

FISCAL NOTE TO
ASSEMBLY CONCURRENT RESOLUTION No. 111
STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: September 29, 1997

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 111 of 1997 petitions the New Jersey Supreme Court to develop a one-year pilot program in Brick Township that would create a model municipal drug court for juveniles. The pilot program would grant the municipal court jurisdiction over juveniles who have been charged with delinquency for an offense defined in chapter 35 or 36 of Title 2C of the New Jersey Statutes (controlled dangerous substances). The resolution also proposes that the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) submit to the Legislature a written assessment of the program within six months of its completion.

The AOC estimates the cost of the pilot program at \$50,000. This amount would be used to hire an outside consultant to perform a written assessment of the program, as proposed under the resolution. The AOC further indicates that the pilot program would not impose additional costs on Brick Township, based on an estimate by the township's municipal court judge.

The Office of Legislative Services (OLS) disagrees with AOC's estimate. OLS maintains that the use of an outside consultant by the AOC appears to be unnecessary since the AOC presently employs personnel who evaluate court-administered programs from time to time. OLS, therefore, contends that the AOC's current staff is sufficient to perform a written assessment of the Brick Township pilot program without additional funding.

The resolution does not indicate the necessary level of services expected of the Brick Township Municipal Court to implement the proposed pilot program. Although the municipal court judge estimated there would be no costs to the township, OLS notes that the pilot program may result in costs not anticipated by the township. For instance, a pilot juvenile drug court in Hudson County has been awarded \$250,000 in federal funds to hire a drug-court coordinator, supply treatment services, conduct ongoing drug tests and purchase computer equipment.

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