

ASSEMBLY TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND UTILITIES
COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 257

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: MARCH 15, 2021

The Assembly Telecommunications and Utilities Committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No. 257.

As reported, 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 benefits under the federal Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), established pursuant to the “Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Act of 1981,” 42 U.S.C. s.8621 et seq. The bill 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 handbook, 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.

This bill was pre-filed for introduction in the 2020-2021 session pending technical review. As reported, the bill includes the changes required by technical review, which has been performed.