

# SENATE, No. 2016

## STATE OF NEW JERSEY 220th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED MARCH 3, 2022

**Sponsored by:**

**Senator ANDREW ZWICKER**

**District 16 (Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex and Somerset)**

**Senator M. TERESA RUIZ**

**District 29 (Essex)**

**Co-Sponsored by:**

**Senator Pou**

**SYNOPSIS**

Requires DHS to develop and implement SNAP outreach plan; appropriates funds.

**CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT**

As introduced.



**(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 5/26/2022)**

1 AN ACT establishing a Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program  
2 outreach plan, supplementing Title 44 of the Revised Statutes,  
3 and making an appropriation.  
4

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

8 1. a. The department, working in consultation and cooperation  
9 with community-based organizations and county welfare agencies,  
10 shall develop and implement a comprehensive SNAP outreach plan  
11 targeted at increasing potential beneficiaries' access to:

12 (1) information regarding the availability of SNAP, the criteria  
13 for eligibility for SNAP benefits, and the various methods to apply  
14 for SNAP benefits; and

15 (2) the technological means to apply for SNAP benefits.

16 b. At a minimum, the department's outreach plan developed  
17 pursuant to subsection a. of this section shall include:

18 (1) establishing a SNAP Navigator Grant Program, the purpose  
19 of which shall be to distribute grant funding, via a process and  
20 method determined by the commissioner, to community-based  
21 organizations to support the employment of SNAP application  
22 navigators. In distributing grants under the program, the  
23 commissioner shall give priority to community-based organizations  
24 that assist underserved communities;

25 (2) providing training to the appropriate staff at community-  
26 based organizations regarding the necessary steps to complete and  
27 submit a SNAP application, through all available methods,  
28 including online and by telephone. Staff trained pursuant to this  
29 paragraph shall assist clients with the SNAP application process;

30 (3) partnering with community-based organizations to increase  
31 client access to computers and the online SNAP application; and

32 (4) providing SNAP information and resources to beneficiaries  
33 of public assistance programs who are served by the department and  
34 county welfare agencies, and who are likely to be eligible for, but  
35 are not currently receiving, SNAP benefits.

36 c. As used in this section:

37 "Commissioner" means Commissioner of Human Services.

38 "County welfare agency" means that agency of county  
39 government, which is charged with the responsibility for  
40 determining eligibility and issuing benefits for public assistance  
41 programs. The term county welfare agency shall include, but not be  
42 limited to, agencies that may be locally known as the Board of  
43 Social Services; the Department of Citizen Services; the Division of  
44 Welfare; the Division of Social Services; the Division of Temporary  
45 Assistance and Social Services; or as the Department of Family and  
46 Community Development.

47 "Department" means the Department of Human Services.

1 “Public assistance program” means any program administered  
2 through the Department of Human Services, a county welfare agency,  
3 or a collaboration between the two which is authorized to provide  
4 assistance and services to needy persons, including, but not limited to:  
5 the New Jersey Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program,  
6 established pursuant to the federal “Food and Nutrition Act of  
7 2008,” Pub.L.110-246 (7 U.S.C. s.2011 et seq.); the Work First New  
8 Jersey program established pursuant to P.L.1997, c.38 (C.44:10-  
9 55 et seq.); and the Medicaid program established pursuant to  
10 P.L.1968, c.413 (C.30:4D-1 et seq.).

11 “SNAP” means the New Jersey Supplemental Nutrition  
12 Assistance Program, established pursuant to the federal “Food and  
13 Nutrition Act of 2008,” Pub.L.110-246 (7 U.S.C. s.2011 et seq.).  
14

15 2. The Commissioner of Human Services, pursuant to the  
16 “Administrative Procedure Act,” P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-  
17 1 et seq.), shall promulgate rules and regulations to effectuate the  
18 provisions of this act.  
19

20 3. There is appropriated from the General Fund to the  
21 Department of Human Services such an amount as is necessary, as  
22 determined by the Commissioner of Human Services, to effectuate  
23 paragraph (1) of subsection b. of section 1 of this act.  
24

25 4. This act shall take effect immediately.  
26  
27

#### 28 STATEMENT 29

30 This bill requires the Department of Human Services (DHS),  
31 working in consultation and cooperation with community-based  
32 organizations and county welfare agencies, to develop and  
33 implement a comprehensive outreach plan for the New Jersey  
34 Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). SNAP,  
35 formerly known as the Food Stamp Program, is a nutrition  
36 assistance program that serves as a safety net for low-income  
37 households.

38 Research indicates that only an estimated 70 percent of eligible  
39 individuals in New Jersey participate in SNAP, leaving many who  
40 could benefit unserved. As staff and resources dedicated to  
41 outreach on the county level are limited, it is the sponsor’s goal to  
42 increase the program’s participation rate, while reducing hunger in  
43 the State, through a comprehensive Statewide outreach effort.

44 Specifically, the bill directs that the outreach plan is to focus on  
45 increasing potential beneficiaries’ access to: 1) information  
46 regarding the availability of SNAP, the criteria for eligibility for  
47 SNAP benefits, and the various methods to apply for SNAP

1 benefits; and 2) the technological means to apply for SNAP  
2 benefits.

3 At a minimum, the plan is to include:

4 1) establishing a SNAP Navigator Grant Program, the purpose  
5 of which will be to distribute grant funding, via a process and  
6 method determined by the Commissioner of Human Services, to  
7 community-based organizations to support the employment of  
8 SNAP application navigators. In distributing grants under the  
9 program, the commissioner will be required to give priority to  
10 community-based organizations that assist underserved  
11 communities. The bill directs that funds, the amount to be  
12 determined by the commissioner, be appropriated from the General  
13 Fund to the DHS for the purposes of establishing this grant  
14 program;

15 2) providing training to the appropriate staff at community-  
16 based organizations regarding the necessary steps to complete and  
17 submit a SNAP application, through all available methods,  
18 including online and by telephone. Trained staff are to assist clients  
19 with the SNAP application process;

20 3) partnering with community-based organizations to increase  
21 client access to computers and the online SNAP application; and

22 4) providing SNAP information and resources to beneficiaries  
23 of public assistance programs who are served by the department and  
24 by county welfare agencies, and who are likely to be eligible for,  
25 but are not currently receiving, SNAP benefits.