

# SENATE, No. 3736

## STATE OF NEW JERSEY 220th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED MARCH 30, 2023

**Sponsored by:**

**Senator ROBERT W. SINGER**

**District 30 (Monmouth and Ocean)**

**Senator SHIRLEY K. TURNER**

**District 15 (Hunterdon and Mercer)**

**Co-Sponsored by:**

**Senator Diegnan**

**SYNOPSIS**

Establishes one-year pilot program for certain persons with disabilities; appropriates \$85,000.

**CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT**

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 6/15/2023)

1 AN ACT establishing a one-year pilot program for certain persons  
2 with disabilities and making an appropriation.

3  
4 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*  
5 *of New Jersey:*

6  
7 1. a. As used in this act:

8 “Direct support professional” means an individual who provides  
9 direct, non-medical supportive assistance, on a daily basis, to a  
10 person who has an intellectual or a developmental disability, with  
11 the aim of helping the person to: (1) become better integrated into  
12 the community or the least restrictive environment; (2) more  
13 effectively understand, communicate, and advocate for, the person’s  
14 individual needs and desires; (3) identify and participate in positive  
15 employment, job coaching, and training opportunities; (4) make  
16 informed choices, and better understand the options and possible  
17 consequences of choices relating to physical health, safety, and  
18 emotional well-being; (5) address challenging behaviors through a  
19 person-centered approach; (6) successfully engage in the basic  
20 activities of daily living; (7) identify and participate in activities  
21 that promote a healthy lifestyle; and (8) otherwise lead a self-  
22 directed and autonomous life.

23 b. There is established a one-year pilot program for persons  
24 with disabilities in the Department of Human Services to address  
25 social and community inclusion needs for such individuals through  
26 recreational, social, vocational, and other community-based  
27 activities. The purpose of the pilot program shall be to:

- 28 (1) create a vocational program for individuals with disabilities;  
29 (2) provide individuals with disabilities opportunities to learn  
30 recreational, social, and vocational skills;  
31 (3) provide individuals with disabilities the ability to engage in  
32 recreational, social, and vocational activities in order to develop  
33 relationships within the community; and  
34 (4) provide individuals with disabilities the opportunity to  
35 explore their interests and build confidence in their abilities.

36 c. The pilot program shall:

- 37 (1) select one or more direct support professionals, who possess  
38 training tailored to the specific needs of participants in the program,  
39 to assist these individuals with social, vocational, and recreational  
40 activities and skills;  
41 (2) select three or more participants in the program who are  
42 currently receiving services funded by the Department of Human  
43 Services and who:  
44 (a) are diagnosed with an intellectual or developmental  
45 disability and between the ages 21 and 30;  
46 (b) do not exhibit aggressive or self-injurious behavior;  
47 (c) are not diagnosed with both a mental illness and an  
48 intellectual or a developmental disability; and

- 1 (d) express interest in achieving personal, recreational, social,  
2 and vocational development;
- 3 (3) provide participants a minimum of six hours of weekly  
4 recreational, social, and vocational development that shall include,  
5 but shall not be limited to:
- 6 (a) educational-based courses that expand participants'  
7 vocational skills;
- 8 (b) soft skill development in the form of workshops that teach  
9 communication, teamwork, problem solving, and ethics;
- 10 (c) pairing participants with mentors who offer support and  
11 guidance to participants throughout the pilot program;
- 12 (d) various recreational and social activities for participants; and  
13 (e) opportunities for participants to volunteer in the community;
- 14 (4) collect data on a regular basis regarding the development of  
15 the participants; and
- 16 (5) provide quarterly progress reports, and a final, year-end  
17 report to participants' parents or guardians.
- 18 d. (1) The Commissioner of Human Services shall select an  
19 independent entity with expertise in evaluating vocational programs  
20 to evaluate the pilot program at the conclusion of the program. The  
21 evaluation shall assess the progress and satisfaction of the  
22 participants and analyze the budget of the pilot program. The  
23 evaluation shall be submitted to the Governor and Legislature in  
24 conjunction with the report prepared by the Commissioner of  
25 Human Services as required pursuant to paragraph (2) of this  
26 subsection.
- 27 (2) The Commissioner of Human Services shall prepare and  
28 submit a report to the Governor, and the Legislature, pursuant to  
29 section 2 of 2 P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), which shall contain  
30 information necessary to assess the success and budgetary needs of  
31 the pilot program no later than three months following the  
32 completion of the pilot program.
- 33
- 34 2. There is appropriated from the General Fund to the  
35 Department of Human Services such sums as may be necessary to  
36 effectuate the purposes of this act, but not to exceed \$85,000, as  
37 shall be determined by the Commissioner of Human Services.
- 38
- 39 3. This act shall take effect immediately and shall expire upon  
40 the submission of the Commissioner of Human Services's report as  
41 required pursuant to paragraph (2) of subsection d. of section 1 of  
42 this act.
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45 STATEMENT

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47 This bill establishes a one-year pilot program for certain persons  
48 with disabilities in the Department of Human Services and makes  
49 an appropriation.

1 Under the bill, the purpose of the pilot program is to: (1) create  
2 a vocational program for individuals with disabilities; (2) provide  
3 individuals with disabilities opportunities to learn recreational,  
4 social, and vocational skills; (3) provide individuals with  
5 disabilities the ability to engage in recreational, social, and  
6 vocational activities in order to develop relationships within the  
7 community; and (4) provide individuals with disabilities the  
8 opportunity to explore their interests and build confidence in their  
9 abilities.

10 The bill provides that the pilot program is to: (1) select one or  
11 more direct support professionals, as this term is defined in the bill,  
12 who possess training tailored to the specific needs of participants in  
13 the program, to assist these individuals with social, vocational, and  
14 recreational activities and skills; (2) select three or more  
15 participants in the program as provided for in the bill; (3) provide  
16 participants a minimum of six hours of weekly recreational, social,  
17 and vocational development as provided for in the bill; (4) collect  
18 data on a regular basis regarding the development of the  
19 participants; and (5) provide quarterly progress reports, and a final,  
20 year-end report to participants' parents or guardians.

21 Under the bill, the Commissioner of Human Services is to  
22 prepare and submit a report to the Governor and Legislature  
23 containing information necessary to assess the success and  
24 budgetary needs of the pilot program no later than three months  
25 following the completion of the pilot program.

26 The bill appropriates up to, but not more than, \$85,000 to the  
27 Department of Human Services, as may be necessary to effectuate  
28 the purposes of the pilot program.

29 It is the sponsor's belief that individuals with disabilities face  
30 many challenges in finding employment. Vocational programs  
31 provide training and support to help these individuals gain  
32 employment and become more independent. However social and  
33 recreational skills, as well as soft skills, are most often not directly  
34 addressed, affecting the individual's ability to sustain employment.  
35 In addition, there is limited research on the effectiveness of  
36 vocational programs for individuals with disabilities. This bill  
37 addresses the importance of teaching social, recreational, and soft  
38 skills to persons with disabilities and creates data for researchers to  
39 study the effectiveness of vocational programs for individuals with  
40 disabilities.