

CHAPTER 191

AN ACT concerning municipal courts, and supplementing Title 2B of the New Jersey Statutes.

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

C.2B:12-34 Regional municipal court pilot program.

1. a. The Administrative Office of the Courts shall establish a regional municipal court pilot program in no fewer than two qualified counties and no fewer than five municipalities in each county. The pilot program shall take place only in municipalities and counties that apply to the Administrative Office of the Courts to participate. The Administrative Director of the Courts in consultation with the assignment judges shall select appropriate counties and municipalities from a list of those counties and municipalities that have applied for the program for the implementation of the program.

b. Any qualified county that has considered municipal court consolidation on a county-wide basis prior to the enactment of P.L.2021, c.191 (C.2B:12-34 et seq.) may submit that information to the Administrative Director of the Courts and that county shall be included in the pilot program.

c. To qualify for selection under this section, a county shall have a population of less than 300,000 and a population density of less than 500 people per square mile according to the 2010 decennial census. If one county in a multi-county vicinage qualifies, all the counties in the vicinage qualify. The population and population density figures set forth in subsection e. of N.J.S. 2B:12-1 shall not apply to any regional municipal court in any county participating in this pilot program, including any county included pursuant to subsection b. of this section.

C.2B:12-35 Jurisdiction of regional municipal court.

2. A regional municipal court shall have jurisdiction over all matters falling within the jurisdiction of the municipal courts in the pilot program. All complaints issued in the county by the State Police or any Statewide law enforcement agency, or by any county law enforcement agency, any county code enforcement entity, or by any other non-municipal law enforcement agency, shall also fall within the jurisdiction of the regional municipal court, consistent with the provisions of N.J.S.2B:12-17 and N.J.S.2B:12-18.

C.2B:12-36 Disposition of fines, costs collected.

3. a. Notwithstanding any other law to the contrary, fines and costs collected by the regional municipal court shall be retained by the regional municipal court on a pro rata basis equal to the costs associated with management, administration, operation, judge and staff salaries, and technology for the regional municipal court. The remainder of the fines and costs collected by the regional municipal court shall be distributed in accordance with N.J.S.22A:3-4, R.S.39:5-40, R.S.39:5-41, and subsection c. of section 3 of P.L.1979, c.396 (C.2C:46-4).

b. A county participating in the pilot program may consider determining budgets for participating municipalities in that county by way of an assessment based on each participating municipality's equalized value as determined by the appropriate county board of taxation.

C.2B:12-37 Judicial appointments.

4. Judicial appointments to the regional municipal court shall be made in accordance with the provisions of Article VI, Section VI, paragraph 1 of the State Constitution. Municipal court judges sitting in the municipal courts selected under section 1 of this act may be considered for appointment to the regional municipal court. The assignment judge of the vicinage shall have the authority to make a temporary appointment in the event of a vacancy.

C.2B:12-38 Certain regional municipal courts to begin hearing cases.

5. Any regional municipal court established in a county that is included in the pilot program pursuant to subsection b. of section 1 of P.L.2021, c.191 (C.2B:12-34), because that qualified county considered municipal court consolidation on a county-wide basis prior to the enactment of P.L.2021, c.191 (C.2B:12-34 et seq.) and submitted information on that previous consideration to the Administrative Director of the Courts, shall begin hearing cases no later than January 1, 2022, and any regional municipal court in any other qualified county selected by the Administrative Director of the Courts for the pilot program shall begin hearing cases no later than one year following enactment.

6. This act shall take effect 60 days after enactment except the Administrative Director of the Courts may take any anticipatory action in advance as the director deems necessary for the implementation of the pilot program.

Approved August 5, 2021.