

LEGISLATIVE FISCAL ESTIMATE

ASSEMBLY, No. 2772

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

222nd LEGISLATURE

DATED: OCTOBER 22, 2026

SUMMARY

Synopsis: Requires Division of Child Protection and Permanency to develop suicide screening and crisis response training for caseworkers.

Type of Impact: Annual State expenditure and revenue increases.

Agencies Affected: Department of Children and Families.

Office of Legislative Services Estimate

Fiscal Impact	Annual
State Expenditure Increase	Indeterminate
State Revenue Increase	Indeterminate

- Absent information from the Department of Children and Families, the Office of Legislative Services (OLS) lacks the informational basis to determine to what extent all new and current Division of Child Protection and Permanency caseworkers undergo specific training on suicide screening and crisis response planning.
- As of FY2023, new Division of Child Protection and Permanency caseworkers were required to take at least three courses addressing mental health disorders and the child welfare system. Current caseworkers also can select from multiple courses addressing suicide prevention and youth mental health offered by the New Jersey Child Welfare Training Partnership. To the extent that these new caseworker and continuing education courses satisfy the bill’s suicide prevention and crisis response training requirements, the department’s costs will be minimized.
- Insofar as the department incurs additional costs to provide the requisite caseworker training, State revenues will increase in the form of federal reimbursements under the Social Security Act.

BILL DESCRIPTION

The bill requires the Division of Child Protection and Permanency to develop, and periodically review and update, a training course and curriculum on suicide screening and crisis response

planning for caseworkers. The training course and curriculum would train caseworkers to: recognize the warning signs and risk factors for youth suicide through use of validated suicide prevention tools; establish response protocols for at-risk youth; and coordinate care with mental health professionals, schools, resource parents, and community supports.

The division would ensure that the training course is included in caseworkers' initial training and, biennially, as part of caseworkers' in-service training. Caseworkers hired prior to the bill's effective date would be required to satisfactorily complete the training course within two years of the bill's effective date.

FISCAL ANALYSIS

EXECUTIVE BRANCH

None received.

OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE SERVICES

Absent information from the Department of Children and Families, the OLS lacks the informational basis to determine to what extent all new and current Division of Child Protection and Permanency caseworkers undergo specific training on suicide screening and crisis response planning.

In FY2023, new caseworkers were required to take the following courses that cover mental health issues: Substance Abuse 1: Understanding Substance Abuse, Mental Health Disorders, Co Occurring Disorders, and Child Welfare; Engaging Families with Mental Health Conditions; and Substance Abuse 3: Mental Health Disorders Treatment and Recovery.

The department's Office of Training and Professional Development additionally funds the New Jersey Child Welfare Training Partnership, in collaboration with three State universities, to provide training and professional development for division caseworkers. The Child Welfare Training Partnership's course offerings include multiple courses addressing suicide prevention and youth mental health. To the extent that these new caseworker and continuing education courses satisfy the course requirements under the bill, the department's costs will be minimal or somewhat reduced.

Insofar as the department incurs additional costs to provide the requisite caseworker training under the bill, State revenues will increase, in the form of federal reimbursements under Title IV-B (child welfare prevention and family support services) and Title IV-E (foster care, adoption assistance, prevention programs) of the Social Security Act.

Section: Human Services

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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.).