

[Second Reprint]

ASSEMBLY, No. 5884

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED JUNE 9, 2021

Sponsored by:

Assemblyman CRAIG J. COUGHLIN

District 19 (Middlesex)

Assemblyman VINCENT MAZZEO

District 2 (Atlantic)

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District 7 (Burlington)

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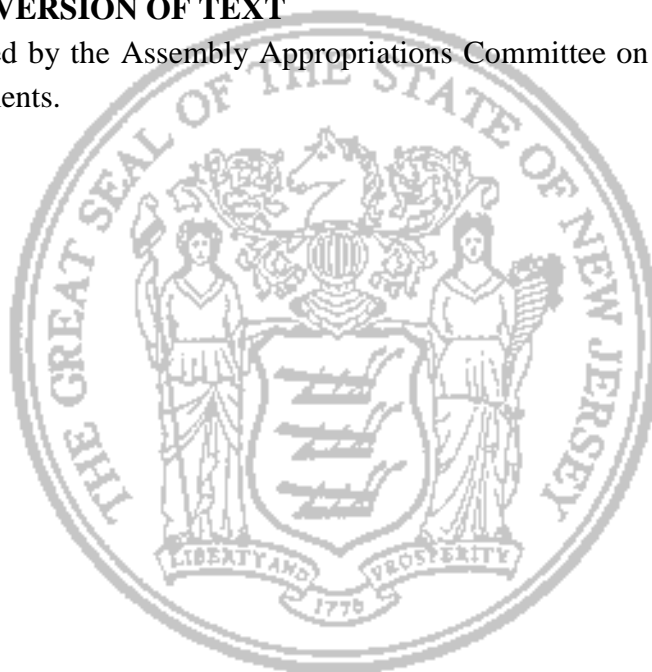
Assemblywomen Reynolds-Jackson, Quijano and Murphy

SYNOPSIS

Establishes Office of Food Insecurity Advocate.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As reported by the Assembly Appropriations Committee on June 16, 2021,
with amendments.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 6/21/2021)

1 **AN ACT** establishing the Office of Food Insecurity Advocate and
 2 supplementing Title 52 of the Revised Statutes.

3
 4 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
 5 *of New Jersey:*

6
 7 1. The Legislature finds and declares that:

8 (a) Over one million people are estimated to be food insecure in
 9 New Jersey and more than one-third of them are children;

10 (b) The coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic is projected to cause
 11 a disproportionate increase in the rate of food insecurity in this
 12 State compared to the national rate and neighboring states;

13 (c) Several departments are responsible for administering
 14 different food insecurity programs in the State: the Department of
 15 Human Services administers the New Jersey Supplemental
 16 Nutrition Assistance Program; the Department of Health
 17 administers the New Jersey Supplemental Nutrition Program for
 18 Women Infants and Children; and the Department of Agriculture
 19 and Education administer the United States Department of
 20 Agriculture's school nutrition program in New Jersey;

21 (d) The State's food insecurity programs are currently operating
 22 in silos and, in some cases, they may all cover the same families,
 23 yet not all eligible families are enrolled into each program; and

24 (e) Establishing an Office of the Food Insecurity Advocate by
 25 statute will help coordinate the administration of the State's food
 26 insecurity programs, advocate for the food insecure, and develop
 27 new policy initiatives to combat hunger and facilitate greater access
 28 to food relief programs.

29
 30 2. As used in this act:

31 "Food insecurity program" means a nutrition program in this
 32 State that provides nutrition assistance to individuals without
 33 reliable access to a sufficient quantity of affordable, nutritious food
 34 and includes, but is not limited to, the New Jersey Supplemental
 35 Nutrition Assistance Program, the New Jersey Supplemental
 36 Nutrition Program for Women Infants and Children, ¹the
 37 Commodity Supplemental Food program, the Senior Farmers
 38 Market Nutrition Program, the Child and Adult Care Program,¹ and
 39 the United States Department of Agriculture's school nutrition
 40 program.

41
 42 3. There is created in the Executive Branch of the State
 43 Government the Office of the Food Insecurity Advocate. For the
 44 purpose of complying with the provisions of Article V, Section IV,
 45 paragraph 1 of the New Jersey Constitution, the Office of Food

EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets **[thus]** in the above bill is
 not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

Matter enclosed in superscript numerals has been adopted as follows:

¹Assembly AWC committee amendments adopted June 16, 2021.

²Assembly AAP committee amendments adopted June 16, 2021.

1 Insecurity Advocate is allocated to the ²Economic Development
2 Authority in the² Department of ²the² Treasury, but notwithstanding
3 this allocation, the office shall be independent of any supervision or
4 control by the ²Economic Development Authority or by the²
5 department ²,² or ²by² any board or officer thereof, in the performance
6 of its duties. The office shall have the duty to:

7 (a) coordinate outreach for food insecurity programs, including
8 developing new initiatives and outreach campaigns and identifying
9 best practices to increase enrollment in the State's food insecurity
10 programs;

11 (b) establish a 24-hour toll-free hunger hotline to assist in making
12 information about the State's food insecurity programs as widely
13 available as possible;

14 (c) support grant application processes related to food insecurity
15 for in-state providers and State departments by monitoring available
16 grants, recommending grant applications, and assisting with the grant
17 application process;

18 (d) coordinate communication with and between food banks;

19 (e) establish best practices for food banks to reduce food waste
20 and to distribute more fresh produce and proteins to food insecurity
21 programs and food banks;

22 (f) collaborate with research organizations and universities to
23 monitor ongoing gap analysis that identifies areas that are undeserved
24 by current food insecurity programs;

25 (g) collaborate with State and community partners to develop a
26 strategic plan to address identified gaps in areas that are undeserved by
27 current food insecurity programs;

28 (h) oversee the development and implementation of public-private
29 partnerships to address food insecurity;

30 (i) provide support in coordinating assistance to address food
31 insecurity during federal or State declared states of emergency;
32 ¹**[and]**¹

33 (j) coordinate food insecurity programming and initiatives for
34 institutions of higher education with the Office of the Secretary of
35 Higher Education¹;

36 (k) develop new initiatives, establish an outreach campaign, and
37 identify best practices to reach senior citizens, persons with
38 disabilities, and other vulnerable population; and

39 (l) coordinate outreach efforts for the newly unemployed who
40 might be eligible for food insecurity programs¹.

41
42 4. The administrator and chief executive officer of the office is
43 the food insecurity advocate, who shall be a person qualified by
44 training and experience to perform the duties of the office. The
45 food insecurity advocate shall be appointed by the Governor and
46 shall serve at the pleasure of the Governor during the Governor's
47 term of office and until the appointment and qualification of the

1 food insecurity advocate's successor. The food insecurity advocate
2 shall devote time entirely to the duties of the position and shall
3 receive a salary as determined by law. Any vacancy occurring in
4 the position of the food insecurity advocate shall be filled in the
5 same manner as the original appointment; except that if the food
6 insecurity advocate dies, resigns, becomes ineligible to serve for
7 any reason, or is removed from office, the Governor shall appoint
8 an acting food insecurity advocate, who shall serve until the
9 appointment and qualification of the food insecurity advocate's
10 successor, but in no event longer than six months from the
11 occurrence of the vacancy, and who shall exercise during this
12 period all the powers and duties of the food insecurity advocate
13 pursuant to the provisions of this act.

14

15 5. The food insecurity advocate, as administrator and chief
16 executive officer of the office, shall:

17 a. administer and organize the work of the office and establish
18 therein such administrative subdivisions as the food insecurity
19 advocate may deem necessary, proper and expedient. The food
20 insecurity advocate may formulate and adopt rules and regulations
21 and prescribe duties for the efficient conduct of the business, work
22 and general administration of the office. The food insecurity
23 advocate may delegate to subordinate officers or employees in the
24 office such power as the food insecurity advocate may deem
25 desirable to be exercised under the food insecurity advocate's
26 supervision and control;

27 b. appoint and remove stenographic, clerical, and other
28 secretarial assistants as may be required for the proper conduct of
29 the office, subject to the provisions of Title 11A of the New Jersey
30 Statutes, and other applicable statutes, and within the limits of
31 funds appropriated or otherwise made available therefor. In
32 addition, and within funding limits, the food insecurity advocate
33 may appoint, retain, or employ, without regard to the provisions of
34 Title 11A of the New Jersey Statutes or any other statutes, any
35 officers, financial managers, social workers, or other professionally
36 qualified personnel on a contract basis or otherwise as the food
37 insecurity advocate deems necessary;

38 c. maintain suitable headquarters for the office and such other
39 quarters as the food insecurity advocate shall deem necessary to the
40 proper functioning of the office;

41 d. solicit and accept grants of funds from the federal
42 government and from other public and any private sources for any
43 of the purposes of this act; provided, however, that any such funds
44 shall be expended only pursuant to an appropriation made by law;

45 e. serve as the liaison between the Office of the Food
46 Insecurity Advocate and the Departments of Agriculture, Education,
47 Health, and Human Services; and

- 1 f. perform such other functions as may be prescribed in this act
2 or by any other law.
3
- 4 6. Pursuant to the "Administrative Procedure Act," P.L.1968,
5 c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.), the food insecurity advocate and the
6 Commissioners of Agriculture, Education, Health, and Human
7 Services may adopt any rules and regulations necessary to
8 effectuate the purposes of this act.
9
- 10 7. This act shall take effect immediately.