Sponsored by:
Senator STEPHEN M. SWEENEY
District 3 (Cumberland, Gloucester and Salem)

Assemblywoman ELIZABETH MAHER MUOIO
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District 33 (Hudson)

Assemblywoman ANGELA V. MCKNIGHT
District 31 (Hudson)

Assemblyman NICHOLAS CHIARAVALLOTI
District 31 (Hudson)

Co-Sponsored by:
Senator Ruiz, Assemblyman Giblin, Assemblywomen Chaparro, Quijano and Murphy

SYNOPSIS
Allows individual to receive additional lifetime emergency assistance under certain circumstances.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT
As introduced.

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

1. Section 8 of P.L.1997, c.14 (C.44:10-51) is amended to read as follows:
   8. a. Emergency assistance shall be provided only to recipients of Work First New Jersey and persons receiving Supplemental Security Income pursuant to P.L.1973, c.256 (C.44:7-85 et seq.) in emergent situations. The standards for eligibility shall be established by the commissioner by regulation, except that emergency assistance shall be granted to an individual or family in which the individual or family is in a state of homelessness or imminent homelessness that, according to a signed attestation by the applicant, is the result of imminent or demonstrated domestic violence that may imperil the health and safety of the individual or family. Emergency assistance shall be provided for up to 12 cumulative months; except that:
      (1) the commissioner may provide for an extension of emergency assistance for up to six additional months to a family with dependent children, if the commissioner determines that a case of extreme hardship exists. The commissioner shall review each such case on a monthly basis during the six-month period and shall continue the emergency assistance only if the commissioner determines, based upon the monthly review, that the extreme hardship continues to exist. If the extreme hardship continues to exist at the end of the six-month period, the commissioner may provide an additional six months of emergency assistance to no more than 10% of those families with dependent children which are receiving temporary rental assistance under the emergency assistance component of the program, based upon the most current data available; [and]
      (2) the commissioner may provide for an extension of emergency assistance for up to six additional months to no more than 10% of single adults and couples without dependent children who are receiving temporary rental assistance under the emergency assistance component of the program, if the commissioner determines that a case of extreme hardship exists. The commissioner shall review each such case on a monthly basis during the six-month period and shall continue the emergency assistance only if the commissioner determines, based upon the monthly review, that the extreme hardship continues to exist.
      (3) the commissioner shall provide that all months of emergency assistance received prior to 84 months from the date of application
for emergency assistance shall not be counted toward the cumulative 12 month limit of emergency assistance as required pursuant this section.

Any form of emergency assistance provided pursuant to this section shall count toward the maximum period of emergency assistance allowed.

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

c. The commissioner shall adopt regulations to establish classifications for hotel or motel per diem rates in accordance with the level of enhanced services provided at a participating hotel or motel.

d. The provisions of this section shall apply to a person who receives general public assistance pursuant to P.L.1947, c.156 (C.44:8-107 et seq.) after the effective date of this act and is subsequently transferred directly into the Work First New Jersey program. (cf: P.L. 2017, c.273)

2. This act shall take effect immediately.

STATEMENT

This bill requires that Work First New Jersey emergency assistance benefits, when received by an individual more than seven years prior to submitting an application for emergency assistance benefits, should not be counted towards the program’s cumulative 12 month benefit limit.

Currently, an individual is limited to 12 months of Work First New Jersey lifetime emergency assistance benefits, plus an additional six months in certain circumstances. This bill requires that the Commissioner of Human Services not count any months of emergency assistance that were received by an individual more than 84 months (seven years) prior to that individual submitting an application for emergency assistance benefits, when determining whether an individual reached the maximum amount of emergency assistance permitted under the law.