LEGISLATIVE FISCAL ESTIMATE
SENATE, No. 1459
STATE OF NEW JERSEY
220th LEGISLATURE

DATED: JUNE 1, 2022

SUMMARY

Synopsis: Requires discrimination prevention training for certain providers of services to senior citizens.

Type of Impact: Annual State cost increase, General Fund.

Agencies Affected: Department of Human Services.

Office of Legislative Services Estimate

Annual Fiscal Impact	
State Cost Increase	Indeterminate

- The Office of Legislative Services (OLS) estimates that the Department of Human Services (DHS) will incur indeterminate one-time costs to produce the training program for service providers and their employees. A similar training program to the one required under the bill was developed by the DHS and partners that could potentially satisfy the requirements of the bill with marginal additional State expense. To the extent that the department is able to expand these existing materials and resources to implement the required training program, costs under the bill will be reduced. On the other hand, contracting out the program's development, as permitted under the bill, will increase the State's expenditures.

- The department may also incur additional annual costs under the bill to establish a system to monitor the completion of the training program by providers and provider's employees.

BILL DESCRIPTION

This bill requires the Department of Human Services to develop, approve, select, or designate a training program that is designed to prevent and eliminate discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression in the delivery of services to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning, and intersex (LGBTQI) senior citizens in the State. The training program is to be designed to increase awareness among, and provide cultural competency to, service providers and their employees about the issues encountered by LGBTQI seniors, in

order to both ensure equal access to services for senior citizens and improve the delivery of those services to senior citizens and caregivers in the State. The training program is to be developed no later than nine months following the bill's enactment.

The bill provides that service providers and their employees are required to complete the training program within one year after the program is made available or within one month after commencing the delivery of services or supports to senior citizens in the State, whichever is later. The bill authorizes the training program to be made available online, by webinar, or by other means. The DHS is required to establish a protocol to ensure that service providers comply with the bill's provisions.

FISCAL ANALYSIS

EXECUTIVE BRANCH

None received.

OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE SERVICES

The OLS estimates that the DHS will incur indeterminate one-time costs to produce the training program for service providers and their employees. A similar training program to the one required under the bill was developed by the DHS and partners that could potentially satisfy the requirements of the bill with marginal additional State expense. To the extent that the department is able to expand these existing materials and resources to implement the required training program, costs under the bill will be reduced. On the other hand, contracting out the program's development, as permitted under the bill, will increase the State's expenditures. The department may also incur additional annual costs under the bill to establish a system to monitor the completion of the training program by providers and provider's employees.

In July of 2021, the department announced that the Division of Family Development had partnered with the Rutgers University-School of Social Work – Institute for Families and the Hudson Pride Center to create an anti-discrimination training program to educate social service providers in the State on the needs of the LGBTQI community, and help address any potential barriers that may discourage or deter LGBTQI individuals facing homelessness from seeking services and support. The training covers a range of topics, including implicit bias; cultural humility; the basics of gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, and intersex status and conditions; issues affecting the LGBTQI community; and the general rights and protections afforded by federal and State law to LGBTQI individuals. This partnership was funded by $600,000 in State funds.

Considering the overlap in training content and target trainee audience, the DHS could pull from these materials and resources in order to create the majority of the training program required under the bill. The development of any additional components would involve marginal additional expenses. Furthermore, as the bill allows the training program to be provided in a virtual format, there could potentially be no expenses related to: 1) the printing and distribution of paper materials; or 2) staffing costs to provide the training program on an in-person basis.

The OLS notes that the department may incur annual costs under the bill to establish a system to monitor the completion of the training program by providers and provider's employees. This estimate assumes that providers could certify compliance with the training requirements via existing correspondence between the provider and the department, resulting in marginal cost to the department.

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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.).