

LEGISLATIVE FISCAL ESTIMATE

[First Reprint]

ASSEMBLY, No. 4124

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
222nd LEGISLATURE

DATED: OCTOBER 22, 2026

SUMMARY

Synopsis:	Provides for background checks and other requirements for certain agencies providing temporary home for persons in crisis.
Type of Impact:	Annual State expenditure increase.
Agencies Affected:	Department of Children and Families; Department of Law and Public Safety; the Judiciary.

Office of Legislative Services Estimate

Fiscal Impact	Annual
State Expenditure Increase	Indeterminate

- The Office of Legislative Services (OLS) estimates that this bill would increase annual expenditures by an indeterminate amount for the Department of Children and Families, the Department Law and Public Safety, and the Judiciary because of the newly established system under the bill that allows for the voluntary, temporary placement of a person in crisis in the home of a volunteer.
- The cost drivers for these expenses include the following unpredictable information: the number of persons in crisis who volunteer for placement; the number of individuals who volunteer to house a person in crisis; the number of persons 18 years of age or older residing in prospective volunteers' homes; the reimbursement rates paid by the Department of Children and Families to approved agencies under the bill; and the number of entities who contract with the department to facilitate placements.

BILL DESCRIPTION

This bill provides for an agency approved by the Department of Children and Families to place children for adoption in New Jersey to facilitate the voluntary temporary placement of a person in crisis in the home of a volunteer, who is to provide a temporary home during the time that the person is in crisis. As defined under the bill, “a person in crisis” means a parent under 21 years of



age with an infant or a pregnant woman under 21 years of age who is in temporary situation, which includes homelessness, hospitalization, substance abuse or mental health issues, domestic violence, or unemployment. Any voluntary temporary placement of a person in crisis under the age of 18 is required to be made in conjunction with a court filing by the department.

An approved agency is to enter into a contract with the department prior to facilitating a placement. These agencies are required to: provide oversight of a placement by visiting the placement home weekly; provide assistance to help guide the person in crisis in restoring a stable life; and locate a different voluntary temporary placement if, as determined by the approved agency, a change is necessary.

An approved agency is also to conduct a home study of a prospective volunteer to determine the suitability of the home prior to a prospective volunteer providing the temporary home. As part of the home study, the approved agency is to consider background checks from the State's child abuse registry and obtain State and federal criminal history record checks for each prospective volunteer and person 18 years of age or older residing in the prospective volunteer's home. The costs of the checks are to be paid by the department. The bill also provides that the approved agency is to forward each home study to the department, prior to placement of a person in crisis in the home of a prospective volunteer. The approved agency is to maintain a record of each home study.

FISCAL ANALYSIS

EXECUTIVE BRANCH

None received.

OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE SERVICES

The OLS estimates that this bill would increase annual expenditures by an indeterminate amount for various State departments because of the newly established system under the bill that allows for the voluntary temporary placement of a person in crisis, as defined in the bill, in the home of a volunteer. Under this system, expenses for the Department of Children and Families would grow due to the following: 1) performing a record information check of the Division of Child Protection and Permanency's child abuse registry for each prospective volunteer and person 18 years of age or older residing in the prospective volunteer's home; 2) paying the State Police for a State and federal criminal history record check of each prospective volunteer and each person 18 years of age and older residing in the prospective volunteer's home; 3) expanding staff, as needed, to administer and monitor new or existing contracts with entities that facilitate a voluntary temporary placement of a person in crisis in the home of a volunteer; and 4) contract reimbursements paid to approved agencies to facilitate the placement of persons in crisis with volunteers. Additionally, the Department of Law and Public Safety would incur additional expenses for the Division of State Police to perform the criminal background checks required under the bill. And finally, the Judiciary would experience a growth in costs for cases under this new system involving persons in crisis under the age of 18 due to the bill's court filing requirement for this population, to the extent that the courts are not already involved in these cases.

The cost drivers for these expenses include the following unpredictable information: the number of persons in crisis who volunteer for placement; the number of individuals who volunteer to house a person in crisis; the number of persons 18 years of age or older residing in prospective volunteers' homes; the reimbursement rates paid by the Department of Children and Families to

approved agencies under the bill; and the number of entities that contract with the department to facilitate placements.

For reference, as of February 2024, the Department of Children and Families contracted with 16 in-State agencies and 14 out-of-State agencies to provide adoption services. Under the bill, these entities would be eligible, but not required, to facilitate the voluntary placement of a person in crisis. The OLS also notes that while the actual costs under the bill related to child abuse record information checks and State and federal background checks is indeterminate because the number of checks needed to be performed is unknown, under the New Jersey Administrative Code the department charges a \$10.00 regulatory fee per child abuse record information check to help defray its expenses associated with this work. Similarly, as of February 2025, the State Police charged \$57.73 per individual to process a State and federal background check.

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.).