

P.L. 2025, CHAPTER 387, *approved January 20, 2026*
Assembly, No. 5798 (*Second Reprint*)

1 AN ACT requiring automatic enrollment into ¹**[energy]** utility bill
2 payment¹ assistance programs for certain individuals and
3 households and supplementing ¹**[Chapter 27D of]**¹ Title 52 of
4 the Revised Statutes.

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

8
9 1. a. ¹For the purposes of P.L. , c. (C.) (pending
10 before the Legislature as this bill), “ongoing assistance” means
11 assistance, including monetary assistance, provided to recipients of
12 a needs-based public assistance program that does not expire upon
13 reaching a pre-determined total amount of assistance received or
14 pre-determined total time period during which assistance was
15 received. “Ongoing assistance” shall include utility shutoff
16 prevention provided pursuant to the Winter Termination Program
17 and Summer Termination Program.

18 b. ¹The Department of Human Services ²**[¹together with the**
19 **Department of the Treasury¹]**² shall enter into a memorandum of
20 understanding with the Department of Community Affairs, the
21 Board of Public Utilities, and any other State agency that
22 administers a utility bill payment assistance program ¹**[or energy**
23 **efficiency program to]** that provides ongoing assistance to
24 recipients. The memorandum of understanding shall require the
25 Department of Human Services ²**[and Department of the Treasury]**²
26 to¹ provide information ¹to the Department of Community Affairs,
27 the Board of Public Utilities, and any other State agency that
28 administers a utility bill payment assistance program that provides
29 ongoing assistance to recipients¹ concerning recipients of ¹or
30 households eligible for any of the following¹ needs-based public
31 assistance ¹**[, including through the following]**¹ programs:

32 (1) Temporary Assistance for Needy Families pursuant to
33 Pub.L.104-193 (42 U.S.C. s.601 et seq.);

34 (2) Work First New Jersey pursuant to P.L.1997, c.38 (C.44:10-
35 55 et seq.);

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:

¹Assembly ATU committee amendments adopted December 11, 2025.

²Assembly AAP committee amendments adopted December 18, 2025.

(3) the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program pursuant to the federal "Food and Nutrition Act of 2008," Pub.L.88-525 (7 U.S.C. s.2011 et seq.);

(4) the supplemental security income program pursuant to the federal Social Security Act, Pub.L.92-603 (42 U.S.C. s.1381 et seq.); and

(5) any other State or federal needs-based public assistance program, as provided for in a memorandum of understanding required to be entered into pursuant to this subsection.

The information provided by the Department of Human Services ²['and the Department of the Treasury']² shall include information necessary to enroll those recipients of ¹or households eligible for a¹ needs-based public assistance ¹program listed in this subsection ²['if qualified,¹² into ¹any¹ utility bill payment assistance program ¹['or energy efficiency programs']¹ administered by the Department of Community Affairs, the Board of Public Utilities, and any other State agency that administers a utility bill payment assistance program ¹['or energy efficiency program, if qualified'] that provides ongoing assistance to recipients¹.

¹[b.] c. The Department of Community Affairs, the Board of Public Utilities, and any other State agency that administers a utility bill payment assistance program that provides ongoing assistance to recipients shall review the eligibility criteria and recipient data for any needs-based public assistance program administered by the respective agency to identify the information necessary to enroll those recipients of needs-based public assistance programs into any utility bill payment assistance program listed in subsection d. of this section.

d.¹ Notwithstanding any State law, rule, or regulation to the contrary, and only to the extent permitted by federal law, a memorandum of understanding entered into pursuant to subsection ¹[a.] b.¹ of this section shall further require the Department of Community Affairs, the Board of Public Utilities, or any other State agency that administers a utility bill payment assistance program ¹['or energy efficiency program,'] that provides ongoing assistance to recipients¹ to, based on the information received from the Department of Human Services ²['and the Department of the Treasury']², and the review conducted pursuant to subsection c. of this section¹, automatically enroll ¹['recipients of the following programs'] eligible households¹ into ¹the following¹ utility bill payment assistance ¹['program or energy efficiency']¹ programs that the State agency administers ¹['and for which the individual or household qualifies']¹:

(1) ¹['Temporary Assistance for Needy Families pursuant to Pub.L.104-193 (42 U.S.C. s.601 et seq.);

(2) Work First New Jersey pursuant to P.L.1997, c.38 (C.44:10-55 et seq.);

(3) the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program pursuant to the federal "Food and Nutrition Act of 2008," Pub.L.88-525 (7 U.S.C. s.2011 et seq.);

(4) the supplemental security income program pursuant to the federal Social Security Act, Pub.L.92-603 (42 U.S.C.s.1381 et seq.); and

(5) the "Universal Service Fund," established pursuant to section 12 of P.L.1999, c.23 (C.48:3-60);

(2) the Winter Termination Program codified pursuant to P.L.2021, c.317 (C.40A:5A-28 et al.);

(3) the Summer Termination Program established pursuant to P.L.2025, c.145 (C.40A:5A-31 et al.); and

(4)¹ any other State ¹or federal needs-based public assistance program, as provided for in a memorandum of understanding required to be entered into pursuant to subsection a. of this section utility bill payment assistance program that provides ongoing assistance to recipients. A State agency shall not automatically enroll a household into a utility bill payment assistance program that provides a one-time grant or other limited-use assistance¹.

2. The Department of Community Affairs, Board of Public Utilities, and any other State agency that administers ¹[an]¹ a utility bill payment assistance program ¹or energy efficiency program may that provides ongoing assistance to recipients shall¹, in consultation with the Department of Human Services ²¹and the Department of the Treasury¹², pursuant to the "Administrative Procedure Act," P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.), promulgate rules and regulations, as necessary, to effectuate the provisions of P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill).

3. This act shall take effect on the first day of the sixth month next following enactment, except that the Department of Human Services, ²¹Department of the Treasury,¹² Department of Community Affairs, Board of Public Utilities, and any other State agency that administers a utility bill payment assistance program ¹or energy efficiency program that provides ongoing assistance to recipients¹ may take action to enter into a memorandum of understanding as required by section 1 of P.L. , c. ¹(C.____)¹ (pending before the Legislature as this bill)¹,¹ and ¹to¹ establish rules and regulations in advance of the effective date as necessary.

Requires automatic enrollment into utility bill payment assistance programs for certain individuals and households.