

ASSEMBLY, No. 654

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 219th LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2020 SESSION

Sponsored by:

Assemblywoman VALERIE VAINIERI HUTTLE

District 37 (Bergen)

Co-Sponsored by:

Assemblywoman Lampitt

SYNOPSIS

Requires all elected or appointed local government officers to receive ethics training.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel.



1 AN ACT concerning local government ethics and supplementing
2 P.L.1991, c.29 (C.40A:9-22.1 et seq.).

3

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

6

7 1. a. Each local government officer serving in this State shall
8 complete a training program regarding the requirements of the
9 "Local Government Ethics Law," P.L.1991, c.29 (C.40A:9-22.1 et
10 seq.), and any additional requirements of an applicable municipal or
11 county code of ethics adopted pursuant thereto. A newly elected or
12 appointed local government officer shall complete the training
13 program required under this section during the first six months of
14 the officer's first term, or if first elected or appointed prior to the
15 promulgation of rules and regulations under section 2 of P.L. ,
16 c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill), within six
17 months following the promulgation of those rules and regulations.
18 Once a local government officer completes the training program
19 required by this section, that officer shall not be required to repeat
20 the training when subsequently elected or appointed to any other
21 local governing body or local government agency, except for
22 updates as may be required under subsection b. of this section.

23 b. The Division of Local Government Services in the
24 Department of Community Affairs shall develop the training
25 program required pursuant to subsection a. of this section. In
26 developing the program, the division shall examine similar
27 programs developed by the various public, non-profit, and private
28 sector entities currently at the forefront of government ethics issues
29 and training across the country, and shall survey the available
30 training resources and methods. The training program that is
31 developed shall not be limited to live training venues, but may
32 instead be delivered through online or video technology when
33 practicable. The training may be provided by employees of the
34 department or by any person, agency, organization or entity
35 contracted by the department for that purpose, and shall be offered
36 on a semi-yearly or more frequent basis at locations easily
37 accessible to those receiving the training. The training program
38 may include a requirement that local government officers attend
39 update sessions when there is a significant change to the ethics laws
40 or regulations.

41 c. Upon completion of the training required pursuant to this
42 section, each local government officer shall sign a statement
43 asserting that the officer has received the training and understands
44 the requirements of the "Local Government Ethics Law," P.L.1991,
45 c.29 (C.40A:9-22.1 et seq.), and any additional requirements of an
46 applicable municipal or county code of ethics adopted pursuant
47 thereto.

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1 examine similar programs in this and other states and to survey the
2 available training resources and methods. The Commissioner of
3 Community Affairs would develop the program's rules and
4 regulations, which would include a time frame, not to exceed 18
5 months from the promulgation of the rules, for the training and an
6 escalating fine schedule, from \$1,000 to \$5,000, for the failure of a
7 local government officer to receive the training within the specified
8 time frame.

9 Recently, the widely publicized violations of law at the local
10 level underscore the need for legislative measures such as this bill.
11 The education and training of all local government officers, as this
12 bill would require, is an important first step towards greater
13 integrity at all levels of government.