

SENATE, No. 1879

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 24, 2020

Sponsored by:

Senator SHIRLEY K. TURNER

District 15 (Hunterdon and Mercer)

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

As introduced.



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
8 as 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. The standards for eligibility shall be
13 established by the commissioner by regulation, except that
14 emergency assistance shall be granted to an individual or family in
15 which the individual or family is in a state of homelessness or
16 imminent homelessness that, according to a signed attestation by
17 the applicant, is the result of imminent or demonstrated domestic
18 violence that may imperil the health and safety of the individual or
19 family. Emergency assistance shall be provided for up to 12
20 cumulative months, regardless of whether the recipient receives
21 emergency assistance as a recipient of Work First New Jersey, as a
22 recipient of Supplemental Security Income, or pursuant to a
23 combination thereof, except that:

24 (1) the commissioner may provide for an extension of
25 emergency assistance for up to six additional months to a family
26 with dependent children, if the commissioner determines that a case
27 of extreme hardship exists. The commissioner shall review each
28 such case on a monthly basis during the six-month period and shall
29 continue the emergency assistance only if the commissioner
30 determines, based upon the monthly review, that the extreme
31 hardship continues to exist. If the extreme hardship continues to
32 exist at the end of the six-month period, the commissioner may
33 provide an additional six months of emergency assistance to no
34 more than 10 percent of those families with dependent children
35 which are receiving temporary rental assistance under the
36 emergency assistance component of the program, based upon the
37 most current data available;

38 (2) the commissioner may provide for an extension of
39 emergency assistance for up to six additional months to no more
40 than 10 percent of single adults and couples without dependent
41 children who are receiving temporary rental assistance under the
42 emergency assistance component of the program, if the
43 commissioner determines that a case of extreme hardship exists.
44 The commissioner shall review each such case on a monthly basis
45 during the six-month period and shall continue the emergency

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 assistance only if the commissioner determines, based upon the
2 monthly review, that the extreme hardship continues to exist;

3 (3) the commissioner shall provide for an extension of
4 emergency assistance to an individual, if the commissioner
5 determines that the individual is:

6 (a) the parent or other relative of a disabled child or other
7 disabled dependent who must provide full-time care for the disabled
8 child or other disabled dependent, as defined by regulation of the
9 commissioner;

10 (b) permanently disabled, including, but not limited to, a person
11 eligible for disability insurance benefits under Title II of the federal
12 Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. s.401 et seq.), as defined by
13 regulation of the commissioner;

14 (c) over 60 years of age; or

15 (d) chronically unemployable as defined by regulation of the
16 commissioner.

17 The commissioner shall review each individual's eligibility for
18 emergency assistance every six months and shall continue the
19 emergency assistance if the commissioner determines, based upon
20 the review, that the individual continues to meet the criteria
21 established pursuant to this paragraph (3); and

22 (4) (a) subject to the requirements of subsection h. of this
23 section, the commissioner shall provide that all months of
24 emergency assistance received more than 84 months from the date
25 of application for emergency assistance shall not be counted toward
26 the cumulative 12-month limit of emergency assistance as required
27 pursuant to this subsection.

28 (b) The Department of Human Services shall provide case
29 management services to an individual receiving emergency
30 assistance pursuant to this paragraph. As used in this subparagraph:
31 "case management services" means personalized services to assist
32 an individual or a family receiving emergency assistance pursuant
33 to subparagraph (a) of this paragraph focusing on housing stability
34 and delivery of services related to housing needs that can be
35 addressed within a set time frame and available resources.

36 (c) In no case shall any individual provided emergency
37 assistance pursuant to subparagraph (a) of this paragraph be
38 provided a cumulative total of more than 24 months of emergency
39 assistance pursuant to this subsection, provided that extensions of
40 emergency assistance provided pursuant to paragraph (1), (2), or (3)
41 of this subsection shall not count toward the cumulative total of 24
42 months.

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

1 person's dependency on emergency assistance and take all other
2 actions required by the commissioner.

3 c. The commissioner shall adopt regulations to:

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

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

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

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

29 e. The commissioner shall require that identifying information
30 for all individuals who receive emergency assistance pursuant to
31 subsection a. of this section shall be entered into the Foothold
32 Homeless Management Information System, or a similar electronic
33 database as designated by the commissioner. The identifying
34 information shall include: an individual identifier of the recipient;
35 the amount and type of emergency assistance delivered to the
36 recipient; and the time period in which emergency assistance was
37 provided to the recipient. The information shall be compiled by the
38 Division of Family Development on an annual basis and submitted
39 to the Legislature no later than April 1 of the current calendar year
40 for expenditures in the prior calendar year.

41 f. Recipients of emergency assistance benefits shall be
42 notified, in writing, of any termination or modification of the
43 recipient's emergency assistance benefits at least 30 days prior to
44 the termination or modification of the recipient's emergency
45 assistance benefits.

46 g. Section 9 of P.L.1997, c.14 (C.44:10-52) shall apply to any
47 denial, termination, or modification of emergency assistance
48 benefits.

1 h. Of the total revenues appropriated to the Division of Family
2 Development in the Department of Human Services during any
3 fiscal year, no more than \$20 million shall be available for the cost
4 of emergency assistance provided pursuant to subparagraph (a) of
5 paragraph (4) of subsection a. of this section, and no more than \$5
6 million shall be available for the cost of case management services
7 provided pursuant to subparagraph (b) of paragraph (4) of
8 subsection a. of this section. Nothing in this subsection shall be
9 construed to require that emergency assistance be awarded on any
10 basis other than by the order in which applications are received. In
11 no case shall the monthly allotment of emergency assistance
12 awarded to any individual be reduced based on the overall limit on
13 emergency assistance funds established pursuant to this subsection,
14 and no additional emergency assistance shall be awarded pursuant
15 to paragraph (4) of subsection a. of this section once the overall
16 limit on emergency assistance funds established pursuant to this
17 subsection has been reached.

18 i. The commissioner shall annually report to the Legislature,
19 pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), the number
20 of recipients deemed ineligible for emergency assistance on the
21 grounds that the individual has reached the maximum period of
22 emergency assistance allowed pursuant to this section, and the total
23 number of months of emergency assistance provided by the
24 department pursuant to subsection a. of this section.
25 (cf: P.L.2019, c.74)

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27 2. This act shall take effect immediately.

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STATEMENT

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

37 Specifically, the bill provides that such regulations are to require
38 each county agency that administers the WFNJ program to: 1)
39 accord priority to the use of temporary rental assistance for
40 apartments, single-family homes, shelters, rooming houses,
41 boarding houses, or other State licensed or approved transitional
42 providers over placements in hotels or motels for persons receiving
43 EA benefits; and 2) annually report information to the
44 commissioner, on a form and in a manner prescribed by the
45 commissioner, on the number of EA recipients receiving temporary
46 rental assistance for apartments, single-family homes, shelters,
47 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 by the
4 county agency is not to include any identifying information about
5 any person receiving EA benefits. The commissioner is required to
6 compile this information and make it available to the public upon
7 request.