

CHAPTER 284

AN ACT concerning regional municipal courts, amending N.J.S.2B:12-16 and P.L.2000, c.126, and amending and supplementing P.L.2021, c.191.

BE IT ENACTED by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:

1. N.J.S.2B:12-16 is amended to read as follows:

Territorial jurisdiction.

2B:12-16. Territorial jurisdiction. a. A municipal court of a single municipality shall have jurisdiction over cases arising within the territory of that municipality except as provided in section 10 of P.L.1997, c.357 (C.27:25-5.15). A joint municipal court shall have jurisdiction over cases arising within the territory of any of the municipalities which the court serves. The territory of a municipality includes any premises or property located partly in and partly outside of the municipality. A central municipal court shall have jurisdiction over cases arising within the territorial boundaries of the county. A regional municipal court established pursuant to the pilot program set forth in section 1 of P.L.2021, c.191 (C.2B:12-34) shall have territorial jurisdiction over cases arising within the territory of the municipalities participating in the regional municipal court pilot program.

b. A municipal court judge, serving as an acting judge in any other municipal court in the county, may also hear matters arising out of that other court, while sitting in the court where the acting judge holds a regular appointment.

2. Section 2 of P.L.2021, c.191 (C.2B:12-35) is amended to read as follows:

C.2B:12-35 Jurisdiction of regional municipal court.

2. A regional municipal court shall have territorial and subject matter jurisdiction over all municipal court matters falling within the territorial jurisdiction of the municipal courts of the municipalities in the pilot program. A county may, by ordinance, confer the regional municipal court with subject matter jurisdiction over complaints issued by such county law enforcement agencies or county code enforcement entities as may be set forth by ordinance.

C.2B:12-18.1 Complaints, county, State Police, Statewide, county law enforcement agency, heard in municipal court.

3. All complaints issued in the county on or after the effective date of P.L.2023, c.284 (C.2B:12-18.1 et al.) by the State Police or any Statewide law enforcement agency, or by any county law enforcement agency, any county code enforcement entity, or by any other non-municipal law enforcement agency, shall be heard in the municipal court of the municipality from which the complaint originates, consistent with the provisions of N.J.S.2B:12-17 and N.J.S.2B:12-18. A regional municipal court established prior to the enactment of P.L.2023, c.284 (C.2B:12-18.1 et al.) shall retain jurisdiction over all matters pending as of the effective date of P.L.2023, c.284 (C.2B:12-18.1 et al.). The assignment judge of the vicinage shall have the authority to transfer matters between the municipal courts of the county consistent with the provisions of this section.

4. Section 37 of P.L.2000, c.126 (C.40:23-6.53) is amended to read as follows:

C.40:23-6.53 Contracts for collection of delinquent fees, fines.

37. The governing body of any county may enter into a contract with a private agency or firm for the purpose of collecting delinquent fees, fines, costs, surcharges, and other penalties

or assessments imposed, after a final determination of guilt, by a central municipal court established pursuant to subsection e. of N.J.S.2B:12-1, or imposed, after a final determination of guilt, on cases that were filed in a regional municipal court established pursuant to N.J.S.2B:12-34. The use of private agencies or firms to collect delinquent fees, fines, costs, surcharges and other penalties or assessments imposed by a central municipal court or for cases filed in a regional municipal court shall be in accordance with rules or procedures adopted by the Supreme Court. Any such contract shall be made pursuant to the provisions of the “Local Public Contracts Law,” P.L.1971, c.198 (C.40A:11-1 et seq.). The governing body of any county may authorize the assessment of a fee by a private agency or firm not to exceed 22% of the amount collected to be paid by the debtor to the private agency or firm to pay for the costs of collection.

5. This act shall take effect on the first day of the seventh month following enactment, except that the Administrative Director of the Courts may take any anticipatory action in advance as the director deems necessary for the timely implementation of this act.

Approved January 16, 2024.