

**CONFIDENTIAL**  
**LEGISLATIVE BILL REVIEW FORM: 2016**

Bill Number: H.575 Name of Bill: An act relating to eliminating the role of town service officers in administering General Assistance benefits

Agency/ Dept: AHS/DCF Author of Bill Review: Heidi Moreau

Date of Bill Review: April 1, 2016 Related Bills and Key Players Rep. Pugh, DCF/ESD

Status of Bill: (check one): ☐ Upon Introduction ☐ As passed by 1<sup>st</sup> body ☒ As passed by both

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**Recommended Position:**

☒ Support ☐ Oppose ☐ Remain Neutral ☐ Support with modifications identified in #8 below

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**Analysis of Bill**

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**1. Summary of bill and issue it addresses.** *Describe what the bill is intended to accomplish and why.*

This bill proposes to amend Title 33 by removing all references to town service officers throughout Chapter 21 (General Assistance). The reference to applying to a town service officer for general assistance would be removed from 13 V.S.A. § 3901 (Vagrant Defined). Town service officers are no longer responsible for administering General Assistance (GA) benefits.

The authority for the selectboard to appoint a town service officer has been moved from 33 V.S.A. § 2102 to 24 V.S.A. § 871 (Organization of Selectboard; Appointments).

**2. Is there a need for this bill?** *Please explain why or why not.*

Yes. Town service officers' role in administering GA benefits has become obsolete in the time since the statute was originally enacted. GA benefits are uniformly administered throughout the Department's 12 district offices, and individuals may apply for benefits after hours through 2-1-1, the designated Information and Referral program for AHS. With these resources, town service officers are no longer needed to assist individuals in obtaining GA benefits,

**3. What are likely to be the fiscal and programmatic implications of this bill for this Department?**

There are no fiscal implications for the Department. The programmatic implications are minimal. Currently, Department staff publish a list of appointed town service officers, and respond to questions from town services officers regarding their role in administering GA benefits.

**4. What might be the fiscal and programmatic implications of this bill for other departments in state government, and what is likely to be their perspective on it?**

*Please return this bill review as a Microsoft Word document to [Jahala.Dudley@vermont.gov](mailto:Jahala.Dudley@vermont.gov) & [Jessica.Mishaan@vermont.gov](mailto:Jessica.Mishaan@vermont.gov)*

N/A

5. **What might be the fiscal and programmatic implications of this bill for others, and what is likely to be their perspective on it?** *(for example, public, municipalities, organizations, business, regulated entities, etc)*

N/A

6. **Other Stakeholders:**

6.1 **Who else is likely to support the proposal and why?**

Appointed town service officers are likely to support the proposal because they no longer serve a role in administering GA benefits and frequently ask the Department for guidance regarding their role with respect the GA program.

6.2 **Who else is likely to oppose the proposal and why?**

N/A

7. **Rationale for recommendation:** *Justify recommendation stated above.*

The Department supports this bill because, as stated above, town service officers are not involved in administering GA benefits. They do not have a budget to provide assistance, and at most, their role consists of referring individuals to an AHS district office or 2-1-1.

8. **Specific modifications that would be needed to recommend support of this bill:** *Not meant to rewrite bill, but rather, an opportunity to identify simple modifications that would change recommended position.*

9. **Will this bill create a new board or commission AND/OR add or remove appointees to an existing one? If so, which one and how many?**

No.

**Secretary/Commissioner has reviewed this document:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_