

ASSEMBLY, No. 695

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2020 SESSION

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SYNOPSIS

Requires DHS to give priority to temporary rental assistance over use of hotels or motels in emergency assistance to Work First New Jersey recipients.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel.



1 **AN ACT** concerning emergency assistance to certain recipients of
2 public assistance and amending P.L.1997, c.14.

3

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

6

7 1. Section 8 of P.L.1997, c.14 (C.44:10-51) is amended to read as
8 follows:

9 8. a. Emergency assistance shall be provided only to recipients
10 of Work First New Jersey and persons receiving Supplemental
11 Security Income pursuant to P.L.1973, c.256 (C.44:7-85 et seq.) in
12 emergent situations, as determined by the commissioner, for up to 12
13 cumulative months; except that:

14 (1) the commissioner may provide for an extension of emergency
15 assistance for up to six additional months to an assistance unit with
16 dependent children, if the commissioner determines that a case of
17 extreme hardship exists. The commissioner shall review each such
18 case on a monthly basis during the six-month period and shall continue
19 the emergency assistance only if the commissioner determines, based
20 upon the monthly review, that the extreme hardship continues to exist.
21 If the extreme hardship continues to exist at the end of the six-month
22 period, the commissioner may provide an additional six months of
23 emergency assistance to no more than 10% of those assistance units
24 with dependent children which are receiving temporary rental
25 assistance under the emergency assistance component of the program,
26 based upon the most current data available; and

27 (2) the commissioner may provide for an extension of emergency
28 assistance for up to six additional months to no more than 10% of
29 single adults and couples without dependent children who are
30 receiving temporary rental assistance under the emergency assistance
31 component of the program, if the commissioner determines that a case
32 of extreme hardship exists. The commissioner shall review each such
33 case on a monthly basis during the six-month period and shall continue
34 the emergency assistance only if the commissioner determines, based
35 upon the monthly review, that the extreme hardship continues to exist.

36 Any form of emergency assistance provided pursuant to this
37 section shall count toward the maximum period of emergency
38 assistance allowed.

39 b. A person receiving emergency assistance shall contribute from
40 the person's income toward the payment of all emergency shelter
41 arrangements, including temporary housing and temporary rental
42 assistance, in accordance with regulations adopted by the
43 commissioner. As a condition of receipt of emergency assistance, a
44 person shall be required to take all reasonable steps to end the person's
45 dependency on emergency assistance and take all other actions
46 required by the commissioner.

47 c. The commissioner shall adopt regulations to:

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.

(1) require that each county agency accord priority to the use of temporary rental assistance for apartments, single-family homes, shelters, rooming houses, boarding houses, or other State licensed or approved transitional providers over placements in hotels or motels for persons receiving emergency assistance pursuant to this section;

(2) establish classifications for hotel or motel per diem rates in accordance with the level of enhanced services provided at a participating hotel or motel; and

(3) require each county agency to annually report information to the commissioner, on a form and in a manner prescribed by the commissioner, on the number of emergency assistance recipients receiving temporary rental assistance for apartments, single-family homes, shelters, rooming houses, boarding houses, or other State licensed or approved transitional providers; and the number residing in participating hotels or motels, respectively. The information to be reported shall not include any identifying information about any person receiving emergency assistance. The commissioner shall compile this information and make it available to the public upon request.

d. The provisions of this section shall apply to a person who receives general public assistance pursuant to P.L.1947, c.156 (C.44:8-107 et seq.) after the effective date of this act and is subsequently transferred directly into the Work First New Jersey program.
(cf: P.L.1997, c.14, s.8)

2. This act shall take effect immediately.

STATEMENT

This bill requires the Commissioner of Human Services to adopt certain regulations concerning temporary residential placements for Work First New Jersey (WFNJ) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) recipients who are receiving emergency assistance (EA) benefits that include temporary housing.

Specifically, the bill provides that these regulations are to require each county agency that administers the WFNJ program to:

- accord priority to the use of temporary rental assistance for apartments, single-family homes, shelters, rooming houses, boarding houses, or other State licensed or approved transitional providers over placements in hotels or motels for persons receiving EA benefits pursuant to the amended statute; and
- annually report information to the commissioner, on a form and in a manner prescribed by the commissioner, on the number of EA recipients receiving temporary rental assistance for apartments, single-family homes, shelters, rooming houses, boarding houses, or other State licensed or

1 approved transitional providers; and the number residing in
2 participating hotels or motels, respectively.

3 The bill stipulates that the information to be reported is not to
4 include any identifying information about any person receiving EA
5 benefits, and that the commissioner is to compile this information
6 and make it available to the public upon request.

7 The purpose of this bill is to establish by explicit statutory
8 authority a clear policy preference for, and a mechanism to ensure
9 public accountability regarding, the use of temporary rental
10 assistance for families receiving EA benefits, in order to enable
11 them to reside in apartments or single-family houses whenever
12 possible. This is clearly preferable to the use of hotels or motels
13 from the standpoint of ensuring both the prudent use of taxpayer
14 dollars and an appropriate living environment for the children of
15 these families.