

SENATE, No. 4236

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED DECEMBER 6, 2021

Sponsored by:
Senator JOSEPH F. VITALE
District 19 (Middlesex)
Senator M. TERESA RUIZ
District 29 (Essex)

SYNOPSIS

Revises and renames Office of Food Insecurity Advocate.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



1 AN ACT concerning the Office of the Food Insecurity Advocate and
2 amending P.L.2021, c.242.

3

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

6

7 1. Section 1 of P.L.2021, c.242 (C.52:27J-1) is amended to
8 read as follows:

9 1. The Legislature finds and declares that:

10 (a) Over one million people are estimated to be food insecure in
11 New Jersey and more than one-third of them are children;

12 (b) The coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic is projected to cause
13 a disproportionate increase in the rate of food insecurity in this
14 State compared to the national rate and neighboring states;

15 (c) Several departments are responsible for administering
16 different food insecurity programs in the State: the Department of
17 Human Services administers the New Jersey Supplemental
18 Nutrition Assistance Program; the Department of Health
19 administers the New Jersey Supplemental Nutrition Program for
20 Women Infants and Children; and the Department of Agriculture
21 administers the United States Department of Agriculture's school
22 nutrition program in New Jersey;

23 (d) The State's food insecurity programs are currently operating
24 in silos and, in some cases, they may all cover the same families,
25 yet not all eligible families are enrolled into each program; and

26 (e) Establishing an Office of the Food **【Insecurity】** Security
27 Advocate by statute will help coordinate the administration of the
28 State's food insecurity programs, advocate for the food insecure,
29 and develop new policy initiatives to combat hunger and facilitate
30 greater access to food relief programs.

31 (cf: P.L.2021, c.242, s.1)

32

33 2. Section 3 of P.L.2021, c.242 (C.52:27J-3) is amended to
34 read as follows:

35 3. There is created in the Executive Branch of the State
36 Government the Office of the Food **【Insecurity】** Security Advocate.
37 For the purpose of complying with the provisions of Article V,
38 Section IV, paragraph 1 of the New Jersey Constitution, the Office
39 of the Food **【Insecurity】** Security Advocate is allocated to the
40 **【Economic Development Authority in the】** Department of **【the**
41 **Treasury】** Agriculture , but notwithstanding this allocation, the
42 office shall be independent of any supervision or control by the
43 **【Economic Development Authority or by the】** department, or by
44 any board or officer thereof, in the performance of its duties. The

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 office shall have the duty to collaborate with the appropriate State
2 agency to:

3 (a) coordinate outreach for food insecurity programs, including
4 developing new initiatives and outreach campaigns and identifying
5 best practices to increase enrollment in the State's food insecurity
6 programs;

7 (b) establish a 24-hour toll-free hunger hotline to assist in
8 making information about the State's food insecurity programs as
9 widely available as possible;

10 (c) support grant application processes related to food insecurity
11 for in-state providers and State departments by monitoring available
12 grants, recommending grant applications, and assisting with the
13 grant application process;

14 (d) coordinate communication with and between food banks;

15 (e) establish best practices for food banks to reduce food waste
16 and to distribute more fresh produce and proteins to food insecurity
17 programs and food banks;

18 (f) cooperate with research organizations and universities to
19 monitor ongoing gap analysis that identifies areas that are
20 undeserved by current food insecurity programs;

21 (g) work with State and community partners to develop a
22 strategic plan to address identified gaps in areas that are undeserved
23 by current food insecurity programs;

24 (h) oversee the development and implementation of public-
25 private partnerships to address food insecurity;

26 (i) provide support in coordinating assistance to address food
27 insecurity during federal or State declared states of emergency;

28 (j) coordinate food insecurity programming and initiatives for
29 institutions of higher education with the Office of the Secretary of
30 Higher Education;

31 (k) develop new initiatives, establish an outreach campaign, and
32 identify best practices to reach senior citizens, persons with
33 disabilities, and other vulnerable population; and

34 (l) coordinate outreach efforts for the newly unemployed who
35 might be eligible for food insecurity programs.

36 (cf: P.L.2021, c.242, s.3)

37

38 3. Section 4 of P.L.2021, c.242 (C.52:27J-4) is amended to
39 read as follows:

40 4. The administrator and chief executive officer of the office is
41 the food **【insecurity】** security advocate, who shall be a person
42 qualified by training and experience to perform the duties of the
43 office. The food **【insecurity】** security advocate shall be appointed
44 by the Governor and shall serve at the pleasure of the Governor
45 during the Governor's term of office and until the appointment and
46 qualification of the food **【insecurity】** security advocate's successor.
47 The food **【insecurity】** security advocate shall devote time entirely
48 to the duties of the position and shall receive a salary as determined

1 by law. Any vacancy occurring in the position of the food
2 **【insecurity】** security advocate shall be filled in the same manner as
3 the original appointment; except that if the food **【insecurity】**
4 security advocate dies, resigns, becomes ineligible to serve for any
5 reason, or is removed from office, the Governor shall appoint an
6 acting food **【insecurity】** security advocate, who shall serve until the
7 appointment and qualification of the food **【insecurity】** security
8 advocate's successor, but in no event longer than six months from
9 the occurrence of the vacancy, and who shall exercise during this
10 period all the powers and duties of the food **【insecurity】** security
11 advocate pursuant to the provisions of this act.
12 (cf: P.L.2021, c.242, s.4)

13

14 4. Section 5 of P.L.2021, c.242 (C.52:27J-5) is amended to
15 read as follows:

16 5. The food **【insecurity】** security advocate, as administrator
17 and chief executive officer of the office, shall:

18 a. administer and organize the work of the office and establish
19 therein such administrative subdivisions as the food **【insecurity】**
20 security advocate may deem necessary, proper and expedient. The
21 food **【insecurity】** security advocate may formulate and adopt rules
22 and regulations and prescribe duties for the efficient conduct of the
23 business, work and general administration of the office. The food
24 **【insecurity】** security advocate may delegate to subordinate officers
25 or employees in the office such power as the food **【insecurity】**
26 security advocate may deem desirable to be exercised under the
27 food **【insecurity】** security advocate's supervision and control;

28 b. appoint and remove stenographic, clerical, and other
29 secretarial assistants as may be required for the proper conduct of
30 the office, subject to the provisions of Title 11A of the New Jersey
31 Statutes, and other applicable statutes, and within the limits of
32 funds appropriated or otherwise made available therefor. In
33 addition, and within funding limits, the food **【insecurity】** security
34 advocate may appoint, retain, or employ, without regard to the
35 provisions of Title 11A of the New Jersey Statutes or any other
36 statutes, any officers, financial managers, social workers, or other
37 professionally qualified personnel on a contract basis or otherwise
38 as the food **【insecurity】** security advocate deems necessary;

39 c. maintain suitable headquarters for the office and such other
40 quarters as the food **【insecurity】** security advocate shall deem
41 necessary to the proper functioning of the office;

42 d. solicit and accept grants of funds from the federal
43 government and from other public and any private sources for any
44 of the purposes of this act; provided, however, that any such funds
45 shall be expended only pursuant to an appropriation made by law;

1 e. serve as the liaison between the Office of the Food
2 **【Insecurity】** Security Advocate and the Departments of Agriculture,
3 Education, Health, and Human Services; and

4 f. perform such other functions as may be prescribed in this act
5 or by any other law.

6 (cf: P.L.2021, c.242, s.5)

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8 5. Section 6 of P.L.2021, c.242 (C.52:27J-6) is amended to
9 read as follows:

10 6. Pursuant to the "Administrative Procedure Act," P.L.1968,
11 c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.), the food **【insecurity】** security advocate
12 and the Commissioners of Agriculture, Education, Health, and
13 Human Services may adopt any rules and regulations necessary to
14 effectuate the purposes of this act.

15 (cf: P.L.2021, c.242, s.6)

16
17 6. This act shall take effect immediately.

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20 STATEMENT

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22 This bill renames the Office of the Food Insecurity Advocate and
23 the position of the food insecurity advocate as the Office of the
24 Food Security and food security advocate, respectively. The bill
25 also provides that the office will be allocated to the Department of
26 Agriculture, instead of the Economic Development Authority in the
27 Department of the Treasury.