

ASSEMBLY, No. 257

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2020 SESSION

Sponsored by:

Assemblyman WAYNE P. DEANGELO

District 14 (Mercer and Middlesex)

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District 11 (Monmouth)

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**Assemblyman Danielsen, Assemblywomen Murphy, McKnight, Lopez,
Downey and Vainieri Huttie**

SYNOPSIS

Requires DCA to provide certain information on low-income home energy assistance program, annually update its low-income home energy assistance program handbook, and provide quarterly training sessions on administering program.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel.



1 **AN ACT** concerning the administration of the low-income home
2 energy assistance benefits program and supplementing chapter
3 27D of Title 52 of the Revised Statutes.

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

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8 1. a. The Department of Community Affairs shall establish a
9 schedule of days and hours of operation, a toll-free telephone
10 number, and a downloadable application on its Internet website to
11 facilitate the receipt of benefits under the federal Low Income
12 Home Energy Assistance Program, established pursuant to 42
13 U.S.C. s.8621 et seq.

14 b. The department shall prepare and annually update a handbook
15 containing the governing policies and eligibility requirements for
16 the federal Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program. The
17 department shall annually distribute copies of the handbook and its
18 updates to each agency designated by the department to obtain,
19 review, and process applications for benefits under that program.

20 c. The department shall adopt training sessions regarding the
21 Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program that cover subjects
22 including, but not limited to, enrollment procedures, eligibility
23 requirements, and fraud detection. The training sessions shall be
24 provided on a quarterly basis and open to any agency that obtains,
25 reviews, and processes applications under that program.

26 d. (1) Each director, manager, supervisor, and employee of an
27 agency that obtains, reviews, and processes Low Income Home
28 Energy Assistance Program applications, who performs or
29 supervises such program work, shall read the annually updated
30 handbooks distributed by the department pursuant to subsection b.
31 of this section and shall comply with the policies and procedures set
32 forth therein for the applicable year.

33 (2) Each supervisor of an agency that obtains, reviews, and
34 processes Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program
35 applications, who supervises such program work, shall attend the
36 quarterly training sessions provided by the department pursuant to
37 subsection c. of this section.

38 e. The department may disqualify an agency from serving as an
39 agency that obtains, reviews, and processes Low Income Home
40 Energy Assistance Program applications for failure to substantially
41 comply with the requirements of subsection d. of this section.

42 f. The Commissioner of Community Affairs shall promulgate
43 rules and regulations, pursuant to the "Administrative Procedure
44 Act," P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.), in order to effectuate
45 the provisions of this section.

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47 2. This act shall take effect immediately.

STATEMENT

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This bill requires the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) to establish a schedule of days and hours of operation, a toll-free telephone number, and a downloadable application on its Internet website to facilitate the receipt of federal Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) benefits. The bill also requires the DCA to prepare and annually update a handbook containing the governing policies and eligibility requirements for LIHEAP, and to provide training sessions about the program on a quarterly basis. Under the bill, all employees of agencies designated by the DCA to obtain, review, and process applications for LIHEAP benefits would be required to read and adhere to the handbooks, and the supervisors of these agencies who oversee LIHEAP work would be required to attend the quarterly training sessions. An agency that fails to substantially comply with these requirements may be disqualified by the DCA from serving as a designated LIHEAP agency.