

SENATE, No. 4129

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED NOVEMBER 12, 2021

Sponsored by:

Senator VIN GOPAL

District 11 (Monmouth)

Senator JAMES BEACH

District 6 (Burlington and Camden)

SYNOPSIS

Establishes temporary COVID-19 Family Relief Assistance Office in DHS; appropriates \$10 million.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 12/2/2021)

1 AN ACT establishing the temporary COVID-19 Family Relief
2 Assistance Office in the Department of Human Services and
3 making an appropriation.
4

5 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State
6 of New Jersey:
7

8 1. a. There is established in the Department of Human
9 Services the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Family Relief
10 Assistance Office. The office shall be established no later than 180
11 days after the effective date of this act. The Commissioner of
12 Human Services shall appoint a director, who shall supervise the
13 office. The commissioner may employ such other personnel and
14 staff as may be necessary to carry out the duties and responsibilities
15 of the office without regard to the provisions of Title 11A, Civil
16 Service, of the New Jersey Statutes. Persons appointed or
17 employed as provided pursuant to this subsection shall be
18 compensated in a manner similar to other employees in the
19 Executive Branch, and their compensation shall be determined by
20 the Civil Service Commission.

21 b. The office shall provide assistance to individuals who have
22 experienced severe or chronic adverse health conditions resulting
23 from COVID-19 infection, their families, and the family members
24 of individuals who have died from COVID-19, in identifying and
25 applying for State and federal assistance programs and other State
26 and federal benefits that may be available and for which the
27 individuals and their families may be eligible.

28 c. The office may establish grant programs, within the limits of
29 appropriate funds available to the office for this purpose, to provide
30 assistance with the unreimbursed costs related to a COVID-19
31 infection or death that are not covered by other benefits or
32 assistance programs, which assistance shall be made available to
33 individuals who have experienced severe or chronic adverse health
34 conditions resulting from COVID-19 infection, their families, and
35 the family members of individuals who have died from COVID-19.
36 The director shall establish eligibility criteria and an application
37 process for any grant program established pursuant to this
38 paragraph.

39 d. In addition to using funds appropriated pursuant to section 2
40 of this act, the office may accept donations from individuals and
41 organizations to support the provision of services pursuant to
42 subsection b. of this section and to fund grant programs established
43 pursuant to subsection c. of this section.

44 e. Commencing one year after it first organizes, and annually
45 thereafter, the office shall submit a report to the Governor and,
46 pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), to the
47 Legislature, concerning its activities under this section, including
48 the use of funds appropriated pursuant to section 2 of this act, the

1 types of assistance provided, the number of individuals to whom it
2 provided assistance and services, the nature of any grant programs
3 established, the source and amount of any donations accepted by the
4 office, the source of funding for any grant programs established, the
5 amount awarded in grants and the number of people to whom grants
6 were awarded, and the effectiveness of existing State and federal
7 programs in assisting individuals with issues related to COVID-19.
8 The report shall include recommendations for legislation,
9 administrative actions, or any other action that the office determines
10 necessary and appropriate to improve the effectiveness and
11 efficiency of services and assistance provided to individuals in
12 relation to COVID-19, as well as to State assistance and benefits
13 programs generally. The office shall cease operations under
14 subsections b. and c. of this section two years after the end of both
15 the state of emergency and the public health emergency declared in
16 response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and shall submit a final report
17 concerning its activities under this section, including any final
18 recommendations, to the Governor and to the Legislature no later
19 than 45 days after it ceases operations. The office shall expire upon
20 submission of its final report.

21
22 2. There is appropriated to the Department of Human Services
23 from the General Fund the sum of \$10,000,000 to implement the
24 provisions of this act. Any unexpended funds from this amount
25 appropriated shall be transferred to the State Treasury upon the
26 expiration of this act.

27
28 3. This act shall take effect immediately and shall expire upon
29 submission of the final report by the Coronavirus Disease 2019
30 (COVID-19) Family Relief Assistance Office as provided in
31 subsection e. of section 1 of this act.

32 33 34 STATEMENT

35
36 This bill establishes the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)
37 Family Relief Assistance Office in the Department of Human
38 Services.

39 The office is to be established no later than 180 days after the
40 effective date of the bill. The Commissioner of Human Services
41 will appoint a director to supervise the office, and may employ such
42 other personnel and staff as may be required to carry out the duties
43 and responsibilities of the office without regard to the provisions of
44 Title 11A, Civil Service, of the New Jersey Statutes.

45 The purpose of the office will be to provide assistance to
46 individuals who have experienced severe or chronic adverse health
47 conditions resulting from COVID-19 infection, their families, and
48 the family members of individuals who have died from COVID-19,

1 in identifying and applying for State and federal assistance
2 programs and other State and federal benefits that may be available
3 and for which the individuals and their families may be eligible.

4 The office may additionally establish grant programs, within the
5 limits of funds made available to the office for this purpose, to
6 provide assistance with the costs related to a COVID-19 infection
7 or death that are not covered by other benefits or assistance
8 programs, which assistance will be made available to individuals
9 who have experienced severe or chronic adverse health conditions
10 resulting from COVID-19 infection, their families, and the family
11 members of individuals who have died from COVID-19. The
12 director will establish eligibility criteria and an application process
13 for any grant program established under the bill.

14 The bill appropriates \$10 million from the General Fund to the
15 Department of Human Services for the purpose of implementing the
16 bill. Any unexpended funds will revert to the State Treasury when
17 the bill expires. In addition, the office will be authorized to accept
18 donations from individuals and groups for the purposes of
19 supporting the provision of services and funding grant programs
20 under the bill.

21 Commencing one year after it first organizes, and annually
22 thereafter, the office will be required to submit a report to the
23 Governor and to the Legislature concerning its activities, including
24 the use of funds appropriated under the bill, the types of assistance
25 provided, the number of individuals to whom it provided assistance
26 and services, the nature of any grant programs established, the
27 source and amount of any donations accepted by the office, the
28 source of funding for any grant programs established, the amount
29 awarded in grants and the number of people to whom grants were
30 awarded, and the effectiveness of existing State and federal
31 programs in assisting individuals with issues related to COVID-19.
32 The report will also include recommendations for legislation,
33 administrative action, or any other action that the office determines
34 necessary and appropriate to improve the effectiveness and
35 efficiency of services and assistance provided to individuals in
36 relation to COVID-19, as well as to State assistance and benefits
37 programs generally.

38 The office will cease operations two years after the end of both
39 the state of emergency and the public health emergency declared in
40 response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and will thereafter have 45
41 days to submit a final report concerning its activities and
42 recommendations. The bill will expire upon submission of the
43 office's final report.