

ASSEMBLY, No. 5608

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED MAY 12, 2021

Sponsored by:

Assemblyman BRIAN BERGEN

District 25 (Morris and Somerset)

SYNOPSIS

Establishes grant program for alternate route police officer training.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



1 AN ACT establishing a grant program for alternate route police
2 officer training and supplementing Title 52 of the Revised
3 Statutes.

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

7
8 1. a. For the purposes of this section:

9 "Alternate route program" means a police training course which
10 is available to persons seeking appointment as a police officer in
11 this State, but who do not hold a probationary or temporary
12 appointment with a police department or force pursuant to section 2
13 of P.L.1998, c.146 (C.52:17B-69.1).

14 "Approved school" means a school approved and authorized by
15 the Police Training Commission to give police training courses.

16 "Police Training Commission" or "commission" means the
17 Police Training Commission in the Division of Criminal Justice in
18 the Department of Law and Public Safety established pursuant to
19 section 5 of P.L.1961, c.56 (C.52:17B-70).

20 b. There is created and established in the Police Training
21 Commission a program to award grants to police officer candidates
22 who enroll in the alternate route program which shall be known as
23 the "New Jersey Alternate Route Opportunity Fund." The purpose
24 of the opportunity fund is to identify, recruit, and provide financial
25 assistance to economically disadvantaged residents of this State
26 who are seeking appointment as a police officer through the
27 alternate route program.

28 c. The business and operations of the opportunity fund shall be
29 administered by the board of directors established pursuant to
30 subsection e. of this section, subject to the general supervision of
31 the commission.

32 d. The commission, in consultation with the board of directors
33 established pursuant to subsection e. of this section, shall designate
34 a person to serve as the chief executive officer of the opportunity
35 fund, who shall organize the work of the opportunity fund as
36 necessary to carry out the provisions of this section. The
37 commission may employ persons, contract for services, make
38 expenditures, and adopt guidelines as may be necessary or
39 appropriate to carry out the provisions of this section.

40 e. The board of directors of the opportunity fund shall consist of
41 a representative of the commission and eight public members
42 appointed by the Governor. Public members of the board shall be
43 selected without regard to political affiliation and, as far as may be
44 practicable, on the basis of their knowledge of, or interest in, police
45 and law enforcement matters. The board shall annually organize as
46 established by rule of the board to elect a chairman, a vice
47 chairman, and other officers as the board shall determine from
48 among its members. The officers shall serve for a two-year term and

1 until their successors are elected and qualified. Vacancies in the
2 offices shall be filled in the same manner for the unexpired term
3 only.

4 Each public member of the board shall serve for a term of four
5 years and until the member's successor shall have been appointed
6 and qualified, except that in the case of the initial appointments to
7 the board, two members shall be appointed for four year terms; two
8 members shall be appointed for three year terms; two members
9 shall be appointed for two year terms; and two members shall be
10 appointed for one year terms. Any vacancy in the membership of
11 the board shall be filled in the same manner as the original
12 appointment for the remainder of the unexpired term.

13 Members of the board shall serve without compensation but shall
14 be entitled to be reimbursed for all reasonable and necessary
15 expenses incurred in the discharge of their duties.

16 f. The board shall:

17 (1) develop and maintain a Statewide system for the
18 identification of police officer candidates in need of financial
19 assistance to complete an alternate route program, including paying
20 the costs of training that may be charged by the Police Training
21 Commission or approved school;

22 (2) devise methods for recruiting candidates;

23 (3) develop, establish, and publicize criteria for the
24 determination of eligibility for financial assistance based on need
25 and potential for success as a police officer;

26 (4) establish procedures for determining the amount of each
27 award according to the total financial need of each police officer
28 applicant;

29 (5) through the commission, be responsible for and periodically
30 report in writing to the Governor and the Legislature pursuant to
31 section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1) on the performance of
32 its duties in accordance with the provisions of this section;

33 (6) adopt bylaws, and make, enforce, alter, and repeal rules for
34 its own operation and for carrying out the provisions of this section;
35 and

36 (7) receive and disburse any contributions to the fund as may be
37 forthcoming from private and public sources.

38 g. An opportunity grant may be awarded to a police officer
39 applicant who:

40 (1) is and has been a resident of the State for at least 12 months
41 prior to receiving the opportunity grant;

42 (2) has demonstrated financial need for an opportunity grant, as
43 determined by standards and procedures established by the board;
44 and

45 (3) has complied with all rules and regulations adopted pursuant
46 to this section by the board for the award, regulation, and
47 administration of the opportunity grant program.

1 h. Opportunity grants awarded pursuant to this section shall be
2 paid to the commission or approved school by the State Treasurer in
3 accordance with rules and regulations adopted by the board.

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5 2. This act shall take effect on the first day of the seventh
6 month next following enactment, but the Police Training
7 Commission may take any anticipatory administrative action in
8 advance as shall be necessary for the implementation of this act.

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11 STATEMENT

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13 This bill establishes a grant program known as the "New Jersey
14 Alternate Route Opportunity Fund" for the purpose of identifying,
15 recruiting, and providing financial assistance to economically
16 disadvantaged residents of this State who are seeking basic police
17 officer training through the State's alternate route program.

18 Generally, police officers in this State are appointed to a local
19 police department before they complete the basic training course for
20 police officer recruits. These police officer recruits are employees
21 of the police department when they attend a police academy for this
22 training. The police department to which they are appointed pays
23 the cost of their training. But under the alternate route program,
24 persons seeking appointment as a police officer who do not hold an
25 appointment with a police department may enroll in the basic police
26 training course at their own expense. Financial assistance would be
27 available under the opportunity fund for alternate route trainees.

28 The business and operations of the opportunity fund are to be
29 administered by a board of directors under the general supervision
30 of the Police Training Commission. The commission is responsible
31 for developing and administering basic training courses for police
32 officers and approves and oversees police training academies.

33 The board of directors is to consist of a representative of the
34 commission and eight public members appointed by the Governor.
35 The public members of the board are to be selected without regard
36 to political affiliation. They should have knowledge of, or interest
37 in, police and law enforcement matters. The commission and the
38 board are to mutually select a chief executive officer of the
39 opportunity fund who will be responsible for organizing the work of
40 the opportunity fund.

41 The board is responsible for: developing and maintaining a
42 Statewide system for the identification of police officer candidates
43 in need of financial assistance to complete an alternate route
44 program; devising methods for recruiting candidates; developing,
45 establishing, and publicizing criteria for the determination of
46 eligibility for financial assistance based on need and potential for
47 success as a police officer; establishing procedures for determining
48 the amount of each award based on need, according to the total

1 financial need of each police officer applicant; reporting to the
2 Governor and the Legislature on the performance of its duties;
3 adopting bylaws and rules for its operation; and receiving and
4 disbursing any contributions to the fund from private and public
5 sources.

6 A police officer applicant is eligible for an opportunity fund
7 grant if the applicant has been a State resident for at least a year;
8 has demonstrated financial need for an opportunity grant; and has
9 complied with the board's rules and regulations.

10 According to the sponsor, the purpose of the opportunity fund
11 established by the bill is to provide economically disadvantaged
12 persons with the opportunity to become a police officer and
13 consequently increase diversity in the ranks of these officers.