

AN ACT in relation to parenting.

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,
represented in the General Assembly:

Section 1. Short title. This Act may be cited as the
Council on Responsible Fatherhood Act.

Section 5. Purpose. The purpose of this Act is to
promote the recognition of the importance of the
participation of both parents in the lives of their children.
While social policy and practice have often focused on the
difficulties of raising a child in a single-parent family and
have often created barriers to the involvement of both
parents in their child's life, the purpose of this Act is to
promote a social policy and practice that values the
contribution that each parent brings to the family unit.

Section 10. Fatherhood initiative.

(a) The purpose of this Act shall be implemented through
a fatherhood initiative to be directed by the Council on
Responsible Fatherhood created by this Act.

(b) The goals of the fatherhood initiative are to
increase the awareness of the problems created when a child
grows up without the presence of a responsible father; to
identify obstacles that impede or prevent the involvement of
responsible fathers in the lives of their children; to
identify strategies that are successful in overcoming
identified obstacles and in encouraging responsible
fatherhood; and to facilitate the transition from current
policies, perceptions, and practices that adversely affect
the participation of fathers in their children's lives to
policies, perceptions, and practices that promote the
contributions of responsible fathers. The fatherhood

initiative must promote positive interaction between fathers and their children. While the emphasis of the program must be on the population of children whose families have received or are receiving public assistance, the program may not exclude other populations of children for which the program is appropriate.

(b) The fatherhood initiative must include, but is not limited to, the following:

(1) The promotion of public education concerning the financial and emotional responsibilities of fatherhood.

(2) The provision of assistance to men in preparing for the legal, financial, and emotional responsibilities of fatherhood.

(3) The promotion of the establishment of paternity upon the birth of a child.

(4) The encouragement of fathers in fostering an emotional connection to children and providing financial support to children.

(5) The establishment of support mechanisms for fathers developing and maintaining relationships with their children.

(6) The identification and promotion of methods that reduce the negative outcomes experienced by children affected by divorce, separation, and disputes concerning custody and visitation.

(7) The integration of State and local services available to families.

Section 15. Council on Responsible Fatherhood.

(a) The Council on Responsible Fatherhood is created to carry out the purposes, goals, and initiatives of this Act. The Council consists of 21 members appointed by and serving at the pleasure of the Governor. Members appointed by the

Governor must be chosen on the basis of their interest in and experience with children and families. In addition, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Minority Leader of the House of Representatives, the President of the Senate, and the Minority Leader of the Senate shall each appoint one ex officio, non-voting member. The Governor must choose one member of the Council to be the Chairperson. A majority of the members appointed by the Governor constitutes a quorum. Members shall serve without compensation, but may be reimbursed for their actual expenses in carrying out their duties as members of the Council. The Department of Human Services must provide staff support to the Council.

(b) The Council has the following duties:

(1) To develop a comprehensive plan that promotes the positive involvement of fathers in their children's lives.

(2) To evaluate State programs, government policies, and community initiatives related to fatherhood and to make recommendations regarding those programs, policies, and initiatives to the Governor and the General Assembly.

(3) To convene a statewide symposium in order to discuss and resolve issues related to responsible fatherhood and the importance of the participation of both parents in their children's lives.

(4) Subject to appropriation, to develop criteria for and to issue requests for proposals for grants for responsible fatherhood projects that are approved by the Council.

(5) To receive grants, contributions, and other funds for the purpose of projects and activities related to responsible fatherhood.

(6) To submit a report, on or before January 1 of each year, to the Governor and the General Assembly

concerning its findings and recommendations.

Section 20. Responsible Fatherhood Fund. Grants, contributions, and other funds received by the Council on Responsible Fatherhood must be deposited into the Responsible Fatherhood Fund, a special fund created in the State treasury, and, subject to appropriation and as directed by the Council may be expended for the purposes of this Act.

Section 90. The State Finance Act is amended by adding Section 5.595 as follows:

(30 ILCS 105/5.595 new)

Sec. 5.595. The Responsible Fatherhood Fund.

Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect upon becoming law.