

CHAPTER 142

AN ACT establishing pilot community coalitions to address the needs and concerns of grandparents raising their grandchildren and making an appropriation therefor.

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

1. The Commissioner of Human Services shall provide funding to six counties for a pilot project to establish broad-based community coalitions to address the needs and concerns of grandparents raising their grandchildren. The six counties shall be: Atlantic, Bergen, Essex, Mercer, Middlesex and Monmouth. The Division of Youth and Family Services in the Department of Human Services shall provide such assistance as may be required and as may be available for the purposes of carrying out the duties of the community coalitions under this act.

2. a. Each community coalition shall be comprised of 11 members, who shall be appointed by the county governing body. Membership in the community coalition shall include representatives from community agencies, law enforcement, and the courts, and from the fields of health, housing, child care, substance abuse and education. The community coalition shall also include grandparents raising their grandchildren.

b. The community coalitions shall organize as soon as possible after the appointment of their members.

3. The goal of the community coalition shall be to:

- a. Identify the needs of grandparents raising their grandchildren;
- b. Match areas of need with an awareness of existing resources;
- c. Provide a comprehensive resource guide for grandparents based on existing programs and services; and
- d. Recommend programs and services where they do not exist.

4. a. Each community coalition shall issue an initial report no later than six months after the community coalition has been organized and a final report no later than one year after the effective date of this act containing its findings and recommendations. The reports shall be submitted directly to the Commissioner of Human Services as well as to the chairpersons of the Senate Women's Issues, Children and Family Services and the Assembly Community Services Committees, or their successor committees. The final report shall include recommendations for the establishment of a Statewide system to provide monitoring and evaluation of entitlements, benefits and services for grandparents raising their grandchildren. The reports shall be provided also to the appropriate county governing body.

5. There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of Human Services \$30,000 to provide each of the six community coalitions with a \$5,000 grant to effectuate the purposes of this act.

6. This act shall take effect immediately and shall expire one year following enactment.

Approved December 20, 1996.