

ASSEMBLY, No. 828

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

220th LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2022 SESSION

Sponsored by:

Assemblyman REGINALD ATKINS

District 20 (Union)

Assemblywoman SHAVONDA E. SUMTER

District 35 (Bergen and Passaic)

Assemblywoman ANGELA V. MCKNIGHT

District 31 (Hudson)

Co-Sponsored by:

Assemblywoman Reynolds-Jackson and Assemblyman Spearman

SYNOPSIS

Establishes Council for Community Recovery and Family Success; appropriates \$1.8 million.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 5/19/2022)

1 **AN ACT** establishing the Council for Community Recovery and
2 Family Success, supplementing Title 9 of the Revised Statutes,
3 and making an appropriation.

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

7
8 1. The Legislature finds and declares that:

9 a. As a State, our child and family services and the resources
10 appropriated to fund those services are primarily designed to
11 respond crisis-related events. Consequently, the services provided
12 to children and their families struggle to produce long-term positive
13 results.

14 b. The State's child welfare system is not organized to address
15 the factors that lead to family crises, child maltreatment, and
16 adverse childhood experiences.

17 c. A growing body of literature suggests that comprehensive,
18 integrated, and sustained investments in prevention, early
19 intervention, and child, youth, and family well-being are more cost-
20 effective than a fragmented approach of various programs providing
21 services that only address the symptoms that cause family crises
22 and child maltreatment.

23 d. The solution to improve the outcomes of those children and
24 families who are served by the child welfare system is to provide an
25 interdisciplinary approach in the provision of family support and
26 preventive services and to enact a Children's Bill of Rights. This
27 Bill of Rights, based on the United Nations Treaty on the Rights of
28 the Child, would recognize and protect the rights of children and
29 youth and provide a framework for the provision of preventive
30 services to at-risk children and youth and their families.

31 e. It is therefore in the best interests of the State to invest in and
32 implement programs that promote prevention, early intervention,
33 and child, youth, and family well-being in order to improve the
34 outcomes of those children and families who are served by the child
35 welfare system.

36
37 2. a. There is established the Council for Community
38 Recovery and Family Success in, but not of, the Department of
39 Children and Families. For the purpose of complying with the
40 provisions of Article V, Section IV, paragraph 1 of the New Jersey
41 Constitution, the Council for Community Recovery and Family
42 Success is allocated within the Department of Children and
43 Families, but, notwithstanding this allocation, the council shall be
44 independent of any supervision or control by the department or by
45 any officer or employee thereof.

46 b. The council shall consist of 25 members as follows:

47 (1) the Commissioners of Children and Families, Community
48 Affairs, Corrections, Education, Health, Human Services, and

1 Labor, and the Executive Director of the Juvenile Justice
2 Commission in the Department of Law and Public Safety, or their
3 designees, who shall serve ex officio;

4 (2) 13 public members appointed by the Governor who shall
5 include a representative of the Advocates for Children of New
6 Jersey, a representative of the Family Success Institute, a
7 representative of the Court Appointed Special Advocates of New
8 Jersey, a representative of the New Jersey Council on
9 Developmental Disabilities, a representative of the Center for
10 Family Services, a representative of the Council of New Jersey
11 Grantmakers, a representative of the New Jersey Institute for Social
12 Justice, a representative of a family success center; a representative
13 of a faith-based organization, a community leader, a parent or
14 guardian whose child is receiving services through the State's child
15 welfare system, a member who has background in physical or
16 behavioral health care for children, and a member who is a mental
17 health professional; and

18 (3) two public members appointed by the Senate President, one
19 of whom shall be a representative of municipal government, and
20 one of whom shall be a representative of a Promise Neighborhood
21 program, two public members appointed by the Speaker of the
22 General Assembly, one of who shall be a representative of county
23 government, and one of whom shall be a representative of the
24 United Way of New Jersey.

25 c. Vacancies in the membership of the council shall be filled in
26 the same manner provided for the original appointments. The
27 public members of the council shall serve without compensation but
28 may be reimbursed for traveling and other miscellaneous expenses
29 necessary to perform their duties, within the limits of funds made
30 available to the council for its purposes.

31 d. The council shall organize as soon as practicable but no later
32 than 60 days following the appointment of its members and shall
33 select a chairperson and vice-chairperson from among the members.
34 The chairperson shall appoint a secretary who need not be a
35 member of the council.

36 e. The council may meet at the call of its chair and hold
37 hearings at the times and in the places it deems appropriate and
38 necessary to fulfill its charge. The council shall be entitled to call
39 to its assistance and avail itself of the services of the employees of
40 any State, county, or municipal department, board, bureau,
41 commission, or agency as it may require and as may be available to
42 it for its purposes. The council shall be entitled to call on the
43 assistance of the Administrative Office of the Courts for
44 information relevant to its purposes.

45 f. The council may seek the advice of experts, such as persons
46 specializing in the field of social work, education, law, human
47 services, economic development, workforce development, or other

1 related fields, as deemed appropriate by the membership of the
2 council.

3 g. The Department of Children and Families shall provide staff
4 services to the council.

5
6 3. a. The purpose of the council shall be to guide and oversee
7 the development and implementation of a Statewide initiative
8 focusing on the social and economic well-being of children and
9 families and the provision of holistic, age and developmentally
10 appropriate services that support a child's development from birth
11 to young adulthood. The initiative shall be based on the four pillars
12 of family success:

- 13 (1) positive family relationships and community connections;
14 (2) safety and financial security;
15 (3) high quality education and quality learning environments;
16 and
17 (4) good health and child, youth, and family well-being.

18 b. (1) In order to implement the Statewide initiative, the council
19 shall:

20 (a) develop a Children's Bill of Rights, based on the United
21 Nations International Treaty on the Rights of Children, which shall
22 provide a framework for the initiative's implementation;

23 (b) conduct a comprehensive study identifying policies,
24 procedures, practices, and financial priorities relating to preventive
25 services for at-risk children and families and the gaps in those
26 policies, procedures, practices, and financial priorities, and
27 promotes the well-being of children and youth, and encourages
28 family success;

29 (c) review the programs, policies, and initiatives of the
30 Departments of Children and Families, Community Affairs,
31 Corrections, Education, Health, Human Services, Labor and
32 Workforce Development, and Law and Public Safety, and any other
33 department of State government or community-based organizations,
34 as appropriate, and make recommendations that will enable them to
35 better coordinate and improve the effectiveness of such programs,
36 policies, and initiatives;

37 (d) conduct ongoing, comprehensive cost benefit analyses of all
38 State department and community-based organization budgets, and
39 State and local funding mechanisms for the child welfare system to
40 identify and make recommendations on how to redirect resources
41 and programmatic focus from distress services to preventive
42 services for at-risk child and families and for family success
43 initiatives;

44 (e) explore strategies to maximize and effectively utilize all
45 State, county, municipal, and federal funding sources, and business
46 and philanthropic investments available for the purpose of
47 providing preventive services to at-risk children and families and to
48 improve family success outcomes; and

- 1 (f) establish community recovery and family success councils in
2 each county of the State. The councils shall:
- 3 (i) assess local children and youth demographics, including age,
4 gender, race, socio-economic status, and ethnicity, and indicators of
5 well-being;
- 6 (ii) collect and analyze information concerning current services
7 and resources available, the cost and availability of services and
8 programs, and the met and unmet needs of at-risk children and
9 families; and
- 10 (iii) develop recommendations on methods that support
11 innovative preventive services for at-risk children and families and
12 the development of local family success initiatives.
- 13 (2) The goal of the Statewide initiative shall be to:
- 14 (a) promote positive family relationships, community
15 connections, and preventive services to ensure financial security
16 quality education, good health, safety, permanency, and well-being
17 of children and families through an integrated service planning and
18 delivery system of care;
- 19 (b) develop and recommend the adoption of community-
20 informed family success outcomes, including specified performance
21 based outcome measures and objectives;
- 22 (c) identify obstacles that impede or prevent family success and
23 develop strategies to successfully overcome such obstacles;
- 24 (d) explore the role of institutional racism and bias in the
25 delivery of services to at-risk children and families, and how racism
26 and bias can impede or prevent family success;
- 27 (e) identify policies and practices that promote the delivery of
28 preventive services to at-risk children and families and encourage
29 family success; and
- 30 (f) incorporate input from key stakeholders, including parents,
31 family members, community members, and children receiving
32 preventive services from the Departments of Children and Families,
33 Community Affairs, Corrections, Education, Health, Human
34 Services, Labor and Workforce Development, and Law and Public
35 Safety, and any other department of State government or
36 community-based organization, on the development of a plan to
37 design, strengthen, or implement local family success initiatives.
- 38 c. All departments and agencies of the State and community-
39 based organizations that provide relevant distress or preventive
40 services, maintain relevant data sets, or perform functions pertinent
41 to relevant distress or prevention programs shall assist the council
42 in its responsibilities pursuant to subsection b. of this section.
- 43 d. As used in this act, “distress services” means services
44 intended to remediate circumstances, including but not limited to,
45 educational, social, and parental failures, and family crises, that
46 endanger the safety, permanency, health and well-being of children
47 and “preventive services” means services that promote the safety,

1 permanency, health, and well-being of children and their families
2 and divert the need for crisis-related services.

3
4 4. The council shall submit an annual report to the Governor
5 and the Legislature, pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164
6 (C.52:14-19.1), on recommendations for legislative and
7 administrative actions regarding the Statewide investments of
8 federal, State, county, municipal, and business and philanthropic
9 investments to support the development and implementation of
10 innovative family success initiatives and preventive services for at-
11 risk children and families.

12
13 5. The council and the Department of Children and Families
14 shall adopt, pursuant to the "Administrative Procedure Act,"
15 P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.), rules and regulations
16 necessary to effectuate the purposes of this act.

17
18 6. There is appropriated \$1,800,000 from the General Fund the
19 Department of Children and Families to implement the provisions
20 this act.

21
22 7. This act shall take effect immediately.

23
24
25 STATEMENT

26
27 This bill establishes a 25-member Council for Community
28 Recovery and Family Success in, but not of, the Department of
29 Children and Families. The purpose of the council is to guide and
30 oversee the development and implementation of a Statewide
31 initiative focusing on the social and economic well-being of
32 children and families and the provision of holistic, age and
33 developmentally appropriate services to support a child's
34 development from birth to young adulthood.

35 The membership of the council will include the Commissioners
36 of Children and Families, Community Affairs, Corrections,
37 Education, Health, Human Services, Labor and Workforce
38 Development, and the Executive Director of the Juvenile Justice
39 Commission in the Department of Law and Public Safety, or their
40 designees, who will serve ex officio; and 17 public members, with
41 13 appointed by the Governor and two each to be appointed by the
42 Senate President and the Speaker of the General Assembly. The
43 public members appointed by the Governor will include
44 representatives of various organizations that advocate for, or
45 provide services to, at-risk children and youth and their parents.

46 In order to implement the Statewide initiative, the council is to:

47 (1) develop a Children's Bill of Rights, based on the United
48 Nations International Treaty on the Rights of Children, which shall

1 provide a framework for the initiative's implementation; (2)
2 conduct a comprehensive study identifying policies, procedures,
3 practices, and financial priorities relating to preventive services for
4 at-risk children and families and the gaps in those policies,
5 procedures, practices, and financial priorities, and promotes the
6 well-being of children and youth, and encourages family success;
7 (3) review the programs, policies, and initiatives of the Departments
8 of Children and Families, Community Affairs, Corrections,
9 Education, Health, Human Services, Labor and Workforce
10 Development, and Law and Public Safety, and other State
11 departments or community-based organizations, as appropriate, and
12 make recommendations that will enable them to better coordinate
13 and improve the effectiveness of such programs, policies, and
14 initiatives; (4) conduct ongoing, comprehensive cost benefit
15 analyses of all State department and community-based organization
16 budgets, and State and local funding mechanisms for the child
17 welfare system to identify and make recommendations on how to
18 redirect resources and programmatic focus from distress services to
19 preventive services for at-risk child and families and family success
20 initiatives; (5) explore strategies to maximize and effectively utilize
21 all State, county, municipal, and federal funding sources, and
22 business and philanthropic investments available for the purpose of
23 providing preventive services to at-risk children and families and to
24 improve family success outcomes; and (6) establish community
25 recovery and family success councils in each county of the State
26 that will: assess local children and youth demographics, including
27 age, gender, race, socio-economic status, and ethnicity, and
28 indicators of well-being; collect and analyze information
29 concerning current services and resources available, the cost and
30 availability of services and programs, and the met and unmet needs
31 of at-risk children and families; and develop recommendations on
32 methods that support innovative preventive services for at-risk
33 children and families and the development of local family success
34 initiatives.

35 The goal of the Statewide initiative established by the council
36 will be to: (1) promote positive family relationships, community
37 connections, and preventive services to ensure financial security
38 quality education, good health, safety, permanency, and well-being
39 of children and families through an integrated service planning and
40 delivery system of care; (2) develop and recommend the adoption of
41 community-informed family success outcomes, including specified
42 performance based outcome measures and objectives; (3) identify
43 obstacles that impede or prevent family success and develop
44 strategies to successfully overcome such obstacles (4) explore the
45 role of institutional racism and bias in the delivery of services to at-
46 risk children and families, and how racism and bias can impede or
47 prevent family success; (5) identify policies and practices that
48 promote the delivery of preventive services to at-risk children and

1 families and encourage family success; and (6) incorporate input
2 from key stakeholders, including parents, family members,
3 community members, and children receiving preventive services
4 from the Departments of Children and Families, Community
5 Affairs, Corrections, Education, Health, Human Services, Labor and
6 Workforce Development, and Law and Public Safety, and other
7 State departments or community-based organizations, on the
8 development of a plan to design, strengthen, or implement local
9 family success initiatives.

10 All State departments and agencies and community-based
11 organizations that provide relevant distress or preventive services,
12 maintain relevant data sets, or perform functions pertinent to these
13 programs will be required to assist the council in its responsibilities
14 under the bill.

15 As used in the bill, “distress services” means services intended to
16 remediate circumstances, including but not limited to, educational,
17 social, and parental failures, and family crises, that endanger the
18 safety, permanency, health and well-being of children and
19 “preventive services” means services that promote the safety,
20 permanency, health, and well-being of children and their families
21 and divert the need for crisis-related services.

22 The council is to submit an annual report to the Governor and the
23 Legislature, pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-
24 19.1), on recommendations for legislative and administrative
25 actions regarding the Statewide investments of federal, State,
26 county, municipal, and business and philanthropic investments to
27 support the development and implementation of innovative family
28 success initiatives and preventive services for at-risk children and
29 families.

30 The bill appropriates \$1,800,000 from the General Fund to the
31 Department of Children and Families to implement the provisions
32 the bill.