

[First Reprint]

**ASSEMBLY, No. 5293**

**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**  
**220th LEGISLATURE**

INTRODUCED MARCH 16, 2023

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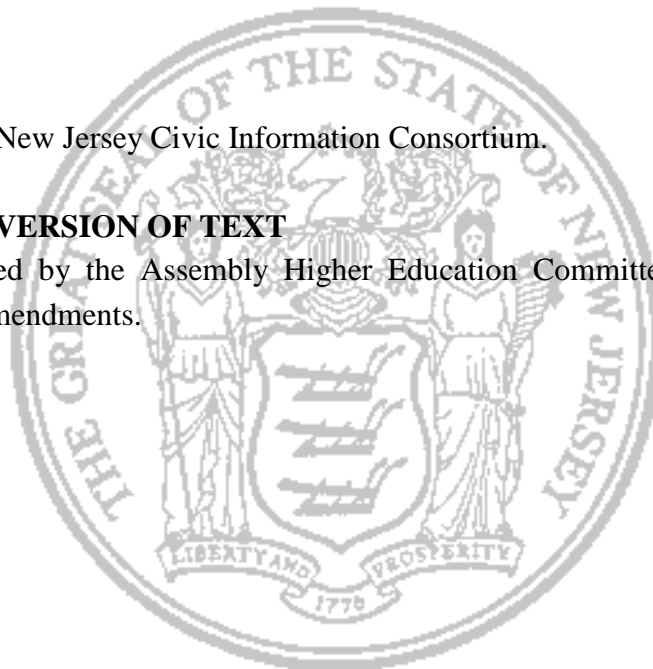
**Assemblywomen Reynolds-Jackson, Jasey, Mosquera, Assemblyman  
Sampson and Senator Greenstein**

**SYNOPSIS**

Concerns New Jersey Civic Information Consortium.

**CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT**

As reported by the Assembly Higher Education Committee on May 18,  
2023, with amendments.



**(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 1/8/2024)**

1 AN ACT concerning the New Jersey Civic Information Consortium  
2 and amending P.L.2018, c.111.

3

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

6

7 1. Section 4 of P.L.2018, c.111 (C.18A:64-97) is amended to  
8 read as follows:

9 4. a. The consortium shall have a board of directors that shall  
10 set strategic priorities and metrics to guide the consortium's grant-  
11 making and other initiatives, as well as to approve grants pursuant  
12 to section 7 of P.L.2018, c.111 (C.18A:64-100).

13 b. The board of directors shall consist of 16 members as  
14 follows:

15 (1) two members appointed by the Governor who shall not be of  
16 the same political party;

17 (2) one member appointed by the President of the Senate, and  
18 one member appointed by the Minority Leader of the Senate;

19 (3) one member appointed by the Speaker of the General  
20 Assembly, and one member appointed by the Minority Leader of  
21 the General Assembly;

22 (4) six members, no more than four of whom shall be of the  
23 same political party, appointed by the president of each member  
24 university, each of whom shall have background or experience in  
25 the field of journalism, media, or technology; and

26 (5) four members, no more than two of whom shall be of the  
27 same political party, appointed by a majority vote of the 12 board  
28 members appointed pursuant to paragraphs (1) through (4) of this  
29 subsection, of which: (a) one member shall represent the media  
30 sector; (b) one member shall represent the technology sector; and  
31 (c) two members, not employed by the State or a member university  
32 at the time of the member's appointment, shall have demonstrated a  
33 record of commitment to public service and understand the  
34 importance of media and technology to the State's future.

35 c. Each board member shall serve a term of four years **[except**  
36 **that the member representing the New Jersey media sector]** <sup>1</sup>and<sup>1</sup>  
37 shall serve in one of four classes as determined by the board of  
38 directors. Members of the first class shall serve an initial term of  
39 one year **[and the member representing the New Jersey technology**  
40 **sector shall serve]** , the second class an initial term of two years,  
41 the third class an initial term of three years, and the fourth class an  
42 initial term of four years. No board member shall serve more than  
43 two four-year terms. In the appointment of members to the board,  
44 every effort shall be made to strive for diversity and balance of

**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>Assembly AHI committee amendments adopted May 18, 2023.

1 representation according to gender, race, ethnicity, and geography  
2 within any limits allowed under law. Any vacancies in the  
3 appointed membership of the board occurring other than by  
4 expiration of term shall be filled in the same manner as the original  
5 appointment, but for the unexpired term only. Board members shall  
6 serve without compensation but may be reimbursed for necessary  
7 expenses incurred in the performance of their duties within the  
8 limits of funds available to the board.

9 (cf: P.L.2021 c.282, s.43)

10

11 2. Section 5 of P.L.2018, c.111 (C18A:64-98) is amended to  
12 read as follows:

13 5. a. The board shall appoint and employ an executive  
14 director, and fix the executive director's compensation and  
15 conditions of employment. The executive director shall be the chief  
16 executive, administrative, and operational officer of the consortium  
17 and shall direct and supervise the administrative affairs and the  
18 general management of the consortium. The executive director  
19 shall oversee the consortium's day-to-day operations, which  
20 includes working with the board to meet the consortium's goals and  
21 grant-making requirements, hiring and managing **program officers**  
22 **and administrative** staff necessary to carry out the purpose of  
23 P.L.2018, c.111 (C.18A:64-94, et seq.) **pursuant to subsection b. of**  
24 **this section**, acting as spokesperson for the consortium's work, and  
25 raising funds from external sources. The executive director shall  
26 attend all meetings of the board.

27 b. **(1)** The executive director shall employ program officers  
28 who shall be experienced practitioners with a strong understanding  
29 of the media or civic technology fields. The executive director shall  
30 strive to appoint program officers that represent the State's racial,  
31 ethnic, gender, and geographic diversity within any limits allowed  
32 under law. The program officers shall manage the grant-making  
33 process, in accordance with the consortium's goals. The grant-  
34 making process shall include soliciting, recommending, and  
35 processing grant proposals, working with grantees to ensure work  
36 on grant project ideas, and directing public engagement and  
37 evaluation efforts.

38 **(2)** The executive director shall employ no more than three  
39 administrative staff to provide operational support for the  
40 consortium, including office management, support for the executive  
41 director and program officers, coordination among member  
42 universities, payment to grantees, human resources, and logistics. **]**  
43 (Deleted by amendment, P.L. , c. (pending before the  
44 Legislature as this bill)

45 c. To save on startup, operating, and ongoing administrative  
46 costs, one member university shall be responsible for housing the  
47 consortium and providing back-office support.

48 (cf: P.L.2018, c.111, s.5)

1       3. Section 7 of P.L.2018, c.111 (C.18A:64-100) is amended to  
2 read as follows:

3       7. a. To be eligible for a grant from the consortium, a  
4 grant proposal application shall include, but not be limited to:

5       (1) evidence of a collaboration between at least one **【**member of  
6 the faculty or graduate student**】** academic or administrative  
7 representative of a member university and at least one local  
8 community organization, media organization, or technology-based  
9 organization;

10       (2) information demonstrating that the collaboration would be a  
11 mutually respectful partnership wherein all community and member  
12 university participants invest in a project designed to serve the  
13 consortium's mission and the goals cited pursuant to subsection b.  
14 of this section; and

15       (3) proof that the member university or universities in total will  
16 provide an amount of funding or make an in-kind contribution  
17 having a value that matches 10 percent of the amount of grant  
18 funding for which the applicant has applied, if **【**an application is  
19 sponsored by**】** one or more member universities acts as fiscal  
20 sponsor for the applicant. For a grant proposal application  
21 sponsored by a member university housing the consortium and  
22 providing back-office support pursuant to subsection c. of section 5  
23 of P.L.2018, c.111 (C.18A:64-98), the cost of that housing and  
24 support to that member university shall count towards the funding  
25 or in-kind contribution match from that member university.

26       b. The consortium shall provide grants for projects that achieve  
27 the following goals:

28       (1) improve the quantity and quality of civic information in New  
29 Jersey communities;

30       (2) give residents enhanced access to useful government data  
31 and public information through innovative applications, platforms,  
32 and technologies;

33       (3) train students, professionals, and community members in the  
34 practice of community storytelling, journalism, and media  
35 production;

36       (4) nurture better civic engagement and dialogue inside and  
37 between New Jersey communities;

38       (5) better meet the information needs of low-income  
39 communities and racial and ethnic communities that have been  
40 underserved by the media; and

41       (6) invest in research and practices that can help media outlets  
42 become more closely connected to their audiences and more  
43 sustainable without government support.

44       c. Any unspent State appropriations to the consortium from one  
45 fiscal year shall be carried over to the next fiscal year.

46 (cf: P.L.2018, c.111, s.7)

1       4. Section 8 of P.L.2018, c.111 (C.18A:64-101) is amended to  
2 read as follows:

3       8. A grant issued by the consortium shall be in the form of a  
4 grant agreement. A grant agreement shall include a provision  
5 establishing a set of metrics for assessing the goals contained in the  
6 agreement to ensure evaluation of a grantee project on how well  
7 those metrics are being met and any other relevant accountability  
8 measures. The set of metrics shall be established by the board in  
9 conjunction with **【the executive director and program officers】**  
10 consortium staff. The agreement shall include the expectations  
11 stated between the consortium and the grantee, which shall include,  
12 but not be limited to, a statement that:

13       a. the grantee shall be independent from the influence of the  
14 State, a member university, and any other grantor or contributor of  
15 funds or outside source; and

16       b. any grantor or other contributor of funds to the grantee shall  
17 acknowledge in writing the grantor's or contributor's understanding  
18 that the grant or donation does not entitle the grantor or contributor  
19 to dictate or influence the content of any work the grantee produces  
20 or may produce.

21 (cf: P.L.2018, c.111, s.8)

22

23       5. This act shall take effect immediately.