

SENATE BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE, No. 1935

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: DECEMBER 20, 2021

The Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Senate Bill No. 1935.

As amended and reported, this bill would require the Commissioner of Human Services (commissioner) to designate an employee as a Transportation Planning Coordinator to oversee the provision of transportation services provided through the Department of Human Services (department).

The bill would require the Transportation Planning Coordinator to be qualified by training and experience, as necessary to perform the duties of the position. The bill grants the commissioner the authority to determine qualifications for the position.

The duties of the Transportation Planning Coordinator include: (1) overseeing the transportation providers who are contracted by or have otherwise entered into an agreement with the department; (2) monitoring and reporting driver or vehicle issues, such as accidents, safety issues, or licensing concerns as that information is made available to the coordinator; (3) soliciting new transportation providers to serve applicable individuals; (4) ensuring that transportation providers provide timely services as provided by contract or agreement; (5) maintaining records of all transportation services provided to individuals under the department's purview; (6) receiving, reviewing, investigating, and resolving complaints filed with respect to applicable transportation services; (7) conducting internal reviews and investigations to identify inefficiencies or other problems occurring within the transportation system, and instituting revised procedures to address identified concerns or issues; (8) analyzing the costs of transportation services offered through the department and recommending more cost effective methods of transportation, where appropriate; and (9) any other appropriate duties assigned by the department.

Each year, the Transportation Planning Coordinator is required to submit a written report to the commissioner describing the coordinator's activities over the prior year. The coordinator is also required to summarize the public complaints received during the reporting period and indicate the extent to which and manner in which such complaints were resolved.

The bill would take effect on the first day of the tenth month following enactment.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS

The committee amended the bill to clarify that the Commissioner of Human Services is to designate an employee to be the Transportation Planning Coordinator and to remove a requirement that the coordinator have at least five years of experience in the transportation industry or in the management of transportation services.

The amendments revise the duties of the coordinator and the items to be included in the annual report to the commissioner. The amendments permit instead of require the commissioner to adopt rules and regulations and provide that the bill takes effect on the first day of the tenth month after enactment instead of the first day of the sixth month after enactment.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The Office of Legislative Services concludes that the Department of Human Services will incur \$120,000 in annual salary, equipment, and fringe benefits expenses associated with the hiring of a Transportation Planning Coordinator, as required under the bill. This estimate assumes that the Transportation Planning Coordinator position will not eliminate, to any extent, the responsibilities of an existing position in the department.

The department may experience additional minimal costs to support the Transportation Planning Coordinator's annual reporting requirement established under the bill.