

LEGISLATIVE FISCAL ESTIMATE

ASSEMBLY, No. 1315

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

222nd LEGISLATURE

DATED: OCTOBER 23, 2026

SUMMARY

- Synopsis:** Modifies collective statewide transfer agreement and reverse transfer agreement; establishes New Jersey Transfer Ombudsperson within Office of Secretary of Higher Education.
- Type of Impact:** Annual State expenditure increase.
- Agencies Affected:** Office of the Secretary of Higher Education; participating institutions of higher education.

Office of Legislative Services Estimate

Fiscal Impact	Annual
State Expenditure Increase	\$300,000

- The Office of Legislative Services (OLS) estimates that this bill would primarily result in an annual State expenditure increase of approximately \$300,000 for the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education. The increase in costs is associated with the employment of a New Jersey Transfer Ombudsperson.
- The OLS notes that participating institutions of higher education may incur indeterminate, likely marginal, cost increases associated with the collection of data, to the extent that the required data is not already collected and existing staff and resources are not sufficient to collect the required data.

BILL DESCRIPTION

The bill modifies the Statewide transfer agreements for the transfer of academic credit and reverse credit at participating institutions of higher education. The bill also establishes the position of New Jersey Transfer Ombudsperson within the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education.

Under current law, each public institution of higher education is required to establish and enter into a collective Statewide transfer agreement that provides for the seamless transfer of academic credits across public institutions of higher education. Similarly, current law requires institutions of higher education, both public and independent, to establish and enter into a collective Statewide reverse transfer agreement for the awarding of associate degrees by the county colleges. The bill

modifies both the collective Statewide transfer agreement and the collective Statewide reverse transfer agreement and requires each public institution of higher education to enter into the modified agreements.

The bill additionally establishes the position of the New Jersey Transfer Ombudsperson within the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education. The purpose of the ombudsperson is to serve as a resource for students and participating institutions of higher education regarding compliance with the credit transfer agreement. The ombudsperson may, upon request, serve as an impartial third-party mediator of disputes between one or more students and a participating institution or between two or more participating institutions. Under the bill, the ombudsperson is also responsible for the preparation of the annual credit transfer report.

The bill also requires each participating institution of higher education to provide transfer students with data on program outcomes of students who have transferred from other participating institutions of higher education in the State, including degree completion rates.

FISCAL ANALYSIS

EXECUTIVE BRANCH

None received.

OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE SERVICES

The OLS estimates that this bill would primarily result in an annual State expenditure increase of approximately \$300,000 for the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education to hire a New Jersey Transfer Ombudsperson. The OLS anticipates that the New Jersey Transfer Ombudsperson is likely to receive salary and benefits commensurate to the title. Based on the most recent payroll information available, the median salary for a State ombudsperson is \$122,000. When factoring in estimated fringe benefit costs of about \$80,600, total compensation is expected to be \$202,600. The OLS further notes that the most recent payroll information indicates a maximum salary of \$172,500 for a State ombudsperson, with fringe benefits costs of about \$114,000. Thus, total compensation in this case would be \$286,500. Accounting for potential fluctuations, including inflation and negotiated salary increases for State employees, the OLS estimates that the annual cost of employing a New Jersey Transfer Ombudsperson is likely to be approximately \$300,000 annually.

The OLS notes that there may be additional costs incurred by participating institutions of higher education associated with the collection of data, to the extent that the required data is not already collected and existing staff and resources are not sufficient to collect the required data. The OLS anticipates that any increased costs resulting from increased data collection would be marginal.

Section: *Education*

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This legislative fiscal estimate has been produced by the Office of Legislative Services due to the failure of the Executive Branch to respond to our request for a fiscal note.

This fiscal estimate has been prepared pursuant to P.L.1980, c.67 (C.52:13B-6 et seq.).