

FISCAL NOTE TO
ASSEMBLY, No. 2498
STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JUNE 26, 1997

Assembly Bill No. 2498 of 1996 permits counties to establish by ordinance a central municipal drug court. This court would have jurisdiction to hear cases arising in the county involving crimes of the fourth degree or disorderly persons offenses or petty disorderly persons offenses related to controlled dangerous substances. Juveniles may be referred by the Presiding Judge of the Family Part of Superior Court for the vicinage in which such a court is established. The bill establishes procedures for the appointment of judges to this court.

The bill makes community service or sentencing to a drug treatment program an option in lieu of incarceration. The county or municipal official in charge of the community service program or the director of the drug treatment program shall report to the central municipal drug court any failure of a person subject to a court order to complete either. Upon receipt of such a report, the central municipal drug court may revoke its order and impose any sentence consistent with the original sentence.

The Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) states that with the exception of Bergen County, which is currently authorized by statute to operate a County Municipal Drug Court with limited jurisdiction, any county wishing to establish such a court would need to provide office and courtroom space as well as staff. At a cost of \$21 per square foot each county would incur a cost of \$71,085 per year for 3,385 square feet of space. Staffing would include the part time services of a judge, public defender, prosecutor, court aide, and a full time Court Administrator and Deputy Court Administrator, for a salary and fringe benefits cost of \$157,418. An additional \$14,000 per county for ancillary costs would also be required. One-time startup costs for equipment would total about \$20,000 per county during the first year of operation. Thus, the total first-year cost per county would be \$262,500, and the Statewide cost (excluding Bergen County) would be \$5.25 million. Second-year costs would total \$255,000 per county, and \$5.1 million, Statewide.

The Office of Legislative Services concurs.

This fiscal note has been prepared pursuant to P.L.1980, c.67.