

[First Reprint]

ASSEMBLY, No. 3628

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
218th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED MARCH 12, 2018

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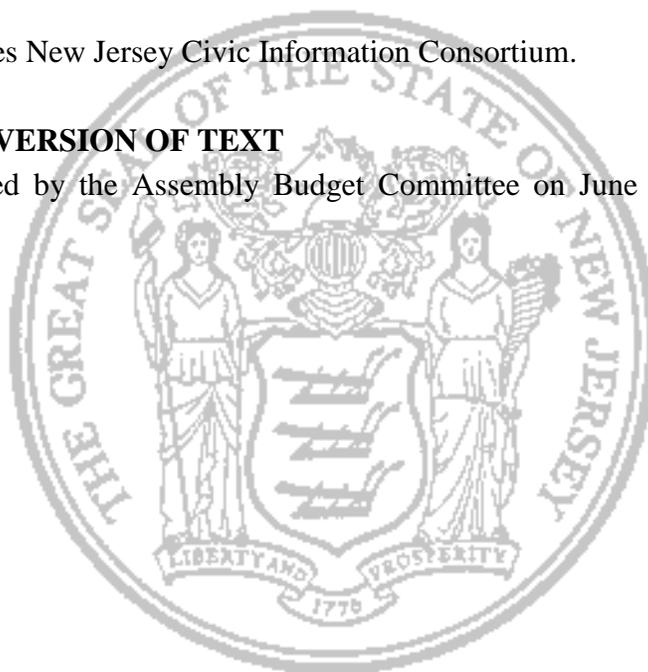
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Holley**

SYNOPSIS

Establishes New Jersey Civic Information Consortium.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As reported by the Assembly Budget Committee on June 18, 2018, with amendments.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 6/19/2018)

1 AN ACT establishing the New Jersey Civic Information
2 Consortium¹**[,] and¹** supplementing Title 18A of the New Jersey
3 Statutes¹**[, and making an appropriation]**¹.

4

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

7

8 1. The Legislature finds and declares that:

9 a. The people of New Jersey need accurate, relevant, timely,
10 and trustworthy news and information to be civically engaged,
11 make informed voting decisions, and work toward common
12 solutions in their communities.

13 b. News media operations in the State have endured major
14 cutbacks in recent years, resulting in less coverage of important
15 State matters. These cutbacks not only hurt the news media's
16 financial health, but also harm communities by reducing the news
17 and civic information to which residents have access.

18 c. This situation has resulted in the need to authorize the
19 establishment of, and to fund, the New Jersey Civic Information
20 Consortium (consortium), a consortium of five State public
21 universities, to advance research and innovation in the field of
22 media and technology to better inform the State's communities to
23 benefit the State's civic life and evolving information needs.

24 d. By leveraging the resources, knowledge, and expertise of the
25 State's public universities through a partnership with The College
26 of New Jersey, Montclair State University, the New Jersey Institute
27 of Technology, Rowan University, and Rutgers, The State
28 University, the consortium could bolster public-interest journalism,
29 civic information, and media innovation.

30 e. The consortium would provide grants that support news and
31 information that benefit the State's civic life and meet the evolving
32 information needs of New Jersey's underserved communities.

33 f. Investments from the consortium, supporting the State's
34 academia, media, innovation, and community service sectors, could
35 advance these goals while ensuring financial sustainability,
36 accountability, and lasting public faith in both the consortium and
37 the work it supports.

38 g. It is therefore necessary and in the public interest to
39 establish the consortium and provide a funding source for the
40 awarding of grants to organizations working to meet these goals.

41

42 2. As used in P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the
43 Legislature as this bill):

44 "Board of directors" or "board" means the board of directors of
45 the New Jersey Civic Information Consortium established pursuant

EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets [thus] in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

Matter enclosed in superscript numerals has been adopted as follows:

¹Assembly ABU committee amendments adopted June 18, 2018.

1 of section 3 of P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the
2 Legislature as this bill).

3 “Consortium” means the New Jersey Civic Information
4 Consortium established pursuant to section 3 of
5 P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill).

6 “In-kind contribution” means a contribution of goods or services,
7 other than a cash grant.

8 “Local community organization” means a locally-based
9 organization serving a community of people having shared interests
10 that is incorporated, organized, and operated in such a manner as to
11 qualify as a nonprofit corporation described in section 501(c)(3) of
12 the federal Internal Revenue Code, 26 U.S.C. s.501(c)(3).

13 “Member university” means The College of New Jersey,
14 Montclair State University, the New Jersey Institute of Technology,
15 Rowan University, and Rutgers, The State University.

16

17 3. a. There is established the New Jersey Civic Information
18 Consortium which shall consist of the following member
19 universities: The College of New Jersey; Montclair State
20 University; the New Jersey Institute of Technology; Rowan
21 University; and Rutgers, The State University. The purpose of the
22 consortium shall be to advance research and innovation in the field
23 of media and technology to benefit the State’s civic life and
24 evolving information needs.

25 b. The consortium shall be established as a nonprofit
26 corporation that is an educational and charitable corporation validly
27 existing and in good standing under the "New Jersey Nonprofit
28 Corporation Act," P.L.1983, c.127 (N.J.S.15A:1-1 et seq.), is
29 incorporated, organized, and operated in such a manner as to
30 qualify as a nonprofit corporation described in section 501(c)(3) of
31 the federal Internal Revenue Code, 26 U.S.C. s.501(c)(3), and
32 structured as a supporting organization to its member universities in
33 a manner that the Internal Revenue Service would deem the
34 consortium to be a public charity, and shall be subject to all
35 applicable State laws governing nonprofit corporations. The
36 consortium shall be accountable and subject to the same federal
37 Internal Revenue Code disclosure requirements of any nonprofit
38 organization pursuant to 26 U.S.C. s.6033, such as making public
39 its Internal Revenue Service Form 990 and filing a copy of that
40 form and a copy of its annual financial report and audited financial
41 reports with the Attorney General.

42

43 4. a. The consortium shall have a board of directors that shall
44 set strategic priorities and metrics to guide the consortium’s grant-
45 making and other initiatives, as well as to approve grants pursuant
46 to section 7 of P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature
47 as this bill).

1 b. The board of directors shall consist of ¹~~13~~ 15¹ members
2 as follows:

3 (1) two members appointed by the Governor;

4 (2) one member appointed by the President of the Senate ¹, and
5 one member appointed by the Minority Leader of the Senate¹ ;

6 (3) one member appointed by the Speaker of the General
7 Assembly ¹, and one member appointed by the Minority Leader of the
8 General Assembly¹ ;

9 (4) five members appointed by the president of each member
10 university, each of whom shall have background or experience in
11 the field of journalism, media, or technology; and

12 (5) four members, appointed by a majority vote of the nine
13 board members appointed pursuant to paragraphs (1) through (4) of
14 this subsection, of which: (a) one member shall represent the media
15 sector; (b) one member shall represent the technology sector; and
16 (c) two members, not employed by the State or a member university
17 at the time of the member's appointment, shall have demonstrated a
18 record of commitment to public service and understand the
19 importance of media and technology to the State's future.

20 ¹Appointments to the board shall be made in such manner so that
21 no more than eight members shall be of the same political party.¹

22 c. Each board member shall serve a term of four years, except
23 that the member representing the New Jersey media sector shall
24 serve an initial term of one year and the member representing the
25 New Jersey technology sector shall serve an initial term of two
26 years. No board member shall serve more than two four-year terms.
27 In the appointment of members to the board, every effort shall be
28 made to strive for diversity and balance of representation according
29 to gender, race, ethnicity, and geography within any limits allowed
30 under law. Any vacancies in the appointed membership of the
31 board occurring other than by expiration of term shall be filled in
32 the same manner as the original appointment, but for the unexpired
33 term only. Board members shall serve without compensation but
34 may be reimbursed for necessary expenses incurred in the
35 performance of their duties within the limits of funds available to
36 the board.

37
38 5. a. The board shall appoint and employ an executive
39 director, and fix the executive director's compensation and
40 conditions of employment. The executive director shall be the chief
41 executive, administrative, and operational officer of the consortium
42 and shall direct and supervise the administrative affairs and the
43 general management of the consortium. The executive director
44 shall oversee the consortium's day-to-day operations, which
45 includes working with the board to meet the consortium's goals and
46 grant-making requirements, hiring and managing program officers
47 and administrative staff pursuant to subsection b. of this section,

1 acting as spokesperson for the consortium's work, and raising funds
2 from external sources. The executive director shall attend all
3 meetings of the board.

4 b. (1) The executive director shall employ program officers
5 who shall be experienced practitioners with a strong understanding
6 of the media or civic technology fields. The executive director shall
7 strive to appoint program officers that represent the State's racial,
8 ethnic, gender, and geographic diversity within any limits allowed
9 under law. The program officers shall manage the grant-making
10 process, in accordance with the consortium's goals. The grant-
11 making process shall include soliciting, recommending, and
12 processing grant proposals, working with grantees to ensure work
13 on grant project ideas, and directing public engagement and
14 evaluation efforts.

15 (2) The executive director shall employ no more than three
16 administrative staff to provide operational support for the
17 consortium, including office management, support for the executive
18 director and program officers, coordination among member
19 universities, payment to grantees, human resources, and logistics.

20 c. To save on startup, operating, and ongoing administrative
21 costs, one member university shall be responsible for housing the
22 consortium and providing back-office support.

23

24 6. The consortium shall be a collaborative effort among the
25 member universities. Each member university shall focus its
26 initiatives on one area of expertise and the board of directors shall
27 decide on each member university's focus of expertise in order to
28 allow for greater collaboration among member universities,
29 decrease competition for grants, and reduce redundancy of efforts.
30 Member universities may collaborate on projects together, as well
31 as seek out other academic institutions to partner with on seeking
32 grants.

33

34 7. a. To be eligible for a grant from the consortium, a grant
35 proposal application shall include, but not be limited to:

36 (1) evidence of a collaboration between at least one member of
37 the faculty or graduate student of a member university and at least
38 one local community organization, media organization, or
39 technology-based organization;

40 (2) information demonstrating that the collaboration would be a
41 mutually respectful partnership wherein all community and member
42 university participants invest in a project designed to serve the
43 consortium's mission and the goals cited pursuant to subsection b.
44 of this section; and

45 (3) proof that the member university or universities in total will
46 provide an amount of funding or make an in-kind contribution
47 having a value that matches 10 percent of the amount of grant
48 funding for which the applicant has applied, if an application is

1 sponsored by one or more member universities. For a grant
2 proposal application sponsored by a member university housing the
3 consortium and providing back-office support pursuant to
4 subsection c. of section 5 of P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before
5 the Legislature as this bill), the cost of that housing and support to
6 that member university shall count towards the funding or in-kind
7 contribution match from that member university.

8 b. The consortium shall provide grants for projects that achieve
9 the following goals:

10 (1) improve the quantity and quality of civic information in New
11 Jersey communities;

12 (2) give residents enhanced access to useful government data
13 and public information through innovative applications, platforms,
14 and technologies;

15 (3) train students, professionals, and community members in the
16 practice of community storytelling, journalism, and media
17 production;

18 (4) nurture better civic engagement and dialogue inside and
19 between New Jersey communities;

20 (5) better meet the information needs of low-income
21 communities and racial and ethnic communities that have been
22 underserved by the media; and

23 (6) invest in research and practices that can help media outlets
24 become more closely connected to their audiences and more
25 sustainable without government support.

26

27 8. A grant issued by the consortium shall be in the form of a
28 grant agreement. A grant agreement shall include a provision
29 establishing a set of metrics for assessing the goals contained in the
30 agreement to ensure evaluation of a grantee project on how well
31 those metrics are being met and any other relevant accountability
32 measures. The set of metrics shall be established by the board in
33 conjunction with the executive director and program officers. The
34 agreement shall include the expectations stated between the
35 consortium and the grantee, which shall include, but not be limited
36 to, a statement that:

37 a. the grantee shall be independent from the influence of the
38 State, a member university, and any other grantor or contributor of
39 funds or outside source; and

40 b. any grantor or other contributor of funds to the grantee shall
41 acknowledge in writing the grantor's or contributor's understanding
42 that the grant or donation does not entitle the grantor or contributor
43 to dictate or influence the content of any work the grantee produces
44 or may produce.

45

46 9. a. The consortium shall annually report to the Governor
47 and, pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), to the
48 Legislature, on the activities of the consortium and make the report

1 available on the consortium's Internet website. The report shall
2 include, but not be limited to:

- 3 (1) a list of all grant applicants and approved grant applicants;
4 (2) the grant amounts of approved grant applicants;
5 (3) the amount of matching funds and types of in-kind
6 contributions provided to approved grant applicants; and
7 (4) a status report on the activities funded by an approved grant
8 applicant.

9 b. The consortium shall make available on its Internet website
10 its grant-making criteria and other relevant documents.

11 c. The board, in conjunction with the executive director and
12 program officers, shall hold one public hearing annually in the
13 northern, central, and southern regions of the State. The public
14 hearings shall provide a forum for the board to report on how the
15 public funds that the consortium receives are spent and to gather
16 public input on what the consortium's mission should be and
17 whether the consortium is meeting its mission. Public input shall be
18 used to assess whether the consortium's grant-making metrics and
19 process for issuing grants needs to be changed.

20

21 ¹【10. There is appropriated from the General Fund to the New
22 Jersey Civic Information Consortium, established pursuant to
23 section 3 of P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature
24 as this bill), \$20,000,000 in the first fiscal year in which the bill is
25 enacted and an additional \$1,000,000 annually thereafter, to
26 effectuate the purposes of P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the
27 Legislature as this bill).】¹

28

29 ¹【11.】 10.¹ This act shall take effect immediately.