



State of Tennessee

PUBLIC CHAPTER NO. 366

HOUSE BILL NO. 862

By Representatives Mark White, Jernigan, Gant, Hardaway, Akbari, Clemmons

Substituted for: Senate Bill No. 887

By Senators Haile, Massey, Norris, Yarbrow

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 16; Title 36 and Title 37, relative to courts specializing in certain types of cases.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 37, Chapter 1, is amended by adding the following language as a new part:

37-1-901. This part shall be known and may be cited as the "Tennessee Zero to Three Court Initiative."

37-1-902.

(a) The general assembly recognizes that a critical need exists in this state for child and family programs to reduce the incidence of child abuse, neglect, and endangerment, minimize the effects of childhood trauma on small children, and provide stability to parents and children within the state. It is the intent of the general assembly by this part to create an initiative to facilitate the implementation of new and the continuation of existing zero to three court programs.

(b) The goals of the zero to three court programs created under this part include the following:

(1) To reduce time to permanency of children thirty-six (36) months of age or younger by surrounding at-risk families with support services;

(2) To reduce incidences of repeat maltreatment among children thirty-six (36) months of age or younger;

(3) To reduce the long-term and short-term effects of traumatic experiences occurring when a child is thirty-six (36) months of age or younger on a child's brain development;

(4) To promote public safety through these reductions;

(5) To increase the personal, familial, and societal accountability of families; and

(6) To promote effective interaction and the use of resources among both public and private state and local child and family service agencies, state and local mental health agencies, and community agencies.

(c) As used in this part, "zero to three court program" means any zero to three court program created within the state that seeks to accomplish the goals stated in subsection (b) and that is established by a judge with jurisdiction over juvenile court matters. A zero to three court program shall have the same powers as the court that created it.

37-1-903.

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(a) On January 1, 2018, there are established five (5) zero to three court programs throughout this state. These courts shall be in addition to any zero to three court programs already established in the state.

(b) The department of children's services, in consultation with the administrative office of the courts and the council of juvenile and family court judges, shall determine the location of each program. The department of children's services shall establish at least one (1) program within each of the three (3) grand divisions and shall seek to serve both rural and urban populations.

(c) The department of children's services, in consultation with the administrative office of the courts, council of juvenile and family court judges, and the department of mental health and substance abuse services, shall administer the zero to three court programs by:

(1) Defining, developing, and gathering outcome measures for zero to three court programs relating to the goals stated in § 37-1-902;

(2) Collecting, reporting, and disseminating zero to three court program data, including an annual report to be submitted by February 1, 2019, and each following February 1, to the civil justice committee of the house of representatives and the judiciary committee of the senate. The annual report shall summarize the results of the programs' operation during the previous calendar year, including data on outcomes achieved in zero to three courts compared to the outcomes achieved by other courts exercising similar jurisdiction, and any cost savings associated with the achievement of the goals stated in § 37-1-902;

(3) Sponsoring and coordinating state zero to three court training for the juvenile court judges and staff who will administer the programs; and

(4) Developing standards of operation, including procedures and protocols, for zero to three court programs prior to the creation, establishment, and commencement of the programs on January 1, 2018.

37-1-904. Nothing contained in this part shall confer a right or an expectation of a right of participation in a zero to three court program to a person within the juvenile court system.

37-1-905. Nothing in this part shall be construed to limit the ability of any jurisdiction to create and maintain a zero to three court program that strives to accomplish the goals set forth in § 37-1-902.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect January 1, 2018, the public welfare requiring it, and shall cease to be effective January 1, 2022.

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PASSED: May 4, 2017



BETH HARWELL, SPEAKER
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



RANDY MCNALLY
SPEAKER OF THE SENATE

APPROVED this 11th day of May 2017



BILL HASLAM, GOVERNOR