

FLOOR AMENDMENT STATEMENT:	No	
LEGISLATIVE FISCAL ESTIMATE:	Yes	6/21/2021 6/24/2021

VETO MESSAGE:	No
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GOVERNOR'S PRESS RELEASE ON SIGNING:	Yes
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FOLLOWING WERE PRINTED:

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REPORTS:	No
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HEARINGS:	No
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NEWSPAPER ARTICLES:	No
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RH/CL

§§1-4
C.44:10-107 to
44:10-110
§5
Approp.

P.L. 2021, CHAPTER 245, *approved September 30, 2021*
Assembly, No. 5880 (*First Reprint*)

1 AN ACT concerning a mobile software program for New Jersey
2 Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program recipients
3 ¹**[and]**,¹ supplementing Title 44 of the Revised Statutes¹, and
4 making an appropriation¹.

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

8
9 1. As used in this act:

10 "Commissioner" means the Commissioner of Human Services.

11 "Electronic benefit transfer card or benefit card" means a benefit
12 card utilized by a consumer to gain access to nutrition assistance
13 program benefits.

14 "¹**[Mobile]** Mobile-friendly¹ software ¹**[program]**¹" means a
15 computer program or ¹web-based¹ software application designed to
16 be ¹**[downloaded onto and]**¹ used in conjunction with a mobile
17 electronic communication device, as defined herein, and available
18 through multiple software platforms.

19 "Mobile electronic communication device" means any mobile
20 device capable of communication or other transmission of
21 information and includes, but is not limited to, a cellular telephone,
22 wireless tablet, or other device with Internet capability, or other
23 wireless communication device.

24 "Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program" or "SNAP" means
25 the supplemental nutrition assistance program, established pursuant
26 to the federal "Food and Nutrition Act of 2008," Pub.L.88-525
27 (7 U.S.C. s.2011 et seq.).

28
29 2. a. The Department of Human Services shall develop and
30 maintain, or enter into or modify an agreement with a third party to
31 develop and maintain¹**[, a mobile]** mobile-friendly¹ software
32 ¹**[program]**¹ for SNAP recipients. The ¹**[mobile]** mobile-friendly¹
33 software ¹**[program]**¹ shall include, but not be limited to,
34 functionality that allows a user of the mobile software program who
35 is recipient of SNAP benefits to:

36 (1) view the user's SNAP case status and the current benefits
37 the user receives;

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.

1 (2) ~~view the current balance on the user’s electronic benefit~~
2 transfer card;

3 (3) ~~request an electronic benefit transfer card or a~~
4 replacement card ~~and track the card’s expected time of arrival by~~
5 mail;

6 (4) ~~(3)~~ upload and submit required documents for continued
7 participation in SNAP and track the current processing status of
8 those documents;

9 ~~(5)~~ ~~(4)~~ receive ~~alerts for upcoming SNAP appointments~~
10 and ~~notices and updates regarding~~ important deadlines or actions;

11 ~~(6)~~ ~~(5)~~ read and print notices and letters;

12 ~~(7)~~ ~~(6)~~ update contact information;

13 ~~(8)~~ ~~(7)~~ request to have a letter mailed to the user listing the
14 amount of benefits the user receives; ~~and~~

15 (9) ~~(8)~~ view local contact information for the County Board of
16 Social Services for the county in which the user resides ~~and~~

17 ~~(9) access any other functionalities as determined by the~~
18 ~~department~~.

19 b. The ~~mobile~~ ~~mobile-friendly~~ software ~~program~~ shall
20 be made available free of charge and in multiple languages.

21

22 3. The commissioner shall apply for any:

23 a. waivers from the federal government, which are necessary
24 for the approval and implementation of this act; and

25 b. grants through the SNAP Process and Technology
26 Improvement Grants program within the United States Department
27 of Agriculture to receive federal funding to implement the
28 provisions of this act.

29

30 4. The Commissioner of Human Services, pursuant to the
31 “Administrative Procedure Act,” P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-
32 1 et seq.), shall promulgate rules and regulations ~~as may be~~
33 ~~necessary~~ to effectuate the provisions of this act.

34

35 ~~5. There is appropriated \$2,000,000 from the General Fund to~~
36 ~~the Department of Human Services to fund the development and~~
37 ~~maintenance of the mobile friendly software required pursuant to~~
38 ~~P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill).~~

39

40 ~~5.~~ ~~6.~~ This act shall take effect immediately.

41

42

43

44

45 Directs DHS to develop mobile software for SNAP recipients;
46 appropriates \$2 million.

CHAPTER 245

AN ACT concerning a mobile software program for New Jersey Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program recipients, supplementing Title 44 of the Revised Statutes, and making an appropriation.

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

C.44:10-107 Definitions regarding mobile-friendly software and SNAP.

1. As used in this act:

"Commissioner" means the Commissioner of Human Services.

"Electronic benefit transfer card or benefit card" means a benefit card utilized by a consumer to gain access to nutrition assistance program benefits.

"Mobile-friendly software" means a computer program or web-based software application designed to be used in conjunction with a mobile electronic communication device, as defined herein, and available through multiple software platforms.

"Mobile electronic communication device" means any mobile device capable of communication or other transmission of information and includes, but is not limited to, a cellular telephone, wireless tablet, or other device with Internet capability, or other wireless communication device.

"Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program" or "SNAP" means the supplemental nutrition assistance program, established pursuant to the federal "Food and Nutrition Act of 2008," Pub.L.88-525 (7 U.S.C. s.2011 et seq.).

C.44:10-108 Mobile-friendly software for SNAP recipients.

2. a. The Department of Human Services shall develop and maintain, or enter into or modify an agreement with a third party to develop and maintain mobile-friendly software for SNAP recipients. The mobile-friendly software shall include, but not be limited to, functionality that allows a user of the mobile software program who is recipient of SNAP benefits to:

- (1) view the user's SNAP case status and the current benefits the user receives;
- (2) request an electronic benefit transfer card or a replacement card;
- (3) upload and submit required documents for continued participation in SNAP and track the current processing status of those documents;
- (4) receive notices and updates regarding important deadlines or actions;
- (5) read and print notices and letters;
- (6) update contact information;
- (7) request to have a letter mailed to the user listing the amount of benefits the user receives;
- (8) view local contact information for the County Board of Social Services for the county in which the user resides and
- (9) access any other functionalities as determined by the department.

b. The mobile-friendly software shall be made available free of charge and in multiple languages.

C.44:10-109 Commissioner's application for waivers, grants.

3. The commissioner shall apply for any:

a. waivers from the federal government, which are necessary for the approval and implementation of this act; and

b. grants through the SNAP Process and Technology Improvement Grants program within the United States Department of Agriculture to receive federal funding to implement the provisions of this act.

C.44:10-110 Rules, regulations.

4. The Commissioner of Human Services, pursuant to the “Administrative Procedure Act,” P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.), shall promulgate rules and regulations as may be necessary to effectuate the provisions of this act.

5. There is appropriated \$2,000,000 from the General Fund to the Department of Human Services to fund the development and maintenance of the mobile friendly software required pursuant to P.L.2021, c.245 (C. 44:10-107 et seq.).

6. This act shall take effect immediately.

Approved September 30, 2021.

ASSEMBLY, No. 5880

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED JUNE 9, 2021

Sponsored by:

Assemblyman CRAIG J. COUGHLIN

District 19 (Middlesex)

Assemblyman JOHN ARMATO

District 2 (Atlantic)

SYNOPSIS

Directs DHS to develop mobile software program for SNAP recipients.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 6/14/2021)

1 AN ACT concerning a mobile software program for New Jersey
2 Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program recipients and
3 supplementing Title 44 of the Revised Statutes.

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

7
8 1. As used in this act:

9 "Commissioner" means the Commissioner of Human Services.

10 "Electronic benefit transfer card or benefit card" means a benefit
11 card utilized by a consumer to gain access to nutrition assistance
12 program benefits.

13 "Mobile software program" means a computer program or
14 software application designed to be downloaded onto and used in
15 conjunction with a mobile electronic communication device, as
16 defined herein, and available through multiple software platforms.

17 "Mobile electronic communication device" means any mobile
18 device capable of communication or other transmission of
19 information and includes, but is not limited to, a cellular telephone,
20 wireless tablet, or other device with Internet capability, or other
21 wireless communication device.

22 "Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program" or "SNAP" means
23 the supplemental nutrition assistance program, established pursuant
24 to the federal "Food and Nutrition Act of 2008," Pub.L.88-525
25 (7 U.S.C. s.2011 et seq.).

26

27 2. a. The Department of Human Services shall develop and
28 maintain, or enter into or modify an agreement with a third party to
29 develop and maintain, a mobile software program for SNAP
30 recipients. The mobile software program shall include, but not be
31 limited to, functionality that allows a user of the mobile software
32 program who is recipient of SNAP benefits to:

33 (1) view the user's SNAP case status and the current benefits
34 the user receives;

35 (2) view the current balance on the user's electronic benefit
36 transfer card;

37 (3) request an electronic benefit transfer card or a replacement
38 card and track the card's expected time of arrival by mail;

39 (4) upload and submit required documents for continued
40 participation in SNAP and track the current processing status of
41 those documents;

42 (5) receive alerts for upcoming SNAP appointments and
43 important deadlines or actions;

44 (6) read and print notices and letters;

45 (7) update contact information;

46 (8) request to have a letter mailed to the user listing the amount
47 of benefits the user receives; and

48 (9) view local contact information for the County Board of
49 Social Services for the county in which the user resides.

ASSEMBLY WOMEN AND CHILDREN COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 5880

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JUNE 16, 2021

The Assembly Women and Children Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Assembly Bill No. 5880.

As amended by the committee, this bill requires the Department of Human Services (DHS) to develop and maintain, or enter into or modify an agreement with a third party to develop and maintain, mobile-friendly software for SNAP recipients.

The mobile software program will include, but not be limited to, functionality that allows a user of the mobile software program who is a recipient of SNAP benefits to: view the user's SNAP case status and the current benefits the user receives; request an electronic benefit transfer card or a replacement card; upload and submit required documents for continued participation in SNAP and track the current processing status of those documents; receive notices and updates regarding important deadlines or actions; read and print notices and letters; update contact information; request to have a letter mailed to the user listing the amount of benefits the user receives; view local contact information for the County Board of Social Services for the county in which the user resides; and access any additional functionality as determined by the DHS. The mobile-friendly software will also be required to be made available free of charge and in multiple languages.

The bill requires the Commissioner of Human Services to apply for any: 1) waivers from the federal government, which are necessary for approval and implementation of this act; and 2) grants through the SNAP Process and Technology Improvement Grants program within the United States Department of Agriculture to receive federal funding to implement the provisions of bill.

As amended, the bill appropriates \$2,000,000 from the General Fund to the DHS to fund the development and maintenance of the mobile friendly software.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS

The committee amendments replace the term "mobile software program" with the term "mobile-friendly software," and defines the term as a computer program or web-based software application

designed to be used in conjunction with a mobile electronic communication device and available through multiple software platforms.

The committee amended the bill to remove the requirement that mobile-friendly software include a functionality that allows a SNAP recipient to view the current balance on the user's electronic benefit transfer card and to receive alerts for upcoming SNAP appointments.

The committee amendments stipulate that the mobile-friendly software is to allow a SNAP recipient to receive notices and updates regarding important deadlines or actions and to access any other functionality as determined by the department.

The committee amended the bill to include a \$2,000,000 appropriation from the General Fund to the DHS to fund the development and maintenance of the mobile friendly software.

The committee amendments clarify that the Commissioner of Human Services is to promulgate rules and regulations that may be necessary to effectuate the bill's provisions.

The committee amendments provide technical changes to the title and the synopsis to reflect the addition of the appropriation.

ASSEMBLY APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

[First Reprint]

ASSEMBLY, No. 5880

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JUNE 16, 2021

The Assembly Appropriations Committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No. 5880 (1R).

This bill requires the Department of Human Services (DHS) to develop and maintain, or enter into or modify an agreement with a third party to develop and maintain, mobile-friendly software for SNAP recipients.

The mobile software program will include, but not be limited to, functionality that allows a user of the mobile software program who is a recipient of SNAP benefits to: view the user's SNAP case status and the current benefits the user receives; request an electronic benefit transfer card or a replacement card; upload and submit required documents for continued participation in SNAP and track the current processing status of those documents; receive notices and updates regarding important deadlines or actions; read and print notices and letters; update contact information; request to have a letter mailed to the user listing the amount of benefits the user receives; view local contact information for the County Board of Social Services for the county in which the user resides; and access any additional functionality as determined by the DHS. The mobile-friendly software will also be required to be made available free of charge and in multiple languages.

The bill requires the Commissioner of Human Services to apply for any: 1) waivers from the federal government, which are necessary for approval and implementation of this act; and 2) grants through the SNAP Process and Technology Improvement Grants program within the United States Department of Agriculture to receive federal funding to implement the provisions of bill.

The bill appropriates \$2,000,000 from the General Fund to the DHS to fund the development and maintenance of the mobile friendly software.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The Office of Legislative Services (OLS) estimates that this bill will result in an indeterminate increase in one-time expenditures by the Division of Family Development (DFD) in the Department of Human Services (DHS) to develop a mobile software program for

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients, as required under the bill, as well as ongoing expenditures to maintain the software program. The magnitude of these costs depend on several unpredictable variables; however, the OLS assumes that the department will incur the majority of the costs during the development process.

Unpredictable cost variables under the bill include: 1) the department's use of a third party to develop and maintain the software program versus the use of current staff and existing State resource; and 2) the receipt of any available federal grant funds to support the development of the software program.

The OLS notes that to the extent all SNAP administrative costs are shared between the State and federal government, and any costs incurred by the department under the bill will result in an increase in State revenue.

LEGISLATIVE FISCAL ESTIMATE
ASSEMBLY, No. 5880
STATE OF NEW JERSEY
219th LEGISLATURE

DATED: JUNE 17, 2021

SUMMARY

Synopsis: Directs DHS to develop mobile software program for SNAP recipients.

Type of Impact: Annual State expenditure and revenue increases.

Agencies Affected: Division of Family Development, Department of Human Services.

Office of Legislative Services Estimate

Fiscal Impact	<u>Year 1</u>	<u>Year 2</u>	<u>Year 3</u>
State Expenditure Increase		Indeterminate	
State Revenue Increase		Indeterminate	

- The Office of Legislative Services (OLS) estimates that this bill will result in an indeterminate increase in one-time expenditures by the Division of Family Development (DFD) in the Department of Human Services (DHS) to develop a mobile software program for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients, as required under the bill, as well as ongoing expenditures to maintain the software program. The magnitude of these costs depend on several unpredictable variables; however, the OLS assumes that the department will incur the majority of the costs during the development process.
- Unpredictable cost variables under the bill include: 1) the department’s use of a third party to develop and maintain the software program versus the use of current staff and existing State resource; and 2) the receipt of any available federal grant funds to support the development of the software program.
- The OLS notes that to the extent all SNAP administrative costs are shared between the State and federal government, and any costs incurred by the department under the bill will result in an increase in State revenue.

BILL DESCRIPTION

This bill requires the DHS to develop and maintain, or enter into or modify an agreement with a third party to develop and maintain, a mobile software program for SNAP recipients.

The mobile software program will include, but not be limited to, functionality that allows a user of the mobile software program who is a recipient of SNAP benefits to: view the user's SNAP case status and the current benefits the user receives; view the current balance on the user's electronic benefit transfer card; request an electronic benefit transfer card or a replacement card and track the card's expected time of arrival by mail; upload and submit required documents for continued participation in SNAP and track the current processing status of those documents; receive alerts for upcoming SNAP appointments and important deadlines or actions; read and print notices and letters; update contact information; request to have a letter mailed to the user listing the amount of benefits the user receives; and view local contact information for the County Board of Social Services for the county in which the user resides. The mobile software program will also be required to be made available free of charge and in multiple languages.

The bill requires the Commissioner of Human Services to apply for any: 1) waivers from the federal government, which are necessary for approval and implementation of this act; and 2) grants through the SNAP Process and Technology Improvement Grants program within the United States Department of Agriculture to receive federal funding to implement the provisions of bill.

FISCAL ANALYSIS

EXECUTIVE BRANCH

None received.

OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE SERVICES

The OLS estimates that this bill will result in an indeterminate increase in one-time expenditures by the DFD in the DHS to develop a mobile software program for SNAP recipients, as required under the bill, as well as ongoing expenditures to maintain the software program. The magnitude of these costs depend on several unpredictable variables; however, the OLS assumes that the department will incur the majority of the costs during the development process.

First, the bill authorizes the department to enter into or modify an agreement with a third party to comply with the provisions of the bill. To the extent that the department can develop the software using current staff and current State resources, the OLS assumes the cost of the bill will be less than using a third party vendor.

Currently, the department manages the State's online benefits portal, NJOneApp. The online application provides residents with the ability to screen for eligibility and apply for various government assistance programs, including SNAP. Applicants can also check an application status and upload documents, which are two requirements of the software platform to be developed under this bill. It is possible that the department will be able to leverage this existing technology to establish the software required under this bill.

Further, the OLS notes that costs incurred by the department in the development of the software may be minimized through collaborations with existing State entities, such as the New Jersey State Office of Innovation. The mission of the office, created in 2018, among other things, is to partner with State agencies to develop technologies that improve the delivery of service. The office's Innovation Lab specifically is designed to develop, test, and implement new products through department collaborations.

The Office of Information Technology is also a potential State resource to guide the department's development of the SNAP software. The office is charged with providing and maintaining information technology infrastructure to the Executive Branch.

Second, the bill requires the department to apply for federal grants through the SNAP Process and Technology Improvement Grants program to implement the provisions of bill. This grant supports efforts by state agencies to develop and implement projects that focus on improving the quality and efficiency of SNAP operations and processes. The federal government competitively awards up to \$5 million in SNAP Process and Technology Improvement Grants each federal fiscal year (FFY), resulting in approximately the distribution of six to 11 grants.

In FFY 2020, the DHS received a \$944,810 SNAP Process and Technology Improvement Grant to redesign the NJ OneApp and create a new customer service portal and text message notification system that alerts applicants to key case updates; thereby providing access to real-time case information. Under this federal program, the department is not eligible to apply for a new grant until FFY 2022, which commences on October 1, 2021. Any grant funds received by the department will minimize, at least in part, the State resources needed to develop the software program.

The OLS notes that all SNAP administrative costs are shared between the State and federal government, with the federal government contributing approximately 50 percent. Automated data processing development and operation is an authorized category of reimbursable administrative expense. Therefore, to the extent that the bill increases costs to the department, it will also increase federal revenue received by the State.

Section: Human Services

*Analyst: Sarah Schmidt
Senior Research Analyst*

*Approved: Thomas Koenig
Legislative Budget and Finance Officer*

This legislative fiscal estimate has been produced by the Office of Legislative Services due to the failure of the Executive Branch to respond to our request for a fiscal note.

This fiscal estimate has been prepared pursuant to P.L.1980, c.67 (C.52:13B-6 et seq.).

LEGISLATIVE FISCAL ESTIMATE

[First Reprint]

ASSEMBLY, No. 5880

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 219th LEGISLATURE

DATED: JUNE 24, 2021

SUMMARY

- Synopsis:** Directs DHS to develop mobile software program for SNAP recipients; appropriates \$2 million.
- Type of Impact:** Annual State expenditure and revenue increases.
- Agencies Affected:** Division of Family Development, Department of Human Services.

Office of Legislative Services Estimate

Fiscal Impact	<u>Year 1</u>	<u>Year 2</u>	<u>Year 3</u>
State Expenditure Increase		Indeterminate	
State Revenue Increase		Indeterminate	

- The Office of Legislative Services (OLS) assumes that this bill will result in an indeterminate increase in one-time expenditures by the Division of Family Development (DFD) in the Department of Human Services (DHS) to develop mobile-friendly software for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients, as required under the bill, as well as ongoing expenditures to maintain the software program. The magnitude of these costs depend on several unpredictable variables; however, the OLS assumes that the department will incur the majority of the costs during the development process.
- Unpredictable cost variables under the bill include: 1) the department's use of a third party to develop and maintain the software program versus the use of existing staff and State resource; and 2) any additional ongoing operational and maintenance costs related to the software.
- The OLS notes that to the extent all SNAP administrative costs are shared between the State and federal government, any costs incurred by the department under the bill will result in an increase in State revenue. The State could also realize additional revenues if it receives federal grant funds to support the development of the software program.

BILL DESCRIPTION

This bill requires the DHS to develop and maintain, or enter into or modify an agreement with a third party to develop and maintain, a mobile-friendly software for SNAP recipients. The bill appropriates \$2 million from the General Fund for these purposes.

The mobile software program will include, but not be limited to, functionality that allows a user of the mobile software program who is a recipient of SNAP benefits to: view the user's SNAP case status and the current benefits the user receives; request an electronic benefit transfer card or a replacement card; upload and submit required documents for continued participation in SNAP and track the current processing status of those documents; receive notices and updates regarding important deadlines or actions; read and print notices and letters; update contact information; request to have a letter mailed to the user listing the amount of benefits the user receives; view local contact information for the County Board of Social Services for the county in which the user resides; and access other functionalities as determined by the department. The mobile-friendly software will also be required to be made available free of charge and in multiple languages.

The bill requires the Commissioner of Human Services to apply for any: 1) waivers from the federal government, which are necessary for approval and implementation of this act; and 2) grants through the SNAP Process and Technology Improvement Grants program within the United States Department of Agriculture to receive federal funding to implement the provisions of bill.

FISCAL ANALYSIS

EXECUTIVE BRANCH

None received.

OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE SERVICES

The OLS assumes that this bill will result in an indeterminate increase in one-time expenditures by the DFD in the DHS to develop mobile-friendly software for SNAP recipients, as required under the bill, as well as ongoing expenditures to maintain the software program. The magnitude of these costs depend on several unpredictable variables; such as: 1) the department's use of a third party to develop and maintain the software program versus the use of existing staff and State resource; and 2) any additional ongoing operational and maintenance costs related to the software. However, the OLS assumes that the department will incur the majority of the costs during the development process.

The bill authorizes the department to enter into or modify an agreement with a third party to comply with the provisions of the bill. To the extent that the department can develop the software using existing staff and State resources, the OLS assumes the cost of the bill will be less than contracting with a third party.

Currently, the department manages the State's online benefits portal, NJOneApp. The online application provides residents with the ability to screen for eligibility and apply for various government assistance programs, including SNAP. Applicants can also check an application status and upload documents, which are two requirements of the software platform developed under this bill. It is possible that the department will be able to leverage this existing technology to establish the software required under this bill.

Further, the OLS notes that costs incurred by the department in the development of the software may be minimized through collaborations with existing State entities, such as the New Jersey State Office of Innovation. The mission of the Office, created in 2018, among other things, is to partner with State agencies to develop technologies that improve the delivery of service. The Office's Innovation Lab specifically is designed to develop, test, and implement new products through department collaborations.

The Office of Information Technology (OIT) is also a potential State resource to guide the department's development of the SNAP software. The OIT is charged with providing and maintaining information technology infrastructure to the Executive Branch.

The OLS notes that all SNAP administrative costs are shared between the State and federal government, with the federal government contributing approximately 50 percent. Automated data processing development and operation is an authorized category of reimbursable administrative expense. Therefore, to the extent that the bill increases costs to the department, it will also increase federal revenue received by the State for SNAP administrative expenses.

The State could also realize additional revenues if it receives federal grant funds to support the development of the software program. For example, the bill requires the department to apply for federal grants through the SNAP Process and Technology Improvement Grants program to implement the provisions of bill. This grant supports efforts by state agencies to develop and implement projects that focus on improving the quality and efficiency of SNAP operations and processes. The federal government competitively awards up to \$5 million in SNAP Process and Technology Improvement Grants each federal fiscal year (FFY), resulting in approximately the distribution of six to 11 grants.

In FFY 2020, the DHS received a \$944,810 SNAP Process and Technology Improvement Grant to redesign the NJ OneApp and create a new customer service portal and text message notification system that alerts applicants to key case updates; thereby providing access to real-time case information. Under this federal program, the department is not eligible to apply for a new grant until FFY 2022, which commences on October 1, 2021. Any grant funds received by the department may minimize, at least in part, the State resources needed to develop the software program.

Section: Human Services

*Analyst: Sarah Schmidt
Senior Research Analyst*

*Approved: Thomas Koenig
Legislative Budget and Finance Officer*

This legislative fiscal estimate has been produced by the Office of Legislative Services due to the failure of the Executive Branch to respond to our request for a fiscal note.

This fiscal estimate has been prepared pursuant to P.L.1980, c.67 (C.52:13B-6 et seq.).

SENATE, No. 3941

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED JUNE 10, 2021

Sponsored by:

Senator JOSEPH F. VITALE

District 19 (Middlesex)

Senator VIN GOPAL

District 11 (Monmouth)

SYNOPSIS

Directs DHS to develop mobile software program for SNAP recipients.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



1 AN ACT concerning a mobile software program for New Jersey
2 Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program recipients and
3 supplementing Title 44 of the Revised Statutes.

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

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8 1. As used in this act:

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15 conjunction with a mobile electronic communication device, as
16 defined herein, and available through multiple software platforms.

17 "Mobile electronic communication device" means any mobile
18 device capable of communication or other transmission of
19 information and includes, but is not limited to, a cellular telephone,
20 wireless tablet, or other device with Internet capability, or other
21 wireless communication device.

22 "Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program" or "SNAP" means
23 the supplemental nutrition assistance program, established pursuant
24 to the federal "Food and Nutrition Act of 2008," Pub.L.88-525 (7
25 U.S.C. s.2011 et seq.).

26
27 2. a. The Department of Human Services shall develop and
28 maintain, or enter into or modify an agreement with a third party to
29 develop and maintain, a mobile software program for SNAP
30 recipients. The mobile software program shall include, but not be
31 limited to, functionality that allows a user of the mobile software
32 program who is recipient of SNAP benefits to:

33 (1) view the user's SNAP case status and the current benefits the
34 user receives;

35 (2) view the current balance on the user's electronic benefit
36 transfer card;

37 (3) request an electronic benefit transfer card or a replacement
38 card and track the card's expected time of arrival by mail;

39 (4) upload and submit required documents for continued
40 participation in SNAP and track the current processing status of
41 those documents;

42 (5) receive alerts for upcoming SNAP appointments and
43 important deadlines or actions;

44 (6) read and print notices and letters;

45 (7) update contact information;

46 (8) request to have a letter mailed to the user listing the amount
47 of benefits the user receives; and

48 (9) view local contact information for the County Board of
49 Social Services for the county in which the user resides.

[First Reprint]

SENATE, No. 3941

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED JUNE 10, 2021

Sponsored by:

Senator JOSEPH F. VITALE

District 19 (Middlesex)

Senator VIN GOPAL

District 11 (Monmouth)

SYNOPSIS

Directs DHS to develop mobile software program for SNAP recipients; appropriates \$2 million.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As reported by the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee on June 17, 2021, with amendments.



1 AN ACT concerning a mobile software program for New Jersey
 2 Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program recipients
 3 ¹**[and]**,¹ supplementing Title 44 of the Revised Statutes¹, and
 4 making an appropriation¹.

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

8
 9 1. As used in this act:

10 "Commissioner" means the Commissioner of Human Services.

11 "Electronic benefit transfer card or benefit card" means a benefit
 12 card utilized by a consumer to gain access to nutrition assistance
 13 program benefits.

14 ¹**[Mobile]** Mobile-friendly¹ software ¹**[program]**¹" means a
 15 computer program or ¹web-based¹ software application designed to be
 16 ¹**[downloaded onto and]**¹ used in conjunction with a mobile electronic
 17 communication device, as defined herein, and available through
 18 multiple software platforms.

19 "Mobile electronic communication device" means any mobile
 20 device capable of communication or other transmission of information
 21 and includes, but is not limited to, a cellular telephone, wireless tablet,
 22 or other device with Internet capability, or other wireless
 23 communication device.

24 "Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program" or "SNAP" means
 25 the supplemental nutrition assistance program, established pursuant to
 26 the federal "Food and Nutrition Act of 2008," ¹**[Pub.L.88-525]** as
 27 Pub.L.110-246¹ (7 U.S.C. s.2011 et seq.).

28
 29 2. a. The Department of Human Services shall develop and
 30 maintain, or enter into or modify an agreement with a third party to
 31 develop and maintain¹, a mobile] mobile-friendly¹ software
 32 ¹**[program]**¹ for SNAP recipients. The ¹**[mobile]** mobile-friendly¹
 33 software ¹**[program]**¹ shall include, but not be limited to, functionality
 34 that allows a user of the mobile software program who is recipient of
 35 SNAP benefits to:

36 (1) view the user's SNAP case status and the current benefits the
 37 user receives;

38 (2) ¹**[view the current balance on the user's electronic benefit**
 39 **transfer card;**

40 (3)¹ request an electronic benefit transfer card or a replacement
 41 card ¹**[and track the card's expected time of arrival by mail;**

42 (4)¹ (3)¹ upload and submit required documents for continued
 43 participation in SNAP and track the current processing status of those
 44 documents;

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:

¹Senate SBA committee amendments adopted June 17, 2021.

1 ¹[(5)] (4)¹ receive ¹[alerts for upcoming SNAP appointments
2 and] notices and updates regarding¹ important deadlines or actions;
3 ¹[(6)] (5)¹ read and print notices and letters;
4 ¹[(7)] (6)¹ update contact information;
5 ¹[(8)] (7)¹ request to have a letter mailed to the user listing the
6 amount of benefits the user receives; ¹[and
7 (9)] (8)¹ view local contact information for the County Board of
8 Social Services for the county in which the user resides¹; and
9 (9) access any other functionalities as determined by the
10 department¹.
11 b. The ¹[mobile] mobile-friendly¹ software ¹[program]¹ shall be
12 made available free of charge and in multiple languages.
13
14 3. The commissioner shall apply for any:
15 a. waivers from the federal government, which are necessary for
16 the approval and implementation of this act; and
17 b. grants through the SNAP Process and Technology
18 Improvement Grants program within the United States Department
19 of Agriculture to receive federal funding to implement the
20 provisions of this act.
21
22 4. The Commissioner of Human Services, pursuant to the
23 “Administrative Procedure Act,” P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et
24 seq.), shall promulgate rules and regulations ¹as may be necessary¹
25 to effectuate the provisions of this act.
26
27 ¹5. There is appropriated \$2,000,000 from the General Fund to
28 the Department of Human Services to fund the development and
29 maintenance of the mobile friendly software required pursuant to
30 P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill).¹
31
32 ¹[5.] 6.¹ This act shall take effect immediately.

LEGISLATIVE FISCAL ESTIMATE
SENATE, No. 3941
STATE OF NEW JERSEY
219th LEGISLATURE

DATED: JUNE 21, 2021

SUMMARY

Synopsis: Directs DHS to develop mobile software program for SNAP recipients.

Type of Impact: Annual State expenditure and revenue increases.

Agencies Affected: Division of Family Development, Department of Human Services.

Office of Legislative Services Estimate

Fiscal Impact	<u>Year 1</u>	<u>Year 2</u>	<u>Year 3</u>
State Expenditure Increase		Indeterminate	
State Revenue Increase		Indeterminate	

- The Office of Legislative Services (OLS) estimates that this bill will result in an indeterminate increase in one-time expenditures by the Division of Family Development (DFD) in the Department of Human Services (DHS) to develop a mobile software program for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients, as required under the bill, as well as ongoing expenditures to maintain the software program. The magnitude of these costs depend on several unpredictable variables; however, the OLS assumes that the department will incur the majority of the costs during the development process.
- Unpredictable cost variables under the bill include: 1) the department’s use of a third party to develop and maintain the software program versus the use of current staff and existing State resource; and 2) the receipt of any available federal grant funds to support the development of the software program.
- The OLS notes that to the extent all SNAP administrative costs are shared between the State and federal government, and any costs incurred by the department under the bill will result in an increase in State revenue.

BILL DESCRIPTION

This bill requires the DHS to develop and maintain, or enter into or modify an agreement with a third party to develop and maintain, a mobile software program for SNAP recipients.

The mobile software program will include, but not be limited to, functionality that allows a user of the mobile software program who is a recipient of SNAP benefits to: view the user's SNAP case status and the current benefits the user receives; view the current balance on the user's electronic benefit transfer card; request an electronic benefit transfer card or a replacement card and track the card's expected time of arrival by mail; upload and submit required documents for continued participation in SNAP and track the current processing status of those documents; receive alerts for upcoming SNAP appointments and important deadlines or actions; read and print notices and letters; update contact information; request to have a letter mailed to the user listing the amount of benefits the user receives; and view local contact information for the County Board of Social Services for the county in which the user resides. The mobile software program will also be required to be made available free of charge and in multiple languages.

The bill requires the Commissioner of Human Services to apply for any: 1) waivers from the federal government, which are necessary for approval and implementation of this act; and 2) grants through the SNAP Process and Technology Improvement Grants program within the United States Department of Agriculture to receive federal funding to implement the provisions of bill.

FISCAL ANALYSIS

EXECUTIVE BRANCH

None received.

OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE SERVICES

The OLS estimates that this bill will result in an indeterminate increase in one-time expenditures by the DFD in the DHS to develop a mobile software program for SNAP recipients, as required under the bill, as well as ongoing expenditures to maintain the software program. The magnitude of these costs depend on several unpredictable variables; however, the OLS assumes that the department will incur the majority of the costs during the development process.

First, the bill authorizes the department to enter into or modify an agreement with a third party to comply with the provisions of the bill. To the extent that the department can develop the software using current staff and current State resources, the OLS assumes the cost of the bill will be less than using a third party vendor.

Currently, the department manages the State's online benefits portal, NJOneApp. The online application provides residents with the ability to screen for eligibility and apply for various government assistance programs, including SNAP. Applicants can also check an application status and upload documents, which are two requirements of the software platform to be developed under this bill. It is possible that the department will be able to leverage this existing technology to establish the software required under this bill.

Further, the OLS notes that costs incurred by the department in the development of the software may be minimized through collaborations with existing State entities, such as the New Jersey State Office of Innovation. The mission of the office, created in 2018, among other things, is to partner with State agencies to develop technologies that improve the delivery of service. The office's Innovation Lab specifically is designed to develop, test, and implement new products through department collaborations.

The Office of Information Technology is also a potential State resource to guide the department's development of the SNAP software. The office is charged with providing and maintaining information technology infrastructure to the Executive Branch.

Second, the bill requires the department to apply for federal grants through the SNAP Process and Technology Improvement Grants program to implement the provisions of bill. This grant supports efforts by state agencies to develop and implement projects that focus on improving the quality and efficiency of SNAP operations and processes. The federal government competitively awards up to \$5 million in SNAP Process and Technology Improvement Grants each federal fiscal year (FFY), resulting in approximately the distribution of six to 11 grants.

In FFY 2020, the DHS received a \$944,810 SNAP Process and Technology Improvement Grant to redesign the NJ OneApp and create a new customer service portal and text message notification system that alerts applicants to key case updates; thereby providing access to real-time case information. Under this federal program, the department is not eligible to apply for a new grant until FFY 2022, which commences on October 1, 2021. Any grant funds received by the department will minimize, at least in part, the State resources needed to develop the software program.

The OLS notes that all SNAP administrative costs are shared between the State and federal government, with the federal government contributing approximately 50 percent. Automated data processing development and operation is an authorized category of reimbursable administrative expense. Therefore, to the extent that the bill increases costs to the department, it will also increase federal revenue received by the State.

Section: Human Services

*Analyst: Sarah Schmidt
Senior Research Analyst)*

*Approved: Thomas Koenig
Legislative Budget and Finance Officer*

This legislative fiscal estimate has been produced by the Office of Legislative Services due to the failure of the Executive Branch to respond to our request for a fiscal note.

This fiscal estimate has been prepared pursuant to P.L.1980, c.67 (C.52:13B-6 et seq.).

LEGISLATIVE FISCAL ESTIMATE

[First Reprint]

SENATE, No. 3941 STATE OF NEW JERSEY 219th LEGISLATURE

DATED: JUNE 24, 2021

SUMMARY

Synopsis: Directs DHS to develop mobile software program for SNAP recipients; appropriates \$2 million.

Type of Impact: Annual State expenditure and revenue increases.

Agencies Affected: Division of Family Development, Department of Human Services.

Office of Legislative Services Estimate

Fiscal Impact	<u>Year 1</u>	<u>Year 2</u>	<u>Year 3</u>
State Expenditure Increase		Indeterminate	
State Revenue Increase		Indeterminate	

- The Office of Legislative Services (OLS) assumes that this bill will result in an indeterminate increase in one-time expenditures by the Division of Family Development (DFD) in the Department of Human Services (DHS) to develop mobile-friendly software for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients, as required under the bill, as well as ongoing expenditures to maintain the software program. The magnitude of these costs depend on several unpredictable variables; however, the OLS assumes that the department will incur the majority of the costs during the development process.
- Unpredictable cost variables under the bill include: 1) the department's use of a third party to develop and maintain the software program versus the use of existing staff and State resource; and 2) any additional ongoing operational and maintenance costs related to the software.
- The OLS notes that to the extent all SNAP administrative costs are shared between the State and federal government, any costs incurred by the department under the bill will result in an increase in State revenue. The State could also realize additional revenues if it receives federal grant funds to support the development of the software program.

BILL DESCRIPTION

This bill requires the DHS to develop and maintain, or enter into or modify an agreement with a third party to develop and maintain, a mobile-friendly software for SNAP recipients. The bill appropriates \$2 million from the General Fund for these purposes.

The mobile software program will include, but not be limited to, functionality that allows a user of the mobile software program who is a recipient of SNAP benefits to: view the user's SNAP case status and the current benefits the user receives; request an electronic benefit transfer card or a replacement card; upload and submit required documents for continued participation in SNAP and track the current processing status of those documents; receive notices and updates regarding important deadlines or actions; read and print notices and letters; update contact information; request to have a letter mailed to the user listing the amount of benefits the user receives; view local contact information for the County Board of Social Services for the county in which the user resides; and access other functionalities as determined by the department. The mobile-friendly software will also be required to be made available free of charge and in multiple languages.

The bill requires the Commissioner of Human Services to apply for any: 1) waivers from the federal government, which are necessary for approval and implementation of this act; and 2) grants through the SNAP Process and Technology Improvement Grants program within the United States Department of Agriculture to receive federal funding to implement the provisions of bill.

FISCAL ANALYSIS

EXECUTIVE BRANCH

None received.

OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE SERVICES

The OLS assumes that this bill will result in an indeterminate increase in one-time expenditures by the DFD in the DHS to develop mobile-friendly software for SNAP recipients, as required under the bill, as well as ongoing expenditures to maintain the software program. The magnitude of these costs depend on several unpredictable variables; such as: 1) the department's use of a third party to develop and maintain the software program versus the use of existing staff and State resource; and 2) any additional ongoing operational and maintenance costs related to the software. However, the OLS assumes that the department will incur the majority of the costs during the development process.

The bill authorizes the department to enter into or modify an agreement with a third party to comply with the provisions of the bill. To the extent that the department can develop the software using existing staff and State resources, the OLS assumes the cost of the bill will be less than contracting with a third party.

Currently, the department manages the State's online benefits portal, NJOneApp. The online application provides residents with the ability to screen for eligibility and apply for various government assistance programs, including SNAP. Applicants can also check an application status and upload documents, which are two requirements of the software platform developed under this bill. It is possible that the department will be able to leverage this existing technology to establish the software required under this bill.

Further, the OLS notes that costs incurred by the department in the development of the software may be minimized through collaborations with existing State entities, such as the New Jersey State Office of Innovation. The mission of the Office, created in 2018, among other things, is to partner with State agencies to develop technologies that improve the delivery of service. The Office's Innovation Lab specifically is designed to develop, test, and implement new products through department collaborations.

The Office of Information Technology (OIT) is also a potential State resource to guide the department's development of the SNAP software. The OIT is charged with providing and maintaining information technology infrastructure to the Executive Branch.

The OLS notes that all SNAP administrative costs are shared between the State and federal government, with the federal government contributing approximately 50 percent. Automated data processing development and operation is an authorized category of reimbursable administrative expense. Therefore, to the extent that the bill increases costs to the department, it will also increase federal revenue received by the State for SNAP administrative expenses.

The State could also realize additional revenues if it receives federal grant funds to support the development of the software program. For example, the bill requires the department to apply for federal grants through the SNAP Process and Technology Improvement Grants program to implement the provisions of bill. This grant supports efforts by state agencies to develop and implement projects that focus on improving the quality and efficiency of SNAP operations and processes. The federal government competitively awards up to \$5 million in SNAP Process and Technology Improvement Grants each federal fiscal year (FFY), resulting in approximately the distribution of six to 11 grants.

In FFY 2020, the DHS received a \$944,810 SNAP Process and Technology Improvement Grant to redesign the NJ OneApp and create a new customer service portal and text message notification system that alerts applicants to key case updates; thereby providing access to real-time case information. Under this federal program, the department is not eligible to apply for a new grant until FFY 2022, which commences on October 1, 2021. Any grant funds received by the department may minimize, at least in part, the State resources needed to develop the software program.

Section: Human Services

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This fiscal estimate has been prepared pursuant to P.L.1980, c.67 (C.52:13B-6 et seq.).

Governor Murphy Signs Legislative Package to Combat Food Insecurity in New Jersey

09/30/2021

TRENTON – During Hunger Action Month, Governor Phil Murphy today signed into law a comprehensive legislation package aimed at combatting food insecurity, reaffirming his commitment to end hunger in New Jersey. The six bills will commit to addressing hunger by expanding access to the New Jersey Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and its benefits, bolstering school meal programs, and establishing the Office of the Food Insecurity Advocate. Additionally, the Governor also signed A5690 which directs the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development to include information on SNAP on any materials pertaining to unemployment compensation benefits.

"It is unacceptable that so many of our most vulnerable people are going without enough food," **said Governor Murphy**. "With today's bill signings, we are continuing our ongoing commitment to end food insecurity in New Jersey by strengthening food assistance and providing support to communities across the state."

"Access to food is a fundamental human need and no one in our state should go hungry or have to skip a meal," **said Human Services Acting Commissioner Sarah Adelman**. "We are committed to improving access to SNAP, our country's first line of defense against hunger, so New Jerseyans have the food assistance they need. We are proud to take these additional steps to end hunger and achieve food security for New Jerseyans of all ages. I thank Governor Murphy for signing these important bills and applaud Speaker Coughlin and the leadership of our legislative partners and advocates. With these new laws, together we will move closer to accomplishing our shared goal of ensuring no one in New Jersey goes hungry."

"We place the highest value on children having access to meals," **said Secretary of Agriculture Douglas Fisher**. "The funding from these bills for the Summer Food Service Program, the Seamless Summer Option, and Breakfast After the Bell will provide consistent nutrition all year long."

"Like Governor Murphy, the New Jersey Department of Labor believes in a whole-of-government approach to assisting our residents in times of need, such as when they are unemployed," **said Labor and Workforce Development Commissioner Robert Asaro-Angelo**. "This new law will augment our ongoing efforts to link unemployment claimants to additional vital resources our state provides."

Governor Murphy signed the following bills into law:

S3945/A5884 (Vitale, Madden/Coughlin, Mazzeo, Conaway, Wimberly) Establishes Office of Food Insecurity Advocate.

A2281/S1078 (Armato, Mazzeo, Vainieri Huttle/Greenstein, Turner) Requires Commissioner of Human Services to streamline SNAP application process for senior citizens and conduct outreach regarding senior SNAP participation.

A5880/S3941 (Coughlin, Armato, Verrelli, Wimberly/Vitale, Gopal) Directs the Department of Human Services to develop mobile software for SNAP recipients; appropriates \$2 million.

A5882/S3943 (Coughlin, Armato, Verrelli, Conaway/Vitale, Madden) Establishes State supplement for federal summer food service program meals.

A5883/S3944 (Schaer, Speight, Zwicker, Stanley/Ruiz, Turner) Establishes State supplement for "breakfast after the bell" meals.

A5690/S3772 (Greenwald, Conaway, Benson/Greenstein, Turner) Requires the Department of Labor & Workforce Development to provide link to New Jersey Supplemental Nutrition

“Breakfast After the Bell is an essential tool for combatting food insecurity among school aged children. Now that students are allowed to eat in their classrooms, during the school day, more families can take advantage of free breakfast,” **said Senator Teresa Ruiz**. “Establishing a state supplement that will be funded annually guarantees provision and support for this critical program which ensures that students have the fuel they need to focus and succeed throughout their school day.”

“SNAP should be easily accessible for all recipients, many of whom will now be able to use mobile devices to keep up with their accounts and help them find retail stores nearby that participate in the program,” **said Senator Joe Vitale, Chair of the Health, Human Services and Senior Citizens Committee**. “Streamlining access to SNAP benefits is a practical way forward in the 21st century, and will allow recipients greater flexibility. Mobile-friendly software will make it easier for recipients to make changes, check balances and keep track of their benefits.”

“Making use of mobile-friendly software to allow for the distribution of SNAP benefits beyond the traditional beginning of the month window will ensure that recipients have access to the food items they need without having to worry about shortages,” **said Senator Vin Gopal**. “SNAP recipients will be able to shop at the grocery store stress-free throughout the month, and will also be able to keep track of the processing status of documents that is so important to the program.”

“The Summer Food Service Program’s goal is to provide nutritious meals and snacks to children in low-income areas during the summer months when school is not in session,” **said Senator Fred Madden**. “This bill will ensure that children will be able to continue to receive nutritious meals that they may not be able to access elsewhere outside of the traditional school year.”

“SNAP benefits have always been our first line of defense in fighting hunger,” **said Senator Shirley Turner**. “Making it easier for senior citizens and people who are out of work to apply for programs like SNAP helps to reduce food insecurity, lift our residents out of poverty, and enable them to spend more on groceries that will keep them healthy. Increasing our SNAP participation rates also brings more federal dollars to our state and helps pump more money into our local and state economies. Closing the gaps in SNAP participation is a win-win for New Jersey, our senior citizens, and our families.”

“SNAP is a great program and a huge asset to many of our residents struggling to make ends meet, and can be utilized in-store or online at ShopRite, Amazon, Walmart, the Fresh Grocer, and ALDI,” **said Senator Linda Greenstein**. “However, this program is vastly underutilized, leaving many qualifying individuals - especially our senior citizens and those seeking unemployment benefits - without the assistance they need. These laws will be a critical help in ensuring that all eligible individuals are receiving the services they need and deserve.”

Assistance Program on website and in emails concerning unemployment compensation benefits.

“Food security and access to proper nutrition are determining factors in every individual’s capacity to realize their full potential,” **said Assembly Speaker Craig J. Coughlin**. “The legislation signed today ensures the food needs of our most vulnerable in New Jersey continue to be met and strengthens our delivery of SNAP benefits and school meals. Most significantly, by creating a Food Insecurity Advocate, we are going to be better equipped as a state to strategically coordinate our anti-hunger initiatives, so no family misses out on access to critical food aid.”

“Programs such as SNAP provide invaluable assistance to families who would otherwise have to wonder where their next meal will come from,” **said Assemblyman Vincent Armato**. “Modernizing access by providing mobile-friendly software would make it easier for New Jerseyans to view their SNAP case status, view their current benefits, request a replacement card, submit necessary documents, and more. A system that is easier to navigate is one that can ultimately help more residents. Additional funding will help schools achieve their goal of reaching as many hungry children as possible.”

"SNAP is an important program that provides food support to more than 800,000 New Jersey residents," **said Assemblyman Anthony Verrelli**. "Finding ways to make it simpler for residents to navigate this system will help ensure more families receive the critical assistance they need."

"Children who lack consistent access to nutritious food are more likely to experience physical, social and behavioral issues – including developmental impairments," **said Assemblyman Herb Conaway**. "It is our state's responsibility to maintain the health and well-being of our children by continuing to provide them with nutritious meals throughout the year."

"Every child in our state deserves to start their day with a healthy, nutritious breakfast – regardless of their parents' financial situation," **said Assemblyman Gary Schaer**. "Supplementing existing programs with additional support will help ensure every child gets the nutrition they need."

"Regular access to healthy meals is an important part of a child's development," **said Assemblywoman Shanique Speight**. "With more families facing economic hardship as we come out of this pandemic, it is essential we expand access to nutritious breakfasts for any child who needs them."

"Food insecurity surged throughout our state as a result of the pandemic, with an increase of 75 percent for New Jersey children," **said Assemblyman Andrew Zwicker**. "Those 365,000 children are counting on our state to help make sure they do not go hungry as their parents get back on their feet and recover from this pandemic."

"Trying to focus on school work and extracurricular activities are practically impossible for students who are doing so on an empty stomach," **said Assemblyman Sterley Stanley**. "It is vital to reduce food insecurity. Helping school districts supply meals to hungry students will improve their health and academic performance, providing them with what they need to succeed."

"Less than half of New Jersey residents 60 and older who are eligible for SNAP benefits use them. This legislation looks to increase senior participation by simplifying the application process, allowing seniors to apply for SNAP through multiple points of entry, and utilizing a comprehensive community outreach and public awareness campaign," **said Assemblymembers John Armato, Vincent Mazzeo, and Valerie Vainieri Huttel, in a joint statement**. "Taking these steps will increase the likelihood of seniors taking advantage of the SNAP benefits, so that they can maintain a healthy, nutritious diet. Access to SNAP benefits for many may also mean the difference between having food and going without."

"Without a steady income to rely on, many people who are out of work understandably struggle to put food on the table. When unemployment soared last year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, food insecurity drastically increased as well – with more than 1 million residents in need of assistance," **said Assemblymembers Louis Greenwald, Herb Conaway, and Daniel Benson, in a joint statement**. "Losing one's job is already a stressful and destabilizing experience without having to worry about where your family's next meal will come from. Including a link to the NJ SNAP website in unemployment-related communications from DOLWD is a simple and effective way to help spread the word about this program and make it easier for residents to access the benefits they need."

"These measures will go a long way toward reducing hunger in the Garden State, especially for the tens of thousands of children who face hunger every day," **said Adele LaTourette, Director of Hunger Free New Jersey**. "We applaud the Legislative leaders for advancing these important initiatives and Gov. Phil Murphy for supporting these measures. We look forward to working with the Murphy Administration to implement these changes."

"The Food Democracy Collaborative applauds Governor Murphy's and state lawmakers' leadership for streamlining and optimizing existing food access programs and advancing food equity for all New Jerseyans," **said Jeanine Cava, Co-Founder of the NJ Food Democracy Collaborative**. "These efforts help connect the dots and close gaps in food system governance which supports food security across the state. We look forward to working with our colleagues and partners in the state to connect more SNAP recipients to NJ's agricultural bounty in the months ahead."

“We welcome the signing of these bills which will strengthen access and coordination of food resources for our New Jerseyans in need and applaud the Governor and legislature for their continued focus on nourishing our neighbors,” **said Carlos Rodriguez, President and CEO, Community FoodBank of New Jersey.**