

LEGISLATIVE FISCAL ESTIMATE
SENATE, No. 3945
STATE OF NEW JERSEY
219th LEGISLATURE

DATED: JUNE 21, 2021

SUMMARY

Synopsis: Establishes Office of Food Insecurity Advocate.

Type of Impact: State expenditure increase.

Agencies Affected: Office of the Food Insecurity Advocate, Department of the Treasury.

Office of Legislative Services Estimate

Fiscal Impact	<u>Annual</u>
State Cost Increase	Indeterminate

- The Office of Legislative Services (OLS) finds that State expenditures from the General Fund will increase by an indeterminate amount to fund the creation of, and programs operated by, the Office of the Food Insecurity Advocate. Expenditures related to the creation of this office, including salary costs for the chief executive officer and other staff, as well as programmatic costs, will increase Department of the Treasury costs, to the extent that the office will be in, but not of, the department, and the department will have no supervision over the activities of this independent office.
- To the extent that the Office of the Food Insecurity Advocate, by identifying new food insecurity grant opportunities and assisting State departments and in-state providers with securing new funding sources, is able to attract additional federal and private funding in support of food insecurity programs in the State, State costs may be somewhat reduced in future fiscal years.

BILL DESCRIPTION

This bill establishes the Office of the Food Insecurity Advocate in, but not of, the Department of Treasury. The office is authorized to: coordinate outreach for food insecurity programs, including developing new initiatives and outreach campaigns and identifying best practices to increase enrollment in the State's food insecurity programs; establish a 24-hour toll-free hunger hotline to assist in making information about the State's food insecurity

programs as widely available as possible; support grant application processes for in-state providers and State departments by monitoring grant availability, and assisting with the grant application process; coordinate communication to and between the State's food banks; establish best practices for food banks to reduce food waste and to distribute more fresh foods to food insecurity programs and food banks; collaborate with research organizations and universities to monitor gap analysis to identify areas that are undeserved by current programs; collaborate with State and community partners to develop a strategic plan to address identified gaps in areas that are undeserved by current food insecurity programs; oversee the development and implementation of public-private partnerships to address food insecurity; and coordinate food insecurity programming and initiatives for institutions of higher education with the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education.

The bill provides that the administrator and chief executive officer of the office will be the food insecurity advocate (the Advocate), who will be a person qualified by training and experience to perform the duties of the office. The Advocate will be appointed by the Governor and will serve at the pleasure of the Governor during the Governor's term of office and until the appointment of the food insecurity advocate's successor. The Advocate will administer and organize the work of the office and serve as the liaison between the Office of the Food Insecurity Advocate and the Departments of Agriculture, Education, Health, and Human Services.

Currently, several departments are responsible for administering various food insecurity programs in the State: the Department of Human Services administers the New Jersey Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP); the Department of Health administers the New Jersey Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women Infants and Children (WIC); and the Departments of Agriculture and Education administer the United States Department of Agriculture's school nutrition program in New Jersey.

FISCAL ANALYSIS

EXECUTIVE BRANCH

None received.

OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE SERVICES

The OLS concludes that State expenditures from the General Fund will increase by an indeterminate amount to fund the creation of, and programs operated by, the Office of the Food Insecurity Advocate, which will be in, but not of, the Department of the Treasury. Expenditures related to the creation of the office includes an estimated annual salary of \$150,000 for the Advocate; estimated annual salary costs for additional office personnel is uncertain, since the Advocate is authorized to appoint, retain, or employ, within funding limits, any qualified personnel that the Advocate deems necessary.

Certain office activities, pursuant to the authorizing legislation, may potentially duplicate certain food insecurity activities or initiatives currently funded and operated through other State departments, such as the Department of Human Services, the Department of Health, the Department of Education, and the Department of Agriculture. Insofar as any of these potentially duplicative activities or initiatives can be consolidated in one department or office, or coordinated, State costs would be reduced somewhat.

To the extent that the office, by identifying new food insecurity grant opportunities and assisting State departments and in-state providers with securing new funding sources, is able to attract additional federal and private funding to support food insecurity programs in New Jersey, State costs may be reduced in future fiscal years.

Section: Human Services

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This legislative fiscal estimate has been produced by the Office of Legislative Services due to the failure of the Executive Branch to respond to our request for a fiscal note.

This fiscal estimate has been prepared pursuant to P.L.1980, c.67 (C.52:13B-6 et seq.).