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P.L. 2021, CHAPTER 321, *approved December 21, 2021*
Assembly, No. 3062 (*Second Reprint*)

1 **AN ACT** establishing the Financial Empowerment Pilot Program
2 ²and making an appropriation².
3

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

7 1. a. There is established in the Department of Community
8 Affairs a Financial Empowerment Pilot Program. The purpose of the
9 pilot program shall be to address financial literacy and empowerment
10 issues for economically vulnerable individuals in the State through
11 ²[municipal] the disbursement of grants to eligible entities to
12 implement² financial empowerment ²[centers]. The municipalities of
13 Camden, ¹New Brunswick,¹ Newark, ¹[and]¹ Paterson ¹, and
14 Trenton¹ shall participate in the pilot program with the department.]
15 forums, programs, or initiatives.²

16 b. The ²[pilot program, in consultation with the participating
17 municipality,] department² shall ²[contract with a non-profit provider
18 to establish a] award grants to eligible entities through a competitive
19 grant solicitation to fund the establishment of² financial empowerment
20 ²[center in each of the participating municipalities in a location that is
21 easily accessible to the residents of that municipality. The financial
22 empowerment centers shall facilitate appropriate]² forums, programs,
23 or initiatives designed to educate the public regarding financial literacy
24 and empowerment and provide personal financial coaching to
25 economically vulnerable individuals.

26 c. The pilot program shall run for a period of three years
27 following ²[establishment of the financial empowerment centers
28 pursuant to this section] the effective date of P.L. , c. (C.)
29 (pending before the Legislature as this bill)².

30 ²d. For purposes of P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the
31 L Legislature as this bill), “eligible entities” shall include non-profit
32 providers, municipalities, and institutions of higher education,
33 excluding proprietary institutions authorized to offer licensed degree
34 programs.²
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36 2. a. ²[The pilot program shall] An eligible entity seeking to
37 participate in the Financial Empowerment Pilot Program shall submit
38 an application for a grant to the Department of Community Affairs in a

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 AFI committee amendments adopted March 5, 2020.

²Assembly amendments adopted in accordance with Governor's
recommendations December 2, 2021.

1 form determined by the department. The application shall include
2 information that the department determines is necessary to administer
3 the program and award grants.

4 b. The department shall establish criteria for the award of grants to
5 eligible entities, which shall include, but need not be limited, to the
6 following:

7 (1) whether the eligible entity's forums, programs, or initiatives
8 are designed to reach and are likely to reach economically vulnerable
9 individuals;

10 (2) whether the eligible entity maintains or plans to establish a
11 financial empowerment center at a physical location that facilitates
12 direct contact with economically vulnerable individuals;

13 (3) whether the eligible entity has established or plans to²
14 establish metrics and standards to track counseling efforts and results
15 for economically vulnerable individuals, and ²【shall provide】 has
16 developed or plans to develop² methods for implementing those
17 standards ²【at the financial empowerment centers,】 as part of its
18 forums, programs, or initiatives;

19 (4) whether the eligible entity's forums, programs, or initiatives
20 are designed to promote education and improve outcomes among
21 economically vulnerable individuals² in the following areas:

22 ²【(1)】 (a)² the opening of or transitioning to a safe and affordable
23 bank account;

24 ²【(2)】 (b)² the establishment of a credit score, or the increase in
25 an existing credit score;

26 ²【(3)】 (c)² the decrease of non-mortgage debt; and

27 ²【(4)】 (d)² the increase in rate of savings²【.

28 b. The pilot program shall provide the centers with support
29 services, including】 ;

30 (5) whether the eligible entity has access to, has developed, or has
31 plans to develop² materials on financial literacy and empowerment for
32 publication and dissemination to the public ²【and shall coordinate the
33 activities of the pilot program with other entities that focus on
34 financial literacy and empowerment, including other State agencies.】 ;

35 (6) whether the eligible entity intends to offer its forums,
36 programs, or initiatives in languages other than English; and

37 (7) any other criteria the department determines are necessary to
38 evaluate whether the eligible entity's proposed forums, programs, or
39 initiatives will achieve the goals of educating the public regarding
40 financial literacy and empowerment and providing personal financial
41 coaching to economically vulnerable individuals.

42 c. If the eligible entity is an institution of higher education, the
43 department shall also determine whether the eligible entity's forums,
44 programs, or initiatives are designed to reach and likely to reach
45 economically vulnerable members of the public beyond the
46 institution's student body.²

1 3. a. The program shall submit a report to the Commissioner of
2 Community Affairs no later than two months after the conclusion of
3 the pilot program. The report shall include, at a minimum, information
4 on the ²【counseling efforts and results established and tracked
5 pursuant to subsection a. of section 2 of this act, for each financial
6 empowerment center.】 outcomes of grantees' forums, programs, or
7 initiatives.²

8 b. ²【After receiving the report, the】 The² commissioner shall
9 submit a report to the Governor, and to the Legislature pursuant to
10 section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), on the implementation
11 and effectiveness of the pilot program no later than two months after
12 the pilot program issues its report to the commissioner. The report
13 shall include the commissioner's recommendation on the advisability
14 of the pilot program's continuation and expansion ²【to additional
15 municipalities in】 throughout² the State.

16
17 4. ²【All monies received by the State from the settlement of the
18 complaint of the Federal Trade Commission against Equifax, Inc.,
19 after accounting for any costs incurred by the Attorney General in
20 participating in the complaint, shall be transferred】 There is
21 appropriated from the General Fund² to the Department of Community
22 Affairs ²\$6,360,000² for the purposes of effectuating the provisions of
23 this act. ²【The moneys】 Up to 3.5 percent of the amounts
24 appropriated² may ²【also】² be expended for appropriate and
25 reasonable administrative expenses incurred in the administration of
26 the pilot program by the department.

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28 5. This act shall take ²effect² immediately and shall expire upon
29 submission of the final report required to be prepared under section 3
30 of this act.

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35 Establishes three year Financial Empowerment Pilot Program.