

SENATE, No. 2129

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

218th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED MARCH 5, 2018

Sponsored by:

Senator NILSA CRUZ-PEREZ

District 5 (Camden and Gloucester)

Co-Sponsored by:

Senators Brown and A.R.Bucco

SYNOPSIS

Authorizes electric and gas public utility assistance grants funded from societal benefits charge revenue for qualified households.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 6/5/2018)

1 AN ACT concerning societal benefits charge revenues and providing
2 for certain energy assistance grants.

3
4 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
5 *of New Jersey:*

6
7 1. a. Notwithstanding any provision to the contrary of section
8 12 of P.L.1999, c.23 (C.48:3-60) or any law, rule, regulation, or
9 order adopted pursuant thereto, in the fiscal year commencing July
10 1, 2018, the Board of Public Utilities shall, from available balances
11 accumulated in accounts of the board from funds collected through
12 the societal benefits charge imposed pursuant to that section,
13 allocate \$25,000,000 to fund the issuance of grants to help pay the
14 electric and gas public utility bills of households seeking temporary
15 assistance from a Statewide nonprofit energy assistance
16 organization with:

17 (1) a network of no less than 200 partner organizations
18 throughout all 21 counties in this State, providing secure, online, or
19 in-person grant application access;

20 (2) a board of directors comprised of not less than five electric
21 or gas public utility representatives; and

22 (3) an on-site customer service call center providing access to
23 assistance offered in a minimum of 150 languages, as designated by
24 the board.

25 b. Within one year after the board has completed the
26 disbursement of grant monies to a Statewide nonprofit energy
27 assistance organization as required under this section, the Statewide
28 nonprofit energy assistance organization shall issue a report to the
29 board which shall provide:

30 (1) the number of applicants applying for household electric and
31 gas public utility assistance grants;

32 (2) the number of households receiving electric and gas public
33 utility assistance grants;

34 (3) the average amount of assistance provided;

35 (4) the average gross income of households receiving assistance;

36 (5) the methods and procedures used for the verification of
37 income or hardship; and

38 (6) any other information as required by the board.

39 c. The board shall thereupon submit the report to the Governor
40 and, pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), to the
41 Legislature.

42
43 2. This act shall take effect on July 1, 2018 and shall expire on
44 the 30th day following submission to the Governor and the
45 Legislature of the report required to be issued pursuant to section 1
46 of this act.

STATEMENT

This bill provides that beginning with the State fiscal year starting on July 1, 2018, the Board of Public Utilities (board) is to dedicate \$25 million from available balances collected through the societal benefits charge, to provide grants to help pay the electric and gas public utility (utility) bills of households seeking temporary assistance from a Statewide nonprofit energy assistance organization with a network of no less than 200 partner organizations throughout all 21 counties in this State, providing secure, online or in-person grant application access, with a board of directors comprised of not less than five utility representatives, with an on-site customer service call center providing access to assistance offered in a minimum of 150 languages, as designated by the board.

Within one year after the board completes the disbursement of grant monies to the Statewide nonprofit energy assistance organization, the organization is to issue a report to the board providing the number of applicants applying for household utility assistance grants, the number of households receiving utility assistance grants, the average amount of assistance provided, the average gross income of households receiving assistance, the methods and procedures used for the verification of income or hardship, and any other information the board requires.

The provisions of this bill are to expire upon the 30th day after the submission of the report to the Governor and the Legislature.