to report to the Children's Committee on the procedures and include any legislative recommendations (PA 18-71, effective July 1, 2018).

Sports Helmet Safety Working Group

A new law requires the Department of Public Health to convene a working group to develop recommendations for creating a system for rating the safety of youth athletic protective headgear and for public disclosure of the safety ratings. The group must report its findings and recommendations to various legislative committees by January 1, 2019 (SA 18-15, effective October 1, 2018).

Child Abuse and Neglect Registry Check

Under existing law, before issuing a license or approval to provide foster care, DCF has to run state and national criminal history and state child abuse registry records checks on the applicant and anyone living in the applicant's household who is age 16 or older. The foster care provider and anyone age 16 or older living in the household must again submit to a criminal history check at the time of license and approval renewal. For renewal purposes, a new law requires DCF to once again check the child abuse and neglect registry for those individuals.

The new law also eliminates provisions that permit the commissioner to (1) run criminal history and child abuse registry checks, when someone applies for a license or approval to provide foster care, on anyone over age 16 who does not live in the applicant's house but who has regular unsupervised access to children in the home and (2) conduct criminal background checks on such individuals at the time of license or approval renewal (PA 18-111, § 6, effective July 1, 2018).

Mandated Reporters

By law, people in certain professions and occupations (e.g., teachers, physicians, social workers) who have regular contact with children must report suspected child abuse or neglect. A new law adds licensed behavior analysts to the statutory list of mandated reporters (PA 18-17, effective July 1, 2018). Generally, a mandated reporter must initially report suspected abuse or neglect orally (by phone or in person) to the DCF commissioner or law enforcement, followed by a written report to the DCF commissioner within prescribed timeframes.

Another new law permits DCF, within existing appropriations, to establish a pilot program from July 1, 2018 to September 30, 2019, to permit certain mandated reporters to fulfill their responsibilities by submitting a report of suspected abuse or neglect electronically to DCF or law enforcement, as appropriate. Starting October 1, 2019, it allows all mandated reporters of child abuse or neglect to electronically file their reports in a manner the commissioner prescribes, provided the reporter must respond to further inquiries the department makes within 24 hours of the report (PA 18-67, §§ 4-7 & 12, effective July 1, 2018, except the provisions that allow mandated reporters statewide to file reports electronically are effective October 1, 2019).

Safe Haven Law

Under the state's safe haven law, a parent may voluntarily surrender custody of an infant to a hospital within 30 days of the infant's birth. Under prior law, if a mother wished to voluntarily surrender the infant under this law while she was still in the hospital following childbirth, she had to provide written notice on a DCF-prescribed form to a health care provider at the hospital. A new law eliminates the requirement that the notice be given in writing. It also makes conforming changes by eliminating (1) the requirement that the hospital retain the written notice in the mother's file and (2) a prohibition against the provider disclosing the notice without the mother's consent (PA 18-67, § 3, effective July 1, 2018).

Children's Matters in Probate Court

A new law makes changes to various unrelated laws that govern probate court operations. Among other things, the new law: 1. expands eligibility for the Kinship and Respite Grant Programs to guardians who are not related to the children in their care; 2. authorizes the probate court to transfer cases on children's matters to a probate court that already has an open case related to the same child; and 3. shortens, from six months to 45 days, the window for parents to petition the court for involuntary conservatorship before a child turns age 18 (PA 18-45, various effective dates).

Immunity from Liability for Providing Medical Assistance in a Child Abuse or Neglect Case

A new law provides immunity from civil and criminal liability to any person, institution, or agency that, in good faith, provides professional medical intervention or assistance in any proceeding involving child abuse or neglect. The new law's immunity applies to liability that might otherwise arise from, or is related to, certain specified actions (e.g., performing a medically relevant test).

The new law also eliminates immunity from civil or criminal liability for any person, institution, or agency that, in good faith, does not report suspected child abuse or neglect or alleged sexual assault of a student to DCF or law enforcement in compliance with the state's mandated reporter laws (PA 18-57, effective July 1, 2018 and applicable to any civil action pending or filed on or after that date).

Special Immigrant Juvenile Status

Existing law permits a party in a probate court case involving guardianship, parental rights, or adoption to petition the court to make certain findings that someone may use to apply to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services for special immigrant juvenile status (SIJS). Under federal law, an immigrant child under age 21 who (1) has been abused, neglected, or abandoned and (2) meets certain other criteria, may apply for SIJS. If granted by the federal court, SIJS allows the child to legally remain in the United States.

For proceedings involving guardianship appointment or removal, a new law allows the probate court to issue those findings for certain SIJS applicants under age 21, instead of under age 18 as under prior law. This change enables 18-, 19-, and 20-year-olds who are eligible to apply for SIJS under federal law, in certain circumstances, to petition the probate court for the findings they need to make that application (i.e., that they are dependent on the court) (PA 18-92, effective July 1, 2018).

Care 4 Kids and Background Checks

A new law excludes relatives who provide child care and are Care 4 Kids recipients from certain background check requirements, including state and national criminal history records checks, and instead requires them to submit to other types of background checks, including the Connecticut Online Law Enforcement Communication Teleprocessing System (PA 18-172, § 7, effective July 1, 2018).

Homeless Children and Child Care

A new law allows homeless children and youths to attend a child care center, group child care home, or family child care home for up to 90 days without meeting physical exam and immunization requirements. It also requires the centers and homes to keep a record on file of all homeless children and youths who attended under the physical exam or immunization exemption for at least two years after the child leaves (PA 18-172, §§ 1 & 2, effective July 1, 2018).

Transfer of Juvenile Services from DCF to Court Support Services Division (CSSD)

Starting on July 1, 2018, a new law transfers legal authority from DCF to the judicial branch over any child who was committed to DCF as a delinquent pursuant to a juvenile court order entered before that date. The branch's CSSD must, in turn, assume responsibility for supervising the children. Under existing law, the juvenile court is prohibited, starting July 1, 2018, from committing a child to DCF as a result of a delinquency adjudication.

The new law also makes numerous other changes to the juvenile justice statutes. For example, it makes changes to laws related to education for individuals involved in the juvenile justice system (e.g. it requires certain schools to designate a liaison to facilitate transitions between school districts and the juvenile justice system), limits and modifies the ways that the juvenile court may dispose of a delinquency adjudication, modifies the probation conditions the court may order, and makes numerous conforming changes (PA 18-31, most sections are effective on July 1, 2018).

Institutional Aid for Undocumented Students

A new law allows certain students without legal immigration status access to institutional aid to attend a state public higher education institution (i.e., UConn and the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities). The act extends eligibility to these students if they meet certain residency, age, and criminal history requirements and file with the institution an affidavit stating that they applied to legalize their immigration status or will do so when eligible. Among other things, students must have been age 16 or younger upon arrival in the United States and have continuously lived in the country since that time. Eligibility begins the earlier of January 1, 2020, or when Congress provides a “pathway to citizenship” for students without legal immigration status (PA 18-2, effective upon passage).

Life-Threatening Food Allergies in Schools

This session, the legislature made several changes to education laws addressing food allergies in schools. A new law allows any student with a medically diagnosed life-threatening allergic condition to (1) possess, (2) self-administer, or (3) possess and self-administer his or her medication. Correspondingly, it requires the State Department of Education (SDE) to adopt implementing regulations.

Among other things, the new law requires school transportation carriers to provide related training to all school bus drivers. Additionally, it extends the protections of the “Good Samaritan” law to cover school bus drivers rendering certain emergency first aid in response to a student's allergic reaction (PA 18-185, effective July 1, 2018, except the provisions relating to SDE's curriculum revisions and funding applications (§ 2) take effect upon passage).

School Oral Health Assessments

A new law requires local and regional boards of education to request that students have an oral health assessment prior to public school enrollment, in grade 6 or 7, and in grade 9 or 10. The assessment may be conducted by a: 1. dentist or dental hygienist or 2. physician, physician assistant, or an advanced practice registered nurse, if he or she is trained in conducting such assessments as part of a DPH-approved training program.

If a dentist conducts the assessment, it must include a dental examination. If another such provider conducts the assessment, it must include a visual screening and risk assessment. The new law also establishes related requirements on parental consent, assessment forms, notification, and records access (PA 18-168 §§ 539-540, effective July 1, 2018).

Commission on Women, Children, and Seniors Membership

A new law reduced the total membership of the Commission on Women, Children, and Seniors from 63 to 21 by reducing, from nine to three, the total (1) appointments by each of the six legislative leaders and (2) joint appointments by the House speaker and Senate president pro tempore. Under existing law and the act, current members' two-year terms expire on June 30, 2018. The next term begins on July 1, 2018, which is when the reduction in membership occurs (PA 18-133, effective upon passage).

For Older Adults³

Commission on Women, Children, and Seniors

A new law reduces the total membership of the Commission on Women, Children, and Seniors from 63 to 21. To accomplish this, it reduces from nine to three, the total (1) appointments by each of the six legislative leaders and (2) joint appointments by the House speaker and Senate president pro tempore.

By law, a minimum number of the total appointments must be from a specified region of the state (e.g., previously, at least three of the House minority leader's nine appointments had to be from the state's southwestern region). The new law reduces the required number of these geographic appointments from at least three to at least one for (1) each legislative leader other than the Senate and House majority leader, who are not subject to the requirement, and (2) joint appointments by the House speaker and Senate president pro tempore.

By law, current members' two-year terms expire on June 30, 2018. The next term begins on July 1, 2018, which is when the reduction in membership occurs (PA 18-133, effective upon passage).

³ Excerpted from the Office of Legislative Research's "Acts Affecting Seniors," Nicole Dube, Principal Analyst, 2018-R-0125 (June 1, 2018).

State Department on Aging Consolidation

PA 17-2, June Special Session, consolidated the State Department on Aging (SDA) within the Department of Social Services (DSS). A new law instead transfers all SDA functions, powers, duties, and personnel from DSS to the Department of Rehabilitative Services (DORS). This includes, among other things:

1. serving as the designated “state unit on aging” under the federal Older Americans Act and administering related programs;
2. overseeing municipal agents for the elderly;
3. awarding state grants for elderly community services and programs; and
4. operating the CHOICES Medicare counseling, Statewide Respite, Community Choices, and elderly nutrition programs (PA 18-169, §§ 7-23 & 29-40, effective upon passage, except for a technical change that takes effect July 1, 2019).

Task Force on Transportation for Persons with Disabilities, Seniors, and Veterans

The legislature established a 13-member task force to study issues with publicly-funded transportation for individuals with disabilities, older adults, and veterans. The study must include (1) other states’ best practices; (2) services and public transportation fare discounts currently available; (3) current and anticipated transportation needs; and (4) ways Connecticut can provide more cost-effective, efficient, and reliable transportation.

The task force must report its findings and recommendations to the Aging, Human Services, Transportation, and Veterans’ Affairs committees by January 1, 2019. It terminates on that date, or the date it submits the report, whichever is later (SA 18-3, effective upon passage).

Dental Hygienists’ Practice Without Supervision at Senior Centers

Under a new law, dental hygienists with two years of experience can practice without a dentist’s general supervision at senior centers and managed residential communities (e.g., assisted living facilities). Hygienists with two years of experience can already practice without such supervision at various other settings. As is already the case at such other settings, the new law requires hygienists practicing at senior centers and managed residential communities to refer to a dentist any patients with needs outside of the hygienist’s scope of practice (PA 18-168, § 4, effective October 1, 2018).

Mandating Health Insurance Coverage of Essential Health Benefits

A new law requires certain health insurance policies to cover specified preventive health services, including osteoporosis screening for women age 60 or older. It also requires some policies to cover 10 essential health benefits, including hospitalization, ambulatory services, and prescription drugs (PA 18-10, effective January 1, 2019).

Medicare Savings Program (MSP)

A new law eliminates a decrease in MSP eligibility that was scheduled to take effect July 1, 2018, thus maintaining the program’s current income eligibility limits.

By law, the MSP covers certain Medicare cost-sharing for low-income Medicare beneficiaries. It generally consists of three separate tiers: (1) Qualified Medicare Beneficiaries (QMB), (2) Specified Low-Income Medicare Beneficiaries (SLMB), and (3) Qualified Individual (QI). MSP eligibility is based on the federal poverty level (FPL), which is adjusted annually, and applicants at the lowest income levels qualify for the most benefits (PA 18-81, effective July 1, 2018).

Consumer Protections for Reverse Mortgages

A new law expands the counseling and certification requirements for reverse mortgages, a type of mortgage that allows homeowners to convert accumulated home equity into liquid assets. Among other things, it requires prospective applicants, or their representatives, to receive counseling from a federal Housing and Urban Development-approved agency before a reverse mortgage lender may accept a final loan application or assess any related fees. The new law also requires lenders to receive and store a signed certification from the applicant stating that the counseling requirements were met. Failure to meet the law’s counseling and certification requirements is a violation of the state’s unfair trade practices law (PA 18-38, effective October 1, 2018).

Recommendations for Public Housing Projects for Seniors and People with Disabilities

SA 17-19 required the housing commissioner, in consultation with Disability Rights Connecticut, Inc. and the departments of Mental Health and Addiction Services, Aging, and Developmental Services, to study three state-funded housing projects serving the elderly and people with disabilities. Depending on the results of this study, a new act requires the commissioner to make recommendations for improving these types of housing projects. The commissioner must submit the report to the Housing Committee by October 1, 2018 (PA 18-12, effective upon passage).

Renters' Rebate Program Payments to Municipalities

The legislature shifted responsibility for funding the Renters' Rebate Program from municipalities to the state, eliminating the requirement that the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) annually recover from each municipality 50% of the cost of issuing rebates to older adults or totally disabled renters, up to \$250,000. Prior law required OPM to recover rebate costs by selecting at least one state grant per municipality from which to withhold funds (PA 18-81, effective July 1, 2018).

Money Follows the Person

A new law removes the 5,000-person cap on the number of participants in the Money Follows the Person (MFP) demonstration program, which supports Medicaid enrollees who choose to transition from institutional living to community-based settings. By law, a person must (1) have been institutionalized for at least 90 days and (2) meet Medicaid eligibility criteria in order to qualify. In addition, it cannot cost more to care for the person in the community than in an institution (PA 18-99, effective upon passage).

Nursing Home and Residential Care Home Information

A new law eliminates a requirement for DPH to annually publish a report that lists and classifies all nursing homes and residential care homes in the state, and instead requires the department to post the information on its website. It requires the posted information to include the number and effective date of the license and the address for each facility. It does not require other information previously required for the published report, such as the total number of beds, number of private and semiprivate rooms, and per diem cost for private patients (PA 18-168, § 16, effective October 1, 2018).

Nursing Home Reportable Events

A new law requires DPH to develop a system for nursing homes to electronically report to the department "reportable events" (i.e., events DPH deems to require immediate notification). DPH must do this by January 1, 2019, after which nursing homes must report the events using the electronic system (PA 18-168, § 73, effective July 1, 2018).

Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman

A new law transfers the Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman from OPM to DORS and makes various changes to the office to comply with recent Older Americans Act regulations. Among other things, it (1) adds to the conditions under which the state ombudsman may remove a resident advocate from his or her position and (2) specifies that the office serves all long-term care facility residents, regardless of age (PA 18-6 and PA 18-169, §§ 24-28, both effective upon passage).

State Long-Term Care Facility Background Search Program

By law, DPH administers a comprehensive criminal history and patient abuse background search program that facilitates background searches on people who have direct access to long-term care facility residents (i.e., employees and volunteers).

A new law exempts from the program's requirements intermediate care facilities for individuals with intellectual disabilities (ICF-IIDs) operated by the Department of Developmental Services that are already subject to background checks under existing law. It also exempts DPH background search program records and information from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (PA 18-168, § 51, effective October 1, 2018).

Expanding Telehealth Providers

A new law adds registered nurses and pharmacists to the list of health care providers authorized to provide telehealth services. They must provide telehealth services within their profession's scope of practice and standard of care, just as other telehealth providers must do under existing law.

By law, the following health care providers are already allowed to provide health care services using telehealth: physicians, advanced practice registered nurses, physician assistants, occupational and physical therapists, naturopaths, chiropractors, optometrists, podiatrists, psychologists, marital and family therapists, clinical or master social workers, alcohol and drug counselors, professional counselors, dietician-nutritionists, speech and language pathologists, respiratory care practitioners, and audiologists (PA 18-148, effective July 1, 2018).

Prescribing Controlled Substances Using Telehealth

A new law allows telehealth providers to prescribe non-opioid Schedule II or III controlled substances using telehealth to treat a psychiatric disability or substance use disorder, including medication-assisted treatment. Providers may only do this (1) in a manner consistent with the federal Ryan Haight Online Pharmacy Consumer Protection Act; (2) if it is allowed under their current scope of practice; and (3) if they submit the prescription electronically, in accordance with existing law. Prior law prohibited telehealth providers from prescribing any Schedule I, II, or III controlled substances using telehealth.

The new law also modifies requirements for telehealth providers to obtain and document patient consent to provide telehealth services and disclose related records (PA 18-148, effective July 1, 2018).

HIGHLIGHTED INITIATIVES

Two-Generational Approaches to Family Poverty and Systems Change

In 2018, the CWCS worked with a bipartisan group of legislators to pass two separate pieces of legislation on the state's innovative 2GEN initiative, which fosters family economic self-sufficiency in low-income households through a comprehensive two-generational service delivery approach. The first, S.B. 437: AAC A Two-Generational Initiative, passed unanimously in the Senate and was passed on Consent in the House. This law solidifies Connecticut's leadership role as a 2GEN state by beginning to tackle some of the more vexing issues facing families in poverty and the systems that serve them:

- Requires the Two-Generational Advisory Council to consult with the Attorney General's Office, the Office of Policy and Management, and the Connecticut Preschool through Twenty and Workforce Information Network (P20 WIN) to develop a uniform approach to facilitate data sharing among the initiative's partner agencies in accordance with state and federal law.
- Requires the Council to provide recommendations on data sharing, and that several executive agencies, including the Department of Social Services, Labor and OEC share data for 2GEN related purposes.

The second 2GEN bill, H.B. 5335: The Alignment of the Coordinated State-Wide Reading Plan with The State's Two-Generational Initiative passed unanimously in both chambers. This bill requires the State Department of Education to include the alignment of reading instruction with the two-generational initiative in its statewide reading plan and allows the Office of Early Childhood to consider the alignment of state and local support systems around the statewide reading plan for students in kindergarten to grade three.

Seeking to Improve Transportation Options for Seniors, Veterans, and the Disabled

This session, we also worked to establish a Task Force to Study Best Practices for Providing Transportation for Persons with Disabilities, Senior Citizens and Veterans (Special Act 18-3). The Task Force, which will be administered by the Commission, will study best practices in other states, the services and public transportation fare discounts available now for such persons in CT, analyze their current and anticipated transportation needs, and develop recommendations to provide more efficient, cost-effective, and reliable modes of transportation for these three populations.

STATISTICAL HIGHLIGHTS

The Commission, in partnership with the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence, the Collaborative for Academic Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL), and Stand Up and Speak Out, has expanded its work on building empathy and connection through the arts, by developing content and implementing an arts-focused school and community approach to social and emotional skills building. This year, the musical production and the accompanying practice guide reached over 1000 middle schoolers in the state, with more to come.

Also, our annual Women's Day at the Capitol, a day of civic engagement for women and their families, focused this year on young girls. Stressing that girls and young women are leaders today, the Commission brought together over 30 young girls from across the state interested in the topic of leadership. A bi-partisan and bi-cameral panel of legislators and other leaders, including the Secretary of the State and the Chief Child Advocate, addressed the girls on how they can be leaders in their everyday lives.

MAJOR PROJECTS & COLLABORATIONS

CT Collective of Women and Girls

The Connecticut Collective for Women and Girls is a collaborative of organizations committed to the advancement of women and girls, including those who are cisgender, transgender, and non-binary, in the state of Connecticut. The Collective is a network that brings participating organizations together to highlight and amplify their work while drawing on the collective power of collaboration and working together.

Many organizations in the state of Connecticut are doing critical work to transform the lives of women and girls everywhere. But, too often, these organizations operate separately, leading to silos. Thus, the CCWG expands our strength as a collective force. It builds on participants' individual assets with a community network of organizations that uplift and amplify each other's work. The very act of coming together in this way increases each organization's impact to advance rights and opportunities for women and girls in Connecticut.

Collective participants are organizations throughout the state with expertise in fields such as girls' leadership, entrepreneurship, violence against women, reproductive care, civic engagement, and more. They have a shared commitment to advance the rights and opportunities of women and girls, aligned with the Collective's shared values. Collective participants drive the vision, agenda, and priorities. They also drive the solutions. The following organizations are part of the collaborative.

- AAUW-CT
- CCADV
- Commission on Women Children and Seniors (CWCS)
- Community Renewal Team (CRT)
- Connecticut Alliance to End Sexual Violence
- CT Black Women
- Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities (CHRO)
- CT NOW
- CT Women's Consortium
- CT Women's Hall of Fame
- CWEALF
- Girls For Technology
- Girl Scouts of CT
- Girls With Impact
- Interval House
- Institute for Community Research
- League of Women Voters CT
- LiveGirl
- Love146
- Ms President US
- NARAL CT
- National Organization of Sisters of Color Ending Sexual Assault (SCESA)
- PCSW Inc.
- Planned Parenthood of Southern New England
- Project Resiliency Movement LLC
- Random Hacks of Kindness Junior
- The Rowan Center
- The United State of Women, Greater Hartford
- True Colors
- UConn Women and Philanthropy Network, UConn Foundation
- Women Against Mass Incarceration
- Women's Business Development Council
- Women and Family Life Center
- Women's Leadership Center, University of St. Joseph
- Women's March CT
- Women's Mentoring Network
- YWCA Greenwich
- YWCA Hartford Region
- Funders include:
- Aurora Foundation for Women and Girls
- Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut, Women and Girls Fund
- Community Foundation for Greater New Haven, Community Fund for Women and Girls
- Community Foundation of Middlesex County, Sari A. Rosenbaum Fund for Women & Girls
- Fairfield County's Community Foundation, Fund for Women & Girls
- Main St. Community Foundation, Women & Girls' Fund
- Northwest Connecticut Community Foundation, The Women & Girls Fund

Workplace Discrimination Investigation Trainings

In cooperation with the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities (CHRO), the CWCS conducts annual Workplace Discrimination Investigations Foundation Training, and biennial Update trainings, as required by C.G.S. §46a-68(b)(3).

These trainings are for State employees who conduct employment discrimination investigations, including Attorneys General Designee, and Equal Employment Opportunity Officers (formerly known as Affirmative Action Officers). In addition to yearly Foundation training held in autumn, every other year, CWCS and CHRO give an Update training in summer, in recognition of the fact that laws change frequently.

Material covered includes: Understanding C.G.S. Statute §46a-68(b); Protected Classes & Discriminatory Conduct; Sexual Harassment; Other Areas of Discrimination; the CHRO Complaint Process; Review Mock Complaint; Conducting Internal Investigations; Duty to Investigate; Interviewing and Gathering Facts; and Making a Finding and Writing a Report.

In 2018, we trained 20 state employees in the Foundation Training, held on October 24th. The next Update Training will be in the Fall of 2019.

Parent Leadership Training Institute (PLTI)

The Connecticut Commission on Children (COC) was created in 1985 by an act of the Connecticut Legislature to bring representatives from the legislative, executive and judicial branches of government together with the private sector to promote public policies in children's best interest. In 1992, focused on prevention and capacity building, the Commission created The Parent Leadership Training Institute (PLTI) as a statewide family civics initiative. PLTI enables parents and other caring adults to become leading advocates for children.

The Commission of Women, Children and Seniors supports and leads PLTI in the State of Connecticut. On July 1, 2016, the newly formed Commission on Women, Children and Seniors (CWCS) officially began operation. The CWCS was formed under P.A. 16-3, during the 2016 legislative session consolidated six legislative commissions into two. The operates with an expanded mandate that includes key elements of those of the former Permanent Commission on the Status of Women (PCSW), the Commission on Children (COC) and the Commission on Aging (COA).

PLTI continues to be the premier leadership training initiative for parent leaders in Connecticut. Through PLTI, parents who wish to improve the lifelong health, safety and learning of children become practiced change agents for the next generation. Communities sponsor the 20-week program in which parents complete a community civic project and accrue college credit for the program through Charter Oak State College. Each PLTI alumni class mentors the next, creating a ripple effect of community caring and a developing coalition of parent leaders. The program is evidence-based and program evaluation is done by parents weekly. Additionally, parents complete a pre- and post-survey.

PLTI seeks to dignify the role of parents as change agents within community and government by building their capacity as well as continuing to elevate the field of parent leadership nationally. Parents use their new civic tools to address issues that affect children and families primarily and engage in small and large

group discussions that facilitate the process of learning the tenets of democracy and how to work with local and state government in the best interest of children.

Similarly, institutions, through parent leadership training, improve their capacity to work with and empower parents. PLTI has worked with early care and education programs, social services institutions and cities to improve: 1) parent engagement policies; 2) consumer-driven service delivery; and 3) leadership opportunities for parents.

This year, as part of the CWCS arm, PLTI continued to collaborate with parents and communities by providing opportunities for families and community leaders to be change agents on behalf of children through participation on panels, public hearings and forum. PLTI worked to remove the economic and academic obstacles that prevent children and their families from reaching their full potential by raising awareness and working in concert with 2Gen leaders in the State to train and mentor 2Gen parents into leadership roles. Additionally, we partnered to promote the physical, social and emotional wellbeing of children in Connecticut.

The Children's Leadership Training Institute (CLTI) is a parallel course to the Parent Leadership Training Institute. Following the profile of PLTI, it is organized into the two sections: Phase I – Developing Community and Phase II – Democracy and civic skills. CLTI was an idea that emerged at a PLTI graduation. It was there that the children's pride in both their parents' accomplishments and their own became visible. This challenged us to develop a parallel childcare component that includes parallel content. It is an organic bridge for parents and children who would now share the course experience.

CLTI uses literacy as a base and creates a full spectrum of activities that parallel the PLTI course and encompass the multiple intelligences.

Demographics

- Gender: Most participants were female (87%), followed by male participants (11%).
- Race/Ethnicity: A majority of participants were Hispanic/Latino (36%), White (26%), and Black/African-American (22%).
- Education: The highest level of education for a slight majority of participants (53%) was a bachelor's degree or a graduate degree, while a high school diploma was the highest level of education for 19% of parents, and an associate's degree for 18% of parents.
- Language: 53% of participants spoke English at home, while 44 % spoke another language.
- Place of birth: 52% of participants were born in the U.S., while 46% were born elsewhere.
- Religion: The highest percentage of participants were Catholic (30%), followed by other Christian (28%), and those who did not identify with a religion (17%).

Outcomes

Quantitative Civic Outcomes

- There was statistically significant growth on all civic outcomes from the pre- to the postsurvey.
- There was an increase in the percentage of parents who engaged in all civic behaviors from the pre- to the post-survey, with the largest changes in meeting with elected officials, participating in a civic or political organization, and working with neighbors to improve something.
- For 5 of the 6 civic actions, the percentage of parents who had engaged in the civic action either increased or stayed the same from the time of the post-survey to the time of the alumni survey.

- In regard to voting behaviors and attitudes, 31% of respondents on the alumni survey (N=20) responded that they worked to register new voters. Of these 20 parents who worked to register new voters, 12 reported doing this as a direct result of their PLTI experience.

Qualitative Civic Outcomes

- PLTI participants engaged in collective action and policy advocacy.
- PLTI participants were seen as experts.
- PLTI community projects led to lasting change in Revere and Bridgeport.

Quantitative Personal Outcomes

- The overwhelming majority of parents reported on the post-survey that PLTI inspired them to make changes or take steps toward making changes in various aspects of their personal lives; for example, 61% took steps toward improving their health and half took steps toward improving their finances.
- One year after graduating, PLTI alumni reported making many changes as a direct result of PLTI; for example, over one-third of alumni reported making changes in their family situation and improving their health.

Qualitative Personal Outcomes

- PLTI parents grew to believe that their voice matters.
- PLTI participants valued diverse experiences within their cohort and communities.
- PLTI participation affected the whole family.

The PLTI Experience - Strengths and Recommendations

Quantitative Findings

- PLTI participants overwhelmingly felt positive about the sense of community, opportunities for leadership, peer connection, diversity and inclusion, and cultural responsiveness within the program.
- PLTI has an excellent net promoter score of 86. The Net Promoter Score is calculated by subtracting the percentage of detractors (those who scored between 0 and 6) from the percentage of promoters or ambassadors (those who scored a 9 or 10).

Recommendations

- Continue to invest in civic design teams.
- Continue to develop sites' capacity to support alumni.
- Continue to engage the whole family in PLTI.
- Allow for each site to be innovative and adapt the curriculum to serve the local population.
- Examine retention strategies.
- Expand access to PLTI in multiple languages.
- Create strategies to enroll more "underrepresented" groups in PLTI.

Empathy and Connection Through the Arts

This year, the Commission and Stand Up and Speak Out continued to expand on its work together to help foster a positive school climate for children and youth throughout Connecticut by building empathy through

the arts. The signature achievement was a multi-cultural cast performing Her Song, a musical about the effects of bullying.

The musical highlights the severity of an issue that many children face today through entertainment and education. It addresses the effects that exclusion and negativity have on our youth and informs students about ways in which they can step up against the cycle of insensitivity.

Written and produced by four-time Emmy nominee Jill Nesi, Her Song debuted at the Ivoryton Playhouse in May 2017 with outstanding reviews from educators and students alike.

The goal of the Commission and Stand Up and Speak out is to raise awareness about the critical importance of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) and empowering youth leaders across our state. By leading with kindness, youth can combat negativity and exclusion. Building evidence-based programs is a way to reach those that have been affected.

Far too often, our youth feel excluded and disconnected from their peers, schools, and communities, which has led to increased mental health illness and suicide rates. This life-changing musical, casts youth from each community in which it is held, featuring children of all ages.

COALITIONS & PARTNERSHIPS

The CWCS serves or leads on the following coalitions:

- Coalition for Choice
- Healthy Youth Connecticut
- Family Law Working Group
- Maternal and Child Health Coalition
- Campaign for Paid Family Leave
- Secretary of State Civic Health Advisory Group
- Safe Havens Working Group
- Connecticut Early Childhood Alliance
- Commission on the Standardization of the
- Collection of Evidence in Sexual Assault Investigations
- Trafficking in Persons Council
- Commission for Child Support Guidelines
- Governor's Sexual Assault Kit Working Group
- Long-Term Care Advisory Council
- Council on Medicaid Assistance Program Oversight
- Task Force on Senior Centers
- Hospital Merger Watch Coalition
- Legislature's Task Force to Study School Climate
- Children's Behavioral Health Plan Implementation Advisory Board
- MTR Policy Oversight Committee
- Legislature's Minority Teacher Recruitment Task Force
- Legislature's Achievement Gap Task Force
- LGBT Aging Advocacy

Informing the public of our work means reaching out to community groups, colleges, high schools, advocacy groups and coalition partners. This work is as local as the school down the street and as far away as national summits. Here is a partial list for the year 2018:

- CASEL
- Hartford Involvement in Leading with Kindness
- NCSL Legislative Forum
- VOICES Forum
- Leading for Literacy
- 2Gen Policymakers Institute
- Annual Higher Education Institute
- NCSL Capitol Forum
- University of Hartford
- Alliance for Retired Americans
- WestCOG-Western CT Council of Governments
- CT Department of Transportation
- Connecticut Community Foundation
- Tunxis Community College
- CT Coalition on Aging
- Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities
- University of Connecticut School of Law
- Two-Generational Interagency Working Group CT Women's Organization Network
- Connecticut Elder Action Network (CEAN)

