

LEGISLATIVE FISCAL ESTIMATE

[Second Reprint]

ASSEMBLY, No. 684

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 220th LEGISLATURE

DATED: FEBRUARY 8, 2023

SUMMARY

- Synopsis:** Requires Homelessness Prevention Program agencies to remain open during public health emergency and provides for funding of each agency.
- Type of Impact:** Potential periodic State cost increases.
- Agencies Affected:** Department of Community Affairs

Office of Legislative Services Estimate

Fiscal Impact	<u>Periodic</u>
Potential State Cost Increase	Indeterminate

- The Office of Legislative Services (OLS) concludes that the bill could potentially result in periodic increases in State costs to the extent that additional funds are needed for the Department of Community Affairs to support the continuous operations of non-profit agencies in the management of the Homelessness Prevention Program, including during times of public health emergencies.

BILL DESCRIPTION

The bill requires the Department of Community Affairs to provide funding at all times to support the operations of at least one Homelessness Prevention Program agency in each populous county in the State and requires each agency to remain open for the duration of a public health emergency. Under the bill, a populous county means any county with a population of 350,000 or more, according to the most recent federal decennial census.

Under the bill, if federal funding intended to address the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is not available to satisfy the full amount of establishing this agency within a populous county, then the Department of Community Affairs is permitted to notify the Department of the Treasury and the Joint Budget Oversight Committee of the Legislature of the deficiency and to request that

the Legislature appropriate a portion of the remainder from the General Fund, or other available State funding sources.

FISCAL ANALYSIS

EXECUTIVE BRANCH

None received.

OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE SERVICES

The OLS concludes that the bill could potentially result in periodic increases in State costs to the extent that additional funds are needed for the Department of Community Affairs to support the continuous operations of non-profit agencies in the management of the Homelessness Prevention Program, including during times of public health emergencies.

The bill requires that the department provide funding to support the operations of at least one agency in each populous county in the State to help implement and manage the Homelessness Prevention Program within each of these counties. Based on 2020 census data, the following 12 counties would be considered a populous county under the bill: Bergen County, Essex County, Middlesex County, Hudson County, Monmouth County, Ocean County, Union County, Passaic County, Camden County, Morris County, Burlington County and Mercer County. According to department's website, each of these counties currently has one agency to operate the Homelessness Prevention Program. To the extent that more funding is needed to maintain the operations of the Homelessness Prevention Program in the existing agencies, including times of public health emergencies, department costs will increase. The OLS is unable to estimate the costs currently incurred by the department for the operation of the Homelessness Prevention Program and is unable to predict future increases in costs to support the operations and management of the Homelessness Prevention Program.

While the required number of agencies are currently in operation in each populous county, to the extent that a replacement agency may need to be established in the future, the department of Community Affairs would be responsible for ensuring its establishment and operation. Similarly, if these agencies require additional funding during future public health emergencies, department costs will increase.

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This legislative fiscal estimate has been produced by the Office of Legislative Services due to the failure of the Executive Branch to respond to our request for a fiscal note.

This fiscal estimate has been prepared pursuant to P.L.1980, c.67 (C.52:13B-6 et seq.).