

**ASSEMBLY, No. 1775**

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**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**

**220th LEGISLATURE**

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PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2022 SESSION

**Sponsored by:**

**Assemblyman WAYNE P. DEANGELO**

**District 14 (Mercer and Middlesex)**

**Assemblyman RAJ MUKHERJI**

**District 33 (Hudson)**

**Co-Sponsored by:**

**Assemblyman Danielsen, Assemblywomen Murphy, McKnight and Lopez**

**SYNOPSIS**

Requires DCA to provide certain information on low-income home energy assistance program, annually update its low-income home energy assistance program handbook, and provide quarterly training sessions on administering program.

**CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT**

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel.



1   **AN ACT** concerning the administration of the low-income home  
 2       energy assistance benefits program and supplementing chapter  
 3       27D of Title 52 of the Revised Statutes.

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

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 8       1.   a.   The Department of Community Affairs shall establish a  
 9       schedule of days and hours of operation, a toll-free telephone  
 10      number, and a downloadable application on its Internet website to  
 11      facilitate the receipt of benefits under the federal Low Income  
 12      Home Energy Assistance Program, established pursuant to 42  
 13      U.S.C. s.8621 et seq.

14     b.   The department shall prepare and annually update a  
 15      handbook containing the governing policies and eligibility  
 16      requirements for the federal Low Income Home Energy Assistance  
 17      Program. The department shall annually distribute copies of the  
 18      handbook and its updates to each agency designated by the  
 19      department to obtain, review, and process applications for benefits  
 20      under that program.

21     c.   The department shall adopt training sessions regarding the  
 22      Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program that cover subjects  
 23      including, but not limited to, enrollment procedures, eligibility  
 24      requirements, and fraud detection. The training sessions shall be  
 25      provided on a quarterly basis and open to any agency that obtains,  
 26      reviews, and processes applications under that program.

27     d.   (1) Each director, manager, supervisor, and employee of an  
 28      agency that obtains, reviews, and processes Low Income Home  
 29      Energy Assistance Program applications, who performs or  
 30      supervises such program work, shall read the annually updated  
 31      handbooks distributed by the department pursuant to subsection b.  
 32      of this section and shall comply with the policies and procedures set  
 33      forth therein for the applicable year.

34     (2) Each supervisor of an agency that obtains, reviews, and  
 35      processes Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program  
 36      applications, who supervises such program work, shall attend the  
 37      quarterly training sessions provided by the department pursuant to  
 38      subsection c. of this section.

39     e.   The department may disqualify an agency from serving as an  
 40      agency that obtains, reviews, and processes Low Income Home  
 41      Energy Assistance Program applications for failure to substantially  
 42      comply with the requirements of subsection d. of this section.

43     f.   The Commissioner of Community Affairs shall promulgate  
 44      rules and regulations, pursuant to the "Administrative Procedure  
 45      Act," P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.), in order to effectuate  
 46      the provisions of this act.

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 48     2.   This act shall take effect immediately.

STATEMENT

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This bill requires the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) to establish a schedule of days and hours of operation, a toll-free telephone number, and a downloadable application on its Internet website to facilitate the receipt of benefits under the federal Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), established pursuant to the “Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Act of 1981,” 42 U.S.C. s.8621 et seq. The bill requires the DCA to prepare and annually update a handbook containing the governing policies and eligibility requirements for LIHEAP and to provide training sessions about the program on a quarterly basis. Under the bill, all employees of agencies designated by the DCA to obtain, review, and process applications for LIHEAP benefits would be required to read and adhere to the handbook, and the supervisors of these agencies who oversee LIHEAP work would be required to attend the quarterly training sessions. An agency that fails to substantially comply with these requirements may be disqualified by the DCA from serving as a designated LIHEAP agency.