



**LEGISLATIVE FISCAL ESTIMATE:**

Yes 6/17/2021  
6/29/2021

**VETO MESSAGE:**

No

**GOVERNOR'S PRESS RELEASE ON SIGNING:**

Yes

**FOLLOWING WERE PRINTED:**

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**REPORTS:**

No

**HEARINGS:**

No

**NEWSPAPER ARTICLES:**

No

RH/CL

Title 52.  
Subtitle 3.  
Chapter 27J.  
(New)  
Office of Food  
Insecurity  
Advocate  
§§1-6  
C.52:27J-1 to  
52:27J-6

P.L. 2021, CHAPTER 242, *approved September 30, 2021*  
Senate, No. 3945 (*Second Reprint*)

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 <sup>2</sup>~~and Education administer~~ administers<sup>2</sup> the United States  
20 Department of Agriculture's school nutrition program in New  
21 Jersey;

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

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

30

31 2. As used in this act:

**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:

<sup>1</sup>Senate SBA committee amendments adopted June 17, 2021.

<sup>2</sup>Assembly floor amendments adopted June 24, 2021.

1 “Food insecurity program” means a nutrition program in this  
2 State that provides nutrition assistance to individuals without  
3 reliable access to a sufficient quantity of affordable, nutritious food  
4 and includes, but is not limited to, the New Jersey Supplemental  
5 Nutrition Assistance Program, the New Jersey Supplemental  
6 Nutrition Program for Women Infants and Children, <sup>1</sup>the  
7 Commodity Supplemental Food program, the Senior Farmers  
8 Market Nutrition Program, the Child and Adult Care Program, <sup>1</sup> and  
9 the United States Department of Agriculture’s school nutrition  
10 program.

11  
12 3. There is created in the Executive Branch of the State  
13 Government the Office of the Food Insecurity Advocate. For the  
14 purpose of complying with the provisions of Article V, Section IV,  
15 paragraph 1 of the New Jersey Constitution, the Office of Food  
16 Insecurity Advocate is allocated to the <sup>1</sup>Economic Development  
17 Authority in the <sup>1</sup> Department of <sup>1</sup>the <sup>1</sup> Treasury, but notwithstanding  
18 this allocation, the office shall be independent of any supervision or  
19 control by the <sup>1</sup>Economic Development Authority or by the  
20 department <sup>1</sup>, <sup>1</sup> or <sup>1</sup>by <sup>1</sup> any board or officer thereof, in the  
21 performance of its duties. The office shall have the duty to  
22 <sup>2</sup>collaborate with the appropriate State agency to<sup>2</sup>:

23 (a) coordinate outreach for food insecurity programs, including  
24 developing new initiatives and outreach campaigns and identifying  
25 best practices to increase enrollment in the State’s food insecurity  
26 programs;

27 (b) establish a 24-hour toll-free hunger hotline to assist in  
28 making information about the State’s food insecurity programs as  
29 widely available as possible;

30 (c) support grant application processes related to food insecurity  
31 for in-state providers and State departments by monitoring available  
32 grants, recommending grant applications, and assisting with the  
33 grant application process;

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

35 (e) establish best practices for food banks to reduce food waste  
36 and to distribute more fresh produce and proteins to food insecurity  
37 programs and food banks;

38 (f) <sup>2</sup>**collaborate** cooperate<sup>2</sup> with research organizations and  
39 universities to monitor ongoing gap analysis that identifies areas  
40 that are undeserved by current food insecurity programs;

41 (g) <sup>2</sup>**collaborate** work<sup>2</sup> with State and community partners to  
42 develop a strategic plan to address identified gaps in areas that are  
43 undeserved by current food insecurity programs;

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

- 1 (i) provide support in coordinating assistance to address food  
2 insecurity during federal or State declared states of emergency;  
3 <sup>1</sup>**[and]**<sup>1</sup>
- 4 (j) coordinate food insecurity programming and initiatives for  
5 institutions of higher education with the Office of the Secretary of  
6 Higher Education<sup>1</sup>;
- 7 (k) develop new initiatives, establish an outreach campaign, and  
8 identify best practices to reach senior citizens, persons with  
9 disabilities, and other vulnerable population; and
- 10 (l) coordinate outreach efforts for the newly unemployed who  
11 might be eligible for food insecurity programs<sup>1</sup>.

12

13 4. The administrator and chief executive officer of the office is  
14 the food insecurity advocate, who shall be a person qualified by  
15 training and experience to perform the duties of the office. The  
16 food insecurity advocate shall be appointed by the Governor and  
17 shall serve at the pleasure of the Governor during the Governor's  
18 term of office and until the appointment and qualification of the  
19 food insecurity advocate's successor. The food insecurity advocate  
20 shall devote time entirely to the duties of the position and shall  
21 receive a salary as determined by law. Any vacancy occurring in  
22 the position of the food insecurity advocate shall be filled in the  
23 same manner as the original appointment; except that if the food  
24 insecurity advocate dies, resigns, becomes ineligible to serve for  
25 any reason, or is removed from office, the Governor shall appoint  
26 an acting food insecurity advocate, who shall serve until the  
27 appointment and qualification of the food insecurity advocate's  
28 successor, but in no event longer than six months from the  
29 occurrence of the vacancy, and who shall exercise during this  
30 period all the powers and duties of the food insecurity advocate  
31 pursuant to the provisions of this act.

32

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

35 a. administer and organize the work of the office and establish  
36 therein such administrative subdivisions as the food insecurity  
37 advocate may deem necessary, proper and expedient. The food  
38 insecurity advocate may formulate and adopt rules and regulations  
39 and prescribe duties for the efficient conduct of the business, work  
40 and general administration of the office. The food insecurity  
41 advocate may delegate to subordinate officers or employees in the  
42 office such power as the food insecurity advocate may deem  
43 desirable to be exercised under the food insecurity advocate's  
44 supervision and control;

45 b. appoint and remove stenographic, clerical, and other  
46 secretarial assistants as may be required for the proper conduct of

1 the office, subject to the provisions of Title 11A of the New Jersey  
2 Statutes, and other applicable statutes, and within the limits of  
3 funds appropriated or otherwise made available therefor. In  
4 addition, and within funding limits, the food insecurity advocate  
5 may appoint, retain, or employ, without regard to the provisions of  
6 Title 11A of the New Jersey Statutes or any other statutes, any  
7 officers, financial managers, social workers, or other professionally  
8 qualified personnel on a contract basis or otherwise as the food  
9 insecurity advocate deems necessary;

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

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

17 e. serve as the liaison between the Office of the Food  
18 Insecurity Advocate and the Departments of Agriculture, Education,  
19 Health, and Human Services; and

20 f. perform such other functions as may be prescribed in this act  
21 or by any other law.

22

23 6. Pursuant to the "Administrative Procedure Act," P.L.1968,  
24 c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.), the food insecurity advocate and the  
25 Commissioners of Agriculture, Education, Health, and Human  
26 Services may adopt any rules and regulations necessary to  
27 effectuate the purposes of this act.

28

29 7. This act shall take effect immediately.

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Establishes Office of Food Insecurity Advocate.

## CHAPTER 242

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

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

C.52:27J-1 Findings, declarations relative to food insecurity.

1. The Legislature finds and declares that:

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

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

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

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

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

C.52:27J-2 Definition of "food insecurity program".

2. As used in this act:

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

C.52:27J-3 Office of the Food Insecurity Advocate created.

3. There is created in the Executive Branch of the State Government the Office of the Food Insecurity Advocate. For the purpose of complying with the provisions of Article V, Section IV, paragraph 1 of the New Jersey Constitution, the Office of Food Insecurity Advocate is allocated to the Economic Development Authority in the Department of the Treasury, but notwithstanding this allocation, the office shall be independent of any supervision or control by the Economic Development Authority or by the department, or by any board or officer thereof, in the performance of its duties. The office shall have the duty to collaborate with the appropriate State agency to:

- (a) coordinate outreach for food insecurity programs, including developing new initiatives and outreach campaigns and identifying best practices to increase enrollment in the State's food insecurity programs;
- (b) establish a 24-hour toll-free hunger hotline to assist in making information about the State's food insecurity programs as widely available as possible;
- (c) support grant application processes related to food insecurity for in-state providers and State departments by monitoring available grants, recommending grant applications, and assisting with the grant application process;
- (d) coordinate communication with and between food banks;
- (e) establish best practices for food banks to reduce food waste and to distribute more fresh produce and proteins to food insecurity programs and food banks;
- (f) cooperate with research organizations and universities to monitor ongoing gap analysis that identifies areas that are undeserved by current food insecurity programs;
- (g) work with State and community partners to develop a strategic plan to address identified gaps in areas that are undeserved by current food insecurity programs;
- (h) oversee the development and implementation of public-private partnerships to address food insecurity;
- (i) provide support in coordinating assistance to address food insecurity during federal or State declared states of emergency;
- (j) coordinate food insecurity programming and initiatives for institutions of higher education with the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education;
- (k) develop new initiatives, establish an outreach campaign, and identify best practices to reach senior citizens, persons with disabilities, and other vulnerable population; and
- (l) coordinate outreach efforts for the newly unemployed who might be eligible for food insecurity programs.

C.52:27J-4 Appointment of food insecurity advocate.

4. The administrator and chief executive officer of the office is the food insecurity advocate, who shall be a person qualified by training and experience to perform the duties of the office. The food insecurity advocate shall be appointed by the Governor and shall serve at the pleasure of the Governor during the Governor's term of office and until the appointment and qualification of the food insecurity advocate's successor. The food insecurity advocate shall devote time entirely to the duties of the position and shall receive a salary as determined by law. Any vacancy occurring in the position of the food insecurity advocate shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment; except that if the food insecurity advocate dies, resigns, becomes ineligible to serve for any reason, or is removed from office, the Governor shall appoint an acting food insecurity advocate, who shall serve until the appointment and qualification of the food insecurity advocate's successor, but in no event longer than six months from the occurrence of the vacancy, and who shall exercise during this period all the powers and duties of the food insecurity advocate pursuant to the provisions of this act.

C.52:27J-5 Duties of food insecurity advocate.

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

- a. administer and organize the work of the office and establish therein such administrative subdivisions as the food insecurity advocate may deem necessary, proper and



expedient. The food insecurity advocate may formulate and adopt rules and regulations and prescribe duties for the efficient conduct of the business, work and general administration of the office. The food insecurity advocate may delegate to subordinate officers or employees in the office such power as the food insecurity advocate may deem desirable to be exercised under the food insecurity advocate's supervision and control;

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

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

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

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

f. perform such other functions as may be prescribed in this act or by any other law.

C.52:27J-6 Rules, regulations.

6. Pursuant to the "Administrative Procedure Act," P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.), the food insecurity advocate and the Commissioners of Agriculture, Education, Health, and Human Services may adopt any rules and regulations necessary to effectuate the purposes of this act.

7. This act shall take effect immediately.

Approved September 30, 2021.

**SENATE, No. 3945**

**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**  
**219th LEGISLATURE**

INTRODUCED JUNE 10, 2021

**Sponsored by:**

**Senator JOSEPH F. VITALE**

**District 19 (Middlesex)**

**Senator FRED H. MADDEN, JR.**

**District 4 (Camden and Gloucester)**

**SYNOPSIS**

Establishes Office of Food Insecurity Advocate.

**CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT**

As introduced.



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, and the United  
37 States Department of Agriculture's school nutrition program.

38

39 3. There is created in the Executive Branch of the State  
40 Government the Office of the Food Insecurity Advocate. For the  
41 purpose of complying with the provisions of Article V, Section IV,  
42 paragraph 1 of the New Jersey Constitution, the Office of Food  
43 Insecurity Advocate is allocated to the Department of Treasury, but  
44 notwithstanding this allocation, the office shall be independent of  
45 any supervision or control by the department or any board or officer  
46 thereof, in the performance of its duties. The office shall have the  
47 duty to:

- 1 (a) coordinate outreach for food insecurity programs, including
- 2 developing new initiatives and outreach campaigns and identifying
- 3 best practices to increase enrollment in the State's food insecurity
- 4 programs;
- 5 (b) establish a 24-hour toll-free hunger hotline to assist in
- 6 making information about the State's food insecurity programs as
- 7 widely available as possible;
- 8 (c) support grant application processes related to food insecurity
- 9 for in-state providers and State departments by monitoring available
- 10 grants, recommending grant applications, and assisting with the
- 11 grant application process;
- 12 (d) coordinate communication with and between food banks;
- 13 (e) establish best practices for food banks to reduce food waste
- 14 and to distribute more fresh produce and proteins to food insecurity
- 15 programs and food banks;
- 16 (f) collaborate with research organizations and universities to
- 17 monitor ongoing gap analysis that identifies areas that are
- 18 undeserved by current food insecurity programs;
- 19 (g) collaborate with State and community partners to develop a
- 20 strategic plan to address identified gaps in areas that are undeserved
- 21 by current food insecurity programs;
- 22 (h) oversee the development and implementation of public-
- 23 private partnerships to address food insecurity;
- 24 (i) provide support in coordinating assistance to address food
- 25 insecurity during federal or State declared states of emergency; and
- 26 (j) coordinate food insecurity programming and initiatives for
- 27 institutions of higher education with the Office of the Secretary of
- 28 Higher Education.
- 29
- 30 4. The administrator and chief executive officer of the office is
- 31 the food insecurity advocate, who shall be a person qualified by
- 32 training and experience to perform the duties of the office. The
- 33 food insecurity advocate shall be appointed by the Governor and
- 34 shall serve at the pleasure of the Governor during the Governor's
- 35 term of office and until the appointment and qualification of the
- 36 food insecurity advocate's successor. The food insecurity advocate
- 37 shall devote time entirely to the duties of the position and shall
- 38 receive a salary as determined by law. Any vacancy occurring in
- 39 the position of the food insecurity advocate shall be filled in the
- 40 same manner as the original appointment; except that if the food
- 41 insecurity advocate dies, resigns, becomes ineligible to serve for
- 42 any reason, or is removed from office, the Governor shall appoint
- 43 an acting food insecurity advocate, who shall serve until the
- 44 appointment and qualification of the food insecurity advocate's
- 45 successor, but in no event longer than six months from the
- 46 occurrence of the vacancy, and who shall exercise during this

1 period all the powers and duties of the food insecurity advocate  
2 pursuant to the provisions of this act.

3

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

6 a. administer and organize the work of the office and establish  
7 therein such administrative subdivisions as the food insecurity  
8 advocate may deem necessary, proper and expedient. The food  
9 insecurity advocate may formulate and adopt rules and regulations  
10 and prescribe duties for the efficient conduct of the business, work  
11 and general administration of the office. The food insecurity  
12 advocate may delegate to subordinate officers or employees in the  
13 office such power as the food insecurity advocate may deem  
14 desirable to be exercised under the food insecurity advocate's  
15 supervision and control;

16 b. appoint and remove stenographic, clerical, and other  
17 secretarial assistants as may be required for the proper conduct of  
18 the office, subject to the provisions of Title 11A of the New Jersey  
19 Statutes, and other applicable statutes, and within the limits of  
20 funds appropriated or otherwise made available therefor. In  
21 addition, and within funding limits, the food insecurity advocate  
22 may appoint, retain, or employ, without regard to the provisions of  
23 Title 11A of the New Jersey Statutes or any other statutes, any  
24 officers, financial managers, social workers, or other professionally  
25 qualified personnel on a contract basis or otherwise as the food  
26 insecurity advocate deems necessary;

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

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

34 e. serve as the liaison between the Office of the Food  
35 Insecurity Advocate and the Departments of Agriculture, Education,  
36 Health, and Human Services; and

37 f. perform such other functions as may be prescribed in this act  
38 or by any other law.

39

40 6. Pursuant to the "Administrative Procedure Act," P.L.1968,  
41 c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.), the food insecurity advocate and the  
42 Commissioners of Agriculture, Education, Health, and Human  
43 Services may adopt any rules and regulations necessary to  
44 effectuate the purposes of this act.

45

46 7. This act shall take effect immediately.

STATEMENT

1

2

3 This bill establishes the Office of the Food Insecurity Advocate  
4 in, but not of, the Department of Treasury. The office will have the  
5 duty to: coordinate outreach for food insecurity programs, including  
6 developing new initiatives and outreach campaigns and identifying  
7 best practices to increase enrollment in the State's food insecurity  
8 programs; establish a 24-hour toll-free hunger hotline to assist in  
9 making information about the State's food insecurity programs as  
10 widely available as possible; support grant application processes  
11 related to food insecurity for in-state providers and State  
12 departments by monitoring available grants, recommending grant  
13 applications, and assisting with the grant application process;  
14 coordinate communication to and between food banks; establish  
15 best practices for food banks to reduce food waste and to distribute  
16 more fresh produce and proteins to food insecurity programs and  
17 food banks; collaborate with research organizations and universities  
18 to monitor ongoing gap analysis that identifies areas that are  
19 undeserved by current food insecurity programs; collaborate with  
20 State and community partners to develop a strategic plan to address  
21 identified gaps in areas that are undeserved by current food  
22 insecurity programs; oversee the development and implementation  
23 of public-private partnerships to address food insecurity; provide  
24 support in coordinating assistance to address food insecurity during  
25 federal or State-declared states of emergency; and coordinate food  
26 insecurity programming and initiatives for institutions of higher  
27 education with the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education.

28 The bill provides that the administrator and chief executive  
29 officer of the office will be the food insecurity advocate, who will  
30 be a person qualified by training and experience to perform the  
31 duties of the office. The food insecurity advocate will be appointed  
32 by the Governor and will serve at the pleasure of the Governor  
33 during the Governor's term of office and until the appointment and  
34 qualification of the food insecurity advocate's successor. The food  
35 insecurity advocate will administer and organize the work of the  
36 office and serve as the liaison between the Office of the Food  
37 Insecurity Advocate and the Departments of Agriculture, Education,  
38 Health, and Human Services.

39 Over one million people are estimated to be food insecure in  
40 New Jersey and more than one-third of them are children. The  
41 coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic is projected to cause a  
42 disproportionate increase in the rate of food insecurity in this State  
43 compared to the national rate and neighboring states. Several  
44 departments are responsible for administering different food  
45 insecurity programs in the State: the Department of Human  
46 Services administers the New Jersey Supplemental Nutrition  
47 Assistance Program; the Department of Health administers the New

**S3945 VITALE, MADDEN**

6

1 Jersey Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women Infants and  
2 Children; and the Department of Agriculture and Education  
3 administer the United States Department of Agriculture's school  
4 nutrition program in New Jersey. The State's food insecurity  
5 programs are currently operating in silos and, in some cases, they  
6 may all cover the same families, yet not all eligible families are  
7 enrolled into each program. It is the sponsor's intent that  
8 establishing an Office of the Food Insecurity Advocate by statute  
9 will help coordinate the administration of the State's food insecurity  
10 programs, advocate for the food insecure, and develop new policy  
11 initiatives to combat hunger and facilitate greater access to food  
12 relief programs.

# SENATE BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

## STATEMENT TO

### **SENATE, No. 3945**

with committee amendments

# **STATE OF NEW JERSEY**

DATED: JUNE 17, 2021

The Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Senate Bill No. 3945.

As amended by the committee, this bill establishes the Office of the Food Insecurity Advocate in, but not of, the Economic Development Authority in the Department of the Treasury. The office will have the duty to: coordinate outreach for food insecurity programs, including developing new initiatives and outreach campaigns and identifying best practices to increase enrollment in the State's food insecurity programs; establish a 24-hour toll-free hunger hotline to assist in making information about the State's food insecurity programs as widely available as possible; support grant application processes related to food insecurity for in-state providers and State departments by monitoring available grants, recommending grant applications, and assisting with the grant application process; coordinate communication to and between food banks; establish best practices for food banks to reduce food waste and to distribute more fresh produce and proteins to food insecurity programs and food banks; collaborate with research organizations and universities to monitor ongoing gap analysis that identifies areas that are undeserved by current food insecurity programs; collaborate with State and community partners to develop a strategic plan to address identified gaps in areas that are undeserved by current food insecurity programs; oversee the development and implementation of public-private partnerships to address food insecurity; provide support in coordinating assistance to address food insecurity during federal or State-declared states of emergency; coordinate food insecurity programming and initiatives for institutions of higher education with the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education; develop new initiatives, establish an outreach campaign, and identify best practices to reach senior citizens, persons with disabilities, and other vulnerable population; and coordinate outreach efforts for the newly unemployed who might be eligible for the food insecurity programs.

As amended, the bill defines "food insecurity program" as a nutrition program in this State that provides nutrition assistance to individuals without reliable access to a sufficient quantity of affordable, nutritious food and includes, but is not limited to, the New



Jersey Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, the New Jersey Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women Infants and Children, the Commodity Supplemental Food program, the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program, the Child and Adult Care Program, and the United States Department of Agriculture's school nutrition program.

The bill provides that the administrator and chief executive officer of the office will be the food insecurity advocate, who will be a person qualified by training and experience to perform the duties of the office.

The food insecurity advocate will be appointed by the Governor and will serve at the pleasure of the Governor during the Governor's term of office and until the appointment and qualification of the food insecurity advocate's successor. The food insecurity advocate will administer and organize the work of the office and serve as the liaison between the Office of the Food Insecurity Advocate and the Departments of Agriculture, Education, Health, and Human Services.

#### COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amendments revise where the Office of the Food Insecurity Advocate is to be allocated. As introduced, the office would be allocated in, but not of, the Department of the Treasury. As amended, the office would be allocated in, but not of, the Economic Development Authority in the Department of the Treasury.

The committee amended the bill to expand the definition of "food insecurity program" to include the Commodity Supplemental Food program, the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program, and the Child and Adult Care Program.

The committee amendments also expand the duties of the Office of Food Insecurity to include: developing new initiatives, establishing an outreach campaign, and identifying best practices to reach senior citizens, persons with disabilities, and other vulnerable population; and coordinating outreach efforts for the newly unemployed who might be eligible for food insecurity programs.

#### FISCAL IMPACT:

The Office of Legislative Services (OLS) finds that State expenditures from the General Fund will increase by an indeterminate amount to fund the creation of, and programs operated by, the Office of the Food Insecurity Advocate (office). Expenditures related to the creation of this office, including salary costs for the chief executive officer and other staff, as well as programmatic costs, will increase Economic Development Authority (EDA) costs, to the extent that the office will be in, but not of, the EDA in the Department of the Treasury, and the EDA will have no supervision over the activities of this independent office.

To the extent that the Office of the Food Insecurity Advocate, by identifying new food insecurity grant opportunities and assisting State departments and in-state providers with securing new funding sources,

is able to attract additional federal and private funding in support of food insecurity programs in the State, State costs may be somewhat reduced in future fiscal years.

STATEMENT TO  
[First Reprint]  
**SENATE, No. 3945**

With Assembly Floor Amendments  
(Proposed by Assemblyman COUGHLIN)

ADOPTED: JUNE 24, 2021

These floor amendments remove the reference to the Department of Education in the findings and declarations section of the bill, and makes a corresponding technical change to address grammar.

The floor amendments stipulate that the Office of Food Insecurity is to collaborate with the appropriate State agency in performing its duties.

**LEGISLATIVE FISCAL ESTIMATE**  
**SENATE, No. 3945**  
**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**  
**219th LEGISLATURE**

DATED: JUNE 21, 2021

**SUMMARY**

**Synopsis:** Establishes Office of Food Insecurity Advocate.

**Type of Impact:** State expenditure increase.

**Agencies Affected:** Office of the Food Insecurity Advocate, Department of the Treasury.

**Office of Legislative Services Estimate**

<b>Fiscal Impact</b>	<b><u>Annual</u></b>
<b>State Cost Increase</b>	Indeterminate

- The Office of Legislative Services (OLS) finds that State expenditures from the General Fund will increase by an indeterminate amount to fund the creation of, and programs operated by, the Office of the Food Insecurity Advocate. Expenditures related to the creation of this office, including salary costs for the chief executive officer and other staff, as well as programmatic costs, will increase Department of the Treasury costs, to the extent that the office will be in, but not of, the department, and the department will have no supervision over the activities of this independent office.
- To the extent that the Office of the Food Insecurity Advocate, by identifying new food insecurity grant opportunities and assisting State departments and in-state providers with securing new funding sources, is able to attract additional federal and private funding in support of food insecurity programs in the State, State costs may be somewhat reduced in future fiscal years.

**BILL DESCRIPTION**

This bill establishes the Office of the Food Insecurity Advocate in, but not of, the Department of Treasury. The office is authorized to: coordinate outreach for food insecurity programs, including developing new initiatives and outreach campaigns and identifying best practices to increase enrollment in the State's food insecurity programs; establish a 24-hour toll-free hunger hotline to assist in making information about the State's food insecurity

programs as widely available as possible; support grant application processes for in-state providers and State departments by monitoring grant availability, and assisting with the grant application process; coordinate communication to and between the State's food banks; establish best practices for food banks to reduce food waste and to distribute more fresh foods to food insecurity programs and food banks; collaborate with research organizations and universities to monitor gap analysis to identify areas that are undeserved by current programs; collaborate with State and community partners to develop a strategic plan to address identified gaps in areas that are undeserved by current food insecurity programs; oversee the development and implementation of public-private partnerships to address food insecurity; and coordinate food insecurity programming and initiatives for institutions of higher education with the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education.

The bill provides that the administrator and chief executive officer of the office will be the food insecurity advocate (the Advocate), who will be a person qualified by training and experience to perform the duties of the office. The Advocate will be appointed by the Governor and will serve at the pleasure of the Governor during the Governor's term of office and until the appointment of the food insecurity advocate's successor. The Advocate will administer and organize the work of the office and serve as the liaison between the Office of the Food Insecurity Advocate and the Departments of Agriculture, Education, Health, and Human Services.

Currently, several departments are responsible for administering various food insecurity programs in the State: the Department of Human Services administers the New Jersey Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP); the Department of Health administers the New Jersey Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women Infants and Children (WIC); and the Departments of Agriculture and Education administer the United States Department of Agriculture's school nutrition program in New Jersey.

## **FISCAL ANALYSIS**

### ***EXECUTIVE BRANCH***

None received.

### ***OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE SERVICES***

The OLS concludes that State expenditures from the General Fund will increase by an indeterminate amount to fund the creation of, and programs operated by, the Office of the Food Insecurity Advocate, which will be in, but not of, the Department of the Treasury. Expenditures related to the creation of the office includes an estimated annual salary of \$150,000 for the Advocate; estimated annual salary costs for additional office personnel is uncertain, since the Advocate is authorized to appoint, retain, or employ, within funding limits, any qualified personnel that the Advocate deems necessary.

Certain office activities, pursuant to the authorizing legislation, may potentially duplicate certain food insecurity activities or initiatives currently funded and operated through other State departments, such as the Department of Human Services, the Department of Health, the Department of Education, and the Department of Agriculture. Insofar as any of these potentially duplicative activities or initiatives can be consolidated in one department or office, or coordinated, State costs would be reduced somewhat.

To the extent that the office, by identifying new food insecurity grant opportunities and assisting State departments and in-state providers with securing new funding sources, is able to attract additional federal and private funding to support food insecurity programs in New Jersey, State costs may be reduced in future fiscal years.

*Section: Human Services*

*Analyst: Anne Cappabianca  
Associate Fiscal 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.).

# 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)**

**SYNOPSIS**

Establishes Office of Food Insecurity Advocate.

**CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT**

As introduced.



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

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, and the United  
37 States Department of Agriculture's school nutrition program.

38

39 3. There is created in the Executive Branch of the State  
40 Government the Office of the Food Insecurity Advocate. For the  
41 purpose of complying with the provisions of Article V, Section IV,  
42 paragraph 1 of the New Jersey Constitution, the Office of Food  
43 Insecurity Advocate is allocated to the Department of Treasury, but  
44 notwithstanding this allocation, the office shall be independent of  
45 any supervision or control by the department or any board or officer  
46 thereof, in the performance of its duties. The office shall have the  
47 duty to:

48 (a) coordinate outreach for food insecurity programs, including  
49 developing new initiatives and outreach campaigns and identifying



- 1 best practices to increase enrollment in the State's food insecurity  
2 programs;
- 3 (b) establish a 24-hour toll-free hunger hotline to assist in  
4 making information about the State's food insecurity programs as  
5 widely available as possible;
- 6 (c) support grant application processes related to food insecurity  
7 for in-state providers and State departments by monitoring available  
8 grants, recommending grant applications, and assisting with the  
9 grant application process;
- 10 (d) coordinate communication with and between food banks;
- 11 (e) establish best practices for food banks to reduce food waste  
12 and to distribute more fresh produce and proteins to food insecurity  
13 programs and food banks;
- 14 (f) collaborate with research organizations and universities to  
15 monitor ongoing gap analysis that identifies areas that are  
16 undeserved by current food insecurity programs;
- 17 (g) collaborate with State and community partners to develop a  
18 strategic plan to address identified gaps in areas that are undeserved  
19 by current food insecurity programs;
- 20 (h) oversee the development and implementation of public-  
21 private partnerships to address food insecurity;
- 22 (i) provide support in coordinating assistance to address food  
23 insecurity during federal or State declared states of emergency; and
- 24 (j) coordinate food insecurity programming and initiatives for  
25 institutions of higher education with the Office of the Secretary of  
26 Higher Education.
- 27
- 28 4. The administrator and chief executive officer of the office is  
29 the food insecurity advocate, who shall be a person qualified by  
30 training and experience to perform the duties of the office. The  
31 food insecurity advocate shall be appointed by the Governor and  
32 shall serve at the pleasure of the Governor during the Governor's  
33 term of office and until the appointment and qualification of the  
34 food insecurity advocate's successor. The food insecurity advocate  
35 shall devote time entirely to the duties of the position and shall  
36 receive a salary as determined by law. Any vacancy occurring in  
37 the position of the food insecurity advocate shall be filled in the  
38 same manner as the original appointment; except that if the food  
39 insecurity advocate dies, resigns, becomes ineligible to serve for  
40 any reason, or is removed from office, the Governor shall appoint  
41 an acting food insecurity advocate, who shall serve until the  
42 appointment and qualification of the food insecurity advocate's  
43 successor, but in no event longer than six months from the  
44 occurrence of the vacancy, and who shall exercise during this  
45 period all the powers and duties of the food insecurity advocate  
46 pursuant to the provisions of this act.
- 47
- 48 5. The food insecurity advocate, as administrator and chief  
49 executive officer of the office, shall:

1 a. administer and organize the work of the office and establish  
2 therein such administrative subdivisions as the food insecurity  
3 advocate may deem necessary, proper and expedient. The food  
4 insecurity advocate may formulate and adopt rules and regulations  
5 and prescribe duties for the efficient conduct of the business, work  
6 and general administration of the office. The food insecurity  
7 advocate may delegate to subordinate officers or employees in the  
8 office such power as the food insecurity advocate may deem  
9 desirable to be exercised under the food insecurity advocate's  
10 supervision and control;

11 b. appoint and remove stenographic, clerical, and other  
12 secretarial assistants as may be required for the proper conduct of  
13 the office, subject to the provisions of Title 11A of the New Jersey  
14 Statutes, and other applicable statutes, and within the limits of  
15 funds appropriated or otherwise made available therefor. In  
16 addition, and within funding limits, the food insecurity advocate  
17 may appoint, retain, or employ, without regard to the provisions of  
18 Title 11A of the New Jersey Statutes or any other statutes, any  
19 officers, financial managers, social workers, or other professionally  
20 qualified personnel on a contract basis or otherwise as the food  
21 insecurity advocate deems necessary;

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

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

29 e. serve as the liaison between the Office of the Food  
30 Insecurity Advocate and the Departments of Agriculture, Education,  
31 Health, and Human Services; and

32 f. perform such other functions as may be prescribed in this act  
33 or by any other law.  
34

35 6. Pursuant to the "Administrative Procedure Act," P.L.1968,  
36 c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.), the food insecurity advocate and the  
37 Commissioners of Agriculture, Education, Health, and Human  
38 Services may adopt any rules and regulations necessary to  
39 effectuate the purposes of this act.  
40

41 7. This act shall take effect immediately.  
42  
43

44 STATEMENT  
45

46 This bill establishes the Office of the Food Insecurity Advocate  
47 in, but not of, the Department of Treasury. The office will have the  
48 duty to: coordinate outreach for food insecurity programs,  
49 including developing new initiatives and outreach campaigns and

1 identifying best practices to increase enrollment in the State's food  
2 insecurity programs; establish a 24-hour toll-free hunger hotline to  
3 assist in making information about the State's food insecurity  
4 programs as widely available as possible; support grant application  
5 processes related to food insecurity for in-state providers and State  
6 departments by monitoring available grants, recommending grant  
7 applications, and assisting with the grant application process;  
8 coordinate communication to and between food banks; establish  
9 best practices for food banks to reduce food waste and to distribute  
10 more fresh produce and proteins to food insecurity programs and  
11 food banks; collaborate with research organizations and universities  
12 to monitor ongoing gap analysis that identifies areas that are  
13 undeserved by current food insecurity programs; collaborate with  
14 State and community partners to develop a strategic plan to address  
15 identified gaps in areas that are undeserved by current food  
16 insecurity programs; oversee the development and implementation  
17 of public-private partnerships to address food insecurity; provide  
18 support in coordinating assistance to address food insecurity during  
19 federal or State-declared states of emergency; and coordinate food  
20 insecurity programming and initiatives for institutions of higher  
21 education with the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education.

22 The bill provides that the administrator and chief executive  
23 officer of the office will be the food insecurity advocate, who will  
24 be a person qualified by training and experience to perform the  
25 duties of the office. The food insecurity advocate will be appointed  
26 by the Governor and will serve at the pleasure of the Governor  
27 during the Governor's term of office and until the appointment and  
28 qualification of the food insecurity advocate's successor. The food  
29 insecurity advocate will administer and organize the work of the  
30 office and serve as the liaison between the Office of the Food  
31 Insecurity Advocate and the Departments of Agriculture, Education,  
32 Health, and Human Services.

33 Over one million people are estimated to be food insecure in  
34 New Jersey and more than one-third of them are children. The  
35 coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic is projected to cause a  
36 disproportionate increase in the rate of food insecurity in this State  
37 compared to the national rate and neighboring states. Several  
38 departments are responsible for administering different food  
39 insecurity programs in the State: the Department of Human  
40 Services administers the New Jersey Supplemental Nutrition  
41 Assistance Program; the Department of Health administers the New  
42 Jersey Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women Infants and  
43 Children; and the Department of Agriculture and Education  
44 administer the United States Department of Agriculture's school  
45 nutrition program in New Jersey. The State's food insecurity  
46 programs are currently operating in silos and, in some cases, they  
47 may all cover the same families, yet not all eligible families are  
48 enrolled into each program. It is the sponsor's intent that  
49 establishing an Office of the Food Insecurity Advocate by statute

**A5884 COUGHLIN, MAZZEO**

6

- 1 will help coordinate the administration of the State's food insecurity
- 2 programs, advocate for the food insecure, and develop new policy
- 3 initiatives to combat hunger and facilitate greater access to food
- 4 relief programs.

# ASSEMBLY WOMEN AND CHILDREN COMMITTEE

## STATEMENT TO

### **ASSEMBLY, No. 5884**

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. 5884.

As amended by the committee, this bill establishes the Office of the Food Insecurity Advocate in, but not of, the Department of Treasury. The office will have the duty to: coordinate outreach for food insecurity programs, including developing new initiatives and outreach campaigns and identifying best practices to increase enrollment in the State's food insecurity programs; establish a 24-hour toll-free hunger hotline to assist in making information about the State's food insecurity programs as widely available as possible; support grant application processes related to food insecurity for in-state providers and State departments by monitoring available grants, recommending grant applications, and assisting with the grant application process; coordinate communication to and between food banks; establish best practices for food banks to reduce food waste and to distribute more fresh produce and proteins to food insecurity programs and food banks; collaborate with research organizations and universities to monitor ongoing gap analysis that identifies areas that are undeserved by current food insecurity programs; collaborate with State and community partners to develop a strategic plan to address identified gaps in areas that are undeserved by current food insecurity programs; oversee the development and implementation of public-private partnerships to address food insecurity; provide support in coordinating assistance to address food insecurity during federal or State-declared states of emergency; coordinate food insecurity programming and initiatives for institutions of higher education with the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education; develop new initiatives, establish an outreach campaign, and identify best practices to reach senior citizens, persons with disabilities, and other vulnerable population; and coordinate outreach efforts for the newly unemployed who might be eligible for the food insecurity programs.

As amended, the bill defines "food insecurity program" as a nutrition program in this State that provides nutrition assistance to individuals without reliable access to a sufficient quantity of affordable, nutritious food and includes, but is not limited to, the New Jersey Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, the New Jersey

Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women Infants and Children, the Commodity Supplemental Food program, the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program, the Child and Adult Care Program, and the United States Department of Agriculture's school nutrition program.

The bill provides that the administrator and chief executive officer of the office will be the food insecurity advocate, who will be a person qualified by training and experience to perform the duties of the office.

The food insecurity advocate will be appointed by the Governor and will serve at the pleasure of the Governor during the Governor's term of office and until the appointment and qualification of the food insecurity advocate's successor. The food insecurity advocate will administer and organize the work of the office and serve as the liaison between the Office of the Food Insecurity Advocate and the Departments of Agriculture, Education, Health, and Human Services.

#### COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS

The committee amended the bill to expand the definition of "food insecurity program" to include the Commodity Supplemental Food program, the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program, and the Child and Adult Care Program.

The committee amendments also expand the duties of the Office of Food Insecurity to include: developing new initiatives, establishing an outreach campaign, and identifying best practices to reach senior citizens, persons with disabilities, and other vulnerable population; and coordinating outreach efforts for the newly unemployed who might be eligible for food insecurity programs.

# ASSEMBLY APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

## STATEMENT TO

[First Reprint]

## **ASSEMBLY, No. 5884**

with committee amendments

# **STATE OF NEW JERSEY**

DATED: JUNE 16, 2021

The Assembly Appropriations Committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No. 5884 (1R), with committee amendments.

As amended by the committee, this bill establishes the Office of the Food Insecurity Advocate in, but not of, the Economic Development Authority in the Department of the Treasury. The office will have the duty to: coordinate outreach for food insecurity programs, including developing new initiatives and outreach campaigns and identifying best practices to increase enrollment in the State's food insecurity programs; establish a 24-hour toll-free hunger hotline to assist in making information about the State's food insecurity programs as widely available as possible; support grant application processes related to food insecurity for in-state providers and State departments by monitoring available grants, recommending grant applications, and assisting with the grant application process; coordinate communication to and between food banks; establish best practices for food banks to reduce food waste and to distribute more fresh produce and proteins to food insecurity programs and food banks; collaborate with research organizations and universities to monitor ongoing gap analysis that identifies areas that are undeserved by current food insecurity programs; collaborate with State and community partners to develop a strategic plan to address identified gaps in areas that are undeserved by current food insecurity programs; oversee the development and implementation of public-private partnerships to address food insecurity; provide support in coordinating assistance to address food insecurity during federal or State-declared states of emergency; coordinate food insecurity programming and initiatives for institutions of higher education with the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education; develop new initiatives, establish an outreach campaign, and identify best practices to reach senior citizens, persons with disabilities, and other vulnerable population; and coordinate outreach efforts for the newly unemployed who might be eligible for the food insecurity programs.

As amended, the bill defines “food insecurity program” as a nutrition program in this State that provides nutrition assistance to individuals without reliable access to a sufficient quantity of affordable, nutritious food and includes, but is not limited to, the New Jersey Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, the New Jersey Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women Infants and Children, the Commodity Supplemental Food program, the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program, the Child and Adult Care Program, and the United States Department of Agriculture’s school nutrition program.

The bill provides that the administrator and chief executive officer of the office will be the food insecurity advocate, who will be a person qualified by training and experience to perform the duties of the office.

The food insecurity advocate will be appointed by the Governor and will serve at the pleasure of the Governor during the Governor's term of office and until the appointment and qualification of the food insecurity advocate's successor. The food insecurity advocate will administer and organize the work of the office and serve as the liaison between the Office of the Food Insecurity Advocate and the Departments of Agriculture, Education, Health, and Human Services.

#### COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS

The committee amendments revise where the Office of the Food Insecurity Advocate is to be allocated. As introduced, the office would be allocated in, but not of, the Department of the Treasury. As amended, the office would be allocated in, but not of, the Economic Development Authority in the Department of the Treasury.

#### FISCAL IMPACT:

The Office of Legislative Services (OLS) finds that State expenditures from the General Fund will increase by an indeterminate amount to fund the creation of, and programs operated by, the Office of the Food Insecurity Advocate. Expenditures related to the creation of this office, including salary costs for the chief executive officer and other staff, as well as programmatic costs, will increase Department of the Treasury costs, to the extent that the office will be in, but not of, the department, and the department will have no supervision over the activities of this independent office.

To the extent that the Office of the Food Insecurity Advocate, by identifying new food insecurity grant opportunities and assisting State departments and in-state providers with securing new funding sources, is able to attract additional federal and private funding in support of food insecurity programs in the State, State costs may be somewhat reduced in future fiscal years.



STATEMENT TO  
[Second Reprint]  
**ASSEMBLY, No. 5884**

with Assembly Floor Amendments  
(Proposed by Assemblyman COUGHLIN)

ADOPTED: JUNE 21, 2021

These floor amendments remove the reference to the Department of Education in the bill's preamble, and makes a corresponding technical change to address grammar.

The floor amendments stipulate that the office is to collaborate with the appropriate State agency in performing its duties.

**LEGISLATIVE FISCAL ESTIMATE**  
**ASSEMBLY, No. 5884**  
**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**  
**219th LEGISLATURE**

DATED: JUNE 17, 2021

**SUMMARY**

**Synopsis:** Establishes Office of Food Insecurity Advocate.

**Type of Impact:** State expenditure increase.

**Agencies Affected:** Office of the Food Insecurity Advocate, Department of the Treasury.

**Office of Legislative Services Estimate**

<b>Fiscal Impact</b>	<u><b>Annual</b></u>
<b>State Cost Increase</b>	Indeterminate

- The Office of Legislative Services (OLS) finds that State expenditures from the General Fund will increase by an indeterminate amount to fund the creation of, and programs operated by, the Office of the Food Insecurity Advocate. Expenditures related to the creation of this office, including salary costs for the chief executive officer and other staff, as well as programmatic costs, will increase Department of the Treasury costs, to the extent that the office will be in, but not of, the department, and the department will have no supervision over the activities of this independent office.
- To the extent that the Office of the Food Insecurity Advocate, by identifying new food insecurity grant opportunities and assisting State departments and in-state providers with securing new funding sources, is able to attract additional federal and private funding in support of food insecurity programs in the State, State costs may be somewhat reduced in future fiscal years.

**BILL DESCRIPTION**

This bill establishes the Office of the Food Insecurity Advocate in, but not of, the Department of Treasury. The office is authorized to: coordinate outreach for food insecurity programs, including developing new initiatives and outreach campaigns and identifying best practices to increase enrollment in the State’s food insecurity programs; establish a 24-hour toll-free hunger hotline to assist in making information about the State’s food insecurity



programs as widely available as possible; support grant application processes for in-state providers and State departments by monitoring grant availability, and assisting with the grant application process; coordinate communication to and between the State's food banks; establish best practices for food banks to reduce food waste and to distribute more fresh foods to food insecurity programs and food banks; collaborate with research organizations and universities to monitor gap analysis to identify areas that are undeserved by current programs; collaborate with State and community partners to develop a strategic plan to address identified gaps in areas that are undeserved by current food insecurity programs; oversee the development and implementation of public-private partnerships to address food insecurity; and coordinate food insecurity programming and initiatives for institutions of higher education with the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education.

The bill provides that the administrator and chief executive officer of the office will be the food insecurity advocate (the Advocate), who will be a person qualified by training and experience to perform the duties of the office. The Advocate will be appointed by the Governor and will serve at the pleasure of the Governor during the Governor's term of office and until the appointment of the food insecurity advocate's successor. The Advocate will administer and organize the work of the office and serve as the liaison between the Office of the Food Insecurity Advocate and the Departments of Agriculture, Education, Health, and Human Services.

Currently, several departments are responsible for administering various food insecurity programs in the State: the Department of Human Services administers the New Jersey Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP); the Department of Health administers the New Jersey Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women Infants and Children (WIC); and the Departments of Agriculture and Education administer the United States Department of Agriculture's school nutrition program in New Jersey.

## **FISCAL ANALYSIS**

### ***EXECUTIVE BRANCH***

None received.

### ***OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE SERVICES***

The OLS concludes that State expenditures from the General Fund will increase by an indeterminate amount to fund the creation of, and programs operated by, the Office of the Food Insecurity Advocate, which will be in, but not of, the Department of the Treasury. Expenditures related to the creation of the office includes an estimated annual salary of \$150,000 for the Advocate; estimated annual salary costs for additional office personnel is uncertain, since the Advocate is authorized to appoint, retain, or employ, within funding limits, any qualified personnel that the Advocate deems necessary.

Certain office activities, pursuant to the authorizing legislation, may potentially duplicate certain food insecurity activities or initiatives currently funded and operated through other State departments, such as the Department of Human Services, the Department of Health, the Department of Education, and the Department of Agriculture. Insofar as any of these potentially duplicative activities or initiatives can be consolidated in one department or office, or coordinated, State costs would be reduced somewhat.

To the extent that the office, by identifying new food insecurity grant opportunities and assisting State departments and in-state providers with securing new funding sources, is able to attract additional federal and private funding to support food insecurity programs in New Jersey, State costs may be reduced in future fiscal years.

*Section: Human Services*

*Analyst: Anne Cappabianca  
Associate Fiscal 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

[Third Reprint]

**ASSEMBLY, No. 5884**

## **STATE OF NEW JERSEY 219th LEGISLATURE**

DATED: JUNE 29, 2021

### SUMMARY

- Synopsis:** Establishes Office of Food Insecurity Advocate.
- Type of Impact:** State expenditure increase.
- Agencies Affected:** Office of the Food Insecurity Advocate, Economic Development Authority.

#### Office of Legislative Services Estimate

<b>Fiscal Impact</b>	<b><u>Annual</u></b>
<b>State Cost Increase</b>	Indeterminate

- The Office of Legislative Services (OLS) finds that State expenditures from the General Fund will increase by an indeterminate amount to fund the creation of, and programs operated by, the Office of the Food Insecurity Advocate. Expenditures related to the creation of this office, including salary costs for the chief executive officer and other staff, as well as programmatic costs, will increase Economic Development Authority (EDA) costs, to the extent that the office will be in, but not of, the EDA in the Department of the Treasury, and the EDA will have no supervision over the activities of this independent office.
- To the extent that the Office of the Food Insecurity Advocate, by identifying new food insecurity grant opportunities and assisting State departments and in-state providers with securing new funding sources, is able to attract additional federal and private funding in support of food insecurity programs in the State, State costs may be somewhat reduced in future fiscal years.

### BILL DESCRIPTION

This bill establishes the Office of the Food Insecurity Advocate (the office) in, but not of, the Economic Development Authority in the Department of Treasury. The office is authorized to collaborate with appropriate State agencies to: coordinate outreach for food insecurity

programs for vulnerable populations, including developing new initiatives and outreach campaigns and identifying best practices to increase enrollment in the State's food insecurity programs; support grant application processes for in-state providers and State departments by monitoring grant availability, and assisting with the grant application process; coordinate communication to and between the State's food banks; establish best practices for food banks to reduce food waste and to distribute more fresh foods to food insecurity programs and food banks; cooperate with research organizations and universities to monitor gap analysis to identify areas that are undeserved by current programs; work with State and community partners to develop a strategic plan to address identified gaps in areas that are undeserved by current food insecurity programs; oversee the development and implementation of public-private partnerships to address food insecurity; and coordinate food insecurity programming and initiatives for institutions of higher education with the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education; develop new initiatives, establish an outreach campaign, and identify best practices to reach senior citizens, people with disabilities, and other vulnerable populations; and coordinate outreach efforts for the newly unemployed who may be eligible for food insecurity programs.

The bill provides that the administrator and chief executive officer of the office will be the food insecurity advocate (the Advocate), who will be a person qualified by training and experience to perform the duties of the office. The Advocate will be appointed by the Governor and will serve at the pleasure of the Governor during the Governor's term of office and until the appointment of the food insecurity advocate's successor. The Advocate will administer and organize the work of the office and serve as the liaison between the Office of the Food Insecurity Advocate and the Departments of Agriculture, Education, Health, and Human Services.

Currently, several departments are responsible for administering various food insecurity programs in the State: the Department of Human Services administers the New Jersey Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP); the Department of Health administers the New Jersey Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women Infants and Children (WIC); and the Department of Agriculture administers the United States Department of Agriculture's school nutrition program in New Jersey.

## **FISCAL ANALYSIS**

### ***EXECUTIVE BRANCH***

None received.

### ***OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE SERVICES***

The OLS concludes that State expenditures from the General Fund will increase by an indeterminate amount to fund the creation of, and programs operated by, the Office of the Food Insecurity Advocate, which will be in, but not of, the Economic Development Authority in the Department of the Treasury. Expenditures related to the creation of the office includes an estimated annual salary of \$150,000 for the Advocate; estimated annual salary costs for additional office personnel is uncertain, since the Advocate is authorized to appoint, retain, or employ, within funding limits, any qualified personnel that the Advocate deems necessary.

Certain office activities, pursuant to the authorizing legislation, may potentially duplicate certain food insecurity activities or initiatives currently funded and operated through other State departments, such as the Department of Human Services, the Department of Health, and the Department of Agriculture. Insofar as any of these potentially duplicative activities or initiatives can be consolidated in one department or office, or coordinated, State costs would be reduced somewhat.

To the extent that the office, by identifying new food insecurity grant opportunities and assisting State departments and in-state providers with securing new funding sources, is able to attract additional federal and private funding to support food insecurity programs in New Jersey, State costs may be reduced in future fiscal years.

*Section: Human Services*

*Analyst: Anne Cappabianca  
Associate Fiscal 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.).

# 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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.**