

LEGISLATIVE FISCAL ESTIMATE

[First Reprint]

SENATE, No. 4412

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

222nd LEGISLATURE

DATED: JUNE 25, 2026

SUMMARY

- Synopsis:** Provides for youth mental health care professionals in family court.
- Type of Impact:** Annual State expenditure increase.
- Agencies Affected:** The Judiciary; Department of Children and Families; Department of Human Services.

Office of Legislative Services Estimate

Fiscal Impact	Annual
State Expenditure Increase	Indeterminate

- The Office of Legislative Services (OLS) concludes that providing youth mental health care professionals in family court will result in an indeterminate annual increase in State expenditures. The OLS lacks sufficient information to precisely quantify the fiscal impact, primarily because it is unknown exactly how many youth mental health care professionals will be hired as a result of the bill.
- The OLS finds that as many as 15 youth mental health care professionals could be hired as a result of the bill. Depending on the number of hires, the annual State expenditure increase could be in the hundreds of thousands of dollars and potentially in the millions of dollars.

BILL DESCRIPTION

This bill provides for youth mental health care professionals in family court.

Under the provisions of the bill, the Superior Court, Chancery Division, Family Part in each vicinage must provide for a youth mental health care professional. The bill provides that, at the discretion of the Administrative Office of the Courts, a youth mental health care professional may serve more than one vicinage so long as the youth mental health care professional maintains a reasonable caseload. A youth mental health care professional would be a State employee and in the unclassified service.

The youth mental health care professional would support and advise, upon the request of a judge, the court in an action or proceeding submitted to or heard by the Superior Court, Chancery Division, Family Part, where an individual under 18 years of age is a party to the action or proceeding or a subject of the action or proceeding.

The youth mental health care professional would assist and collaborate with other mental health professionals and service providers to assist the court with: identifying youth with mental health needs; recognizing when specific mental health interventions are indicated; providing a referral for evidence-based mental health services when appropriate; and connecting youth and caregivers to appropriate supports in a timely manner.

In addition, the bill amends provisions of State law concerning the disclosure of juvenile records to permit a youth mental health care professional to have access to information and records relevant to the youth, including juvenile delinquency records otherwise confidential under State law.

FISCAL ANALYSIS

EXECUTIVE BRANCH

None received.

OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE SERVICES

The OLS concludes that providing youth mental health care professionals in family court will result in an indeterminate annual increase in State expenditures. The OLS lacks sufficient information to precisely quantify the fiscal impact, primarily because it is unknown exactly how many youth mental health care professionals will be hired as a result of the bill.

The following State agencies would incur expenditure increases: a) the Judiciary would have to hire and supervise youth mental health care professionals, provide training, and administer the program within the Family Court system; and b) the Department of Children and Families and the Department of Human Services would have to coordinate with the Judiciary, facilitating referrals to youth mental health care professionals, and providing additional case management and behavioral health services for affected youth and families.

The OLS notes that the Superior Court, Chancery Division, Family Part in each of the State's 15 vicinages would be required to provide for a youth mental health care professional. The OLS notes that, at the Administrative Office of the Courts' discretion, a youth mental health care professional may serve more than one vicinage so long as the youth mental health care professional maintains a reasonable caseload.

The OLS finds that as many as 15 youth mental health care professionals could be hired as a result of the bill. Depending on the number of hires, the annual State expenditure increase could be in the hundreds of thousands of dollars and potentially in the millions of dollars. For context, according to the Department of Human Services, the advertised salary for a new mental healthcare professional hire was between \$92,711 and \$136,605 in 2026. For example only, if a youth mental health care professional were hired at a salary of \$92,711, with fringe benefits (59.4 percent), and employer FICA (7.65 percent), the total estimated annual compensation would be \$154,873.

Section: Judiciary

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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.).