

SENATE BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

[Second Reprint] **ASSEMBLY, No. 2363**

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JUNE 27, 2022

The Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Assembly Bill No. 2363 (2R).

As amended by the committee, this bill would require the Department of Human Services (DHS), to the maximum extent permissible under federal law, to establish a training program for county boards of social services that assist individuals with the SNAP enrollment and recertification process. The purpose of the training will be to educate employees, including supervisory and managerial employees and designated county training staff, on current federal laws, regulations, and standards concerning SNAP, and standard best practices to comply with federal SNAP requirements, with the goal of ensuring employees of county boards of social services are at all times in compliance with federal laws, regulations, standards, and best practices as they pertain to SNAP. The department will review the training program and curriculum each year and may modify the training program from time to time, as necessary, to incorporate any changes to the federal laws, regulations, and standards concerning SNAP.

Participation in the training program will be mandatory for all employees of a county board of social services who assist individuals with the SNAP enrollment and recertification process, as well as for all supervisory or management employees of the county board of social services who interview, process, or review SNAP cases and designated training staff of the county board of social services. Each county board of social services will be responsible for ensuring that: all required employees complete the training program at least twice in each calendar year; all newly-hired employees of the county board of social services who will assist individuals with SNAP enrollment and recertification processes, who will interview, process, or review SNAP cases in a managerial or supervisory role, or who will serve as designated training staff for the county board of social services complete the training within one month of hire; and all employees who assist individuals with SNAP enrollment and recertification processes,

who interview, process, or review SNAP cases in a managerial or supervisory role, or who serve as designated training staff members, complete the training as a condition of any professional promotion within the county board of social services.

As amended, the bill requires the department to publish county-level case tracking data on SNAP on its Internet website that includes, but is not limited to: application approval rates, reasons for application denial, average application approval times, and the average time between when a case closes and when it is subsequently reopened.

As amended, the bill revises a current law that requires the Commissioner of Human Services to allow SNAP applications to be submitted by telephone, to additionally permit applications to be submitted using electronic devices, including computers, mobile phones, tablets, and other Internet-connected devices, as well as by kiosk. As amended, the bill further directs the commissioner to allow SNAP interviews to be conducted by telephone or using an electronic device or kiosk. The commissioner is directed to establish requirements to ensure the security and privacy of applications submitted, and interviews conducted, by telephone or using an electronic device or kiosk.

County welfare agencies and county boards of social services will be required to designate an employee of the agency or board as the agency's or board's county social service liaison. County social service liaisons will be responsible for consulting with institutions of higher education and the higher education community to assist with any technical assistance questions from SNAP applicants and from the county welfare agency or county board of social services arising from the use of telephones, electronic devices, and kiosks in connection with SNAP applications and SNAP interviews.

The bill requires the commissioner to apply to the Food and Nutrition Service within the United States Department of Agriculture for any necessary waivers or approvals to implement the provisions of the bill. The commissioner may adopt rules and regulations as may be necessary to effectuate the provisions of this act, which rules and regulations will be effective immediately upon filing with the Office of Administrative Law for a period not to exceed 18 months, and may, thereafter, be amended, adopted, or readopted in accordance with the provisions of the "Administrative Procedure Act," P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.).

As amended, the bill directs the commissioner to annually request funding in an amount as is necessary and appropriate to support additional funding for county call centers to address technical assistance questions from SNAP applicants, county welfare agencies, and county boards of social services arising from the use of telephones, electronic devices, and kiosks in connection with SNAP applications and SNAP interviews.

The bill appropriates from the State's General Fund the sum of \$250,000 to the Department of Human Services to effectuate the provisions of the bill.

As reported by the committee with amendments, Assembly Bill No. 2363 (2R) is identical to Senate Bill No. 2033 (1R), which was also reported by the committee on this date, with amendments.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amendments provide that the training required under the bill will be required of supervisory or management employees of county boards of social services who interview, process, or review SNAP cases, as well as designated training staff of county boards of social services.

The committee amendments revise the training requirements to require that the training be completed at least twice per year, as well as upon hiring and as a condition of accepting a professional promotion within a county board of social services.

The committee amendments revise certain data reporting requirements for the DHS to require the DHS to publish data concerning the average time between when a SNAP case is closed and when it is subsequently reopened.

The committee amendments revise an existing law that requires the Commissioner of Human Services to allow SNAP applications to be submitted by telephone to additionally require the commissioner to allow applications to be submitted using electronic devices and kiosks, as well as to allow SNAP interviews to be conducted using a telephone, electronic device, or kiosk. The amendments require the DHS to ensure the security and privacy of information transmitted using a telephone, electronic device, or kiosk.

The committee amendments require county welfare agencies and county boards of social services to designate a county social service liaison, who will be responsible for working with institutions of higher education concerning technical assistance issues involving SNAP applications and interviews involving telephones, electronic devices, and kiosks.

The committee amendments require the commissioner to annually request funding in an amount necessary and appropriate to support additional funding for county call centers to address technical assistance questions involving SNAP applications and interviews.

The committee amendments revise the title and synopsis of the bill to reflect the changes made by the committee.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Fiscal information for this bill is currently unavailable.