ASSEMBLY, No. 5445

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

222nd LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED SEPTEMBER 14, 2026

Sponsored by:
Assemblyman WILLIAM F. MOEN, JR.
District 5 (Camden and Gloucester)
Assemblywoman SHAMA A. HAIDER
District 37 (Bergen)

SYNOPSIS

Requires law enforcement, prosecutorial, and judicial training on impact of trauma.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.

(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 10/5/2026)

AN ACT concerning trauma-informed training, supplementing Title 2C of the New Jersey Statutes, and amending various parts of the statutory law.

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

1. (New section) a. In addition to any other requirements under current law, training provided to municipal prosecutors pursuant to section 10 of P.L.1999, c.349 (C.2B:25-10); law enforcement officers, assistant county prosecutors, municipal court judges, Superior Court judges, and judicial personnel pursuant to section 4 of P.L.1991, c.261 (C.2C:25-20); members of a county Sexual Assault Response Team pursuant to section 4 of P.L.2001, c.81 (C.52:4B-52); law enforcement officers pursuant to section 1 of P.L.2017, c.192 (C.52:4B-54.1); and county prosecutors and assistant county prosecutors pursuant to section 1 of P.L.2021, c.66 (C.52:4B-54.2) shall include information on the application of trauma-informed practices during real-time interactions with a survivor of domestic violence or sexual assault.

b. Information on the application of trauma-informed practices during real-time interactions with a survivor of domestic violence or sexual assault shall include, but not be limited to:

(1) neurobiological effects of trauma on memory, behavior, and communication;

(2) emotional state-dependent recall and the impact of stress on memory retrieval;

(3) recognition of trauma responses including dissociation, shutdown, freeze, and fawn responses;

(4) trauma-informed interviewing practices;

(5) considerations related to pacing, sequencing, and environmental factors during interviews and testimony;

(6) impact of nervous system dysregulation on communication and witness presentation;

(7) application of trauma-informed principles during courtroom engagement and judicial proceedings; and

(8) current evidence-based research and best practices regarding trauma and survivor interaction.

2. Section 10 of P.L.1999, c.349 (C.2B:25-10) is amended to read as follows:

10. a. (1) The Attorney General, in consultation with **[**the**]** county and municipal prosecutors, shall develop curricula for training programs for **[**all**]** municipal prosecutors which shall

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 <u>thus</u> is new matter.

include, but not be limited to, a domestic violence training [and include topics] which includes information regarding the:

(a) [the] dynamics of domestic violence[,];

(b) [the] impact of domestic violence on children[,];

(c) [the] impact of trauma on survivors[,];

(d) risks for lethality in domestic violence cases[,];

(e) accountability of offenders [accountability,];

(f) safety planning and services for survivors of domestic violence[,];

(g) application of trauma-informed practices during real-time interactions with a survivor pursuant to section 1 of P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill); and

(h) [the] impact of racial bias and discrimination on survivors and marginalized communities.

(2) Participation in such training programs shall be voluntary, except that participation in the domestic violence training program shall be mandatory. An attorney [successfully completing] who successfully completes a training program shall receive such certification or recognition as deemed appropriate by the Attorney General.

b. The domestic violence training course and curriculum shall be reviewed at least every two years and modified by the Division of Criminal Justice [from time to time] , in consultation with the Division of Violence Intervention and Victim Assistance, as [need may require] necessary.

The Attorney General shall be responsible for ensuring that [all] a [new] municipal [prosecutors] prosecutor appointed after the effective date of P.L.2021, c.378 who [have] has not previously served as a municipal prosecutor for a municipality [attend] attends an initial domestic violence training within 90 days of appointment or transfer and annual in-service training of at least four hours as described in paragraph (3) of subsection b. of section 4 of P.L. 1991, c.261 (C.2C:25-20). The training shall not be required for [any] a municipal prosecutor who was appointed to that office prior to the effective date of P.L.2021, c.378 who is subsequently [re-appointed] reappointed to that office or appointed as a municipal prosecutor for another municipality after that effective date.

(cf: P.L.2021, c.378, s.1)

3. Section 4 of P.L.1991, c.261 (C.2C:25-20) is amended to read as follows:

4. a. (1) The Division of Criminal Justice shall develop and approve a training course and curriculum on the handling, investigation, and response procedures concerning reports of domestic violence and abuse and neglect of the elderly and disabled. This training course and curriculum shall be reviewed at

least every two years and modified by the Division of Criminal Justice [from time to time] as [need may require] necessary. The Division of Criminal Justice shall distribute the curriculum to [all] each local police [agencies] agency.

(2) The Attorney General shall be responsible for ensuring training as follows:

(a) [all] a law enforcement [officers] officer shall attend initial training within 90 days of appointment or transfer and annual in-service training of at least four hours as described in this section. Once every three years, this in-service training requirement shall be satisfied through in-person instructor-led training.

(b) [all] an assistant county [prosecutors] prosecutor involved in the handling of domestic violence cases shall attend initial training within 90 days of appointment or transfer and annual in-service training of at least four hours as described in this section.

b. (1) The Administrative Director of the Courts shall develop and approve a training course and a curriculum for [all] municipal court judges, Superior Court judges responsible for the adjudication of domestic violence matters, and judicial personnel involved with the intake and processing of domestic violence complaints.

(a) [All judges] municipal court judges and Superior Court judges and judicial personnel identified in this section shall participate in core training regarding issues such as the dynamics of domestic violence, the impact of domestic violence on children, trauma-informed danger assessments, batterer intervention programs, and domestic violence risk factors and lethality.

(b) [In addition, municipal] municipal court judges shall receive [specific] supplemental training related to the issuance of temporary restraining orders in emergent situations.

(c) Superior Court judges responsible for the adjudication of domestic violence matters shall receive supplemental training related to the issuance and enforcement of temporary and final restraining orders, including factors considered when determining if a final restraining order should be issued, child custody and parenting plans, the setting of child support, distribution of property and ongoing housing expenses, and counseling.

(d) the core curriculum and [individualized] supplemental training programs shall be reviewed at least every two years and modified by the Administrative Director of the Courts [from time to time] as [need may require] necessary.

(2) The Administrative Director of the Courts shall be responsible for ensuring that [all] municipal court judges, Superior Court judges responsible for the adjudication of domestic violence matters, and judicial personnel involved with the intake and processing of domestic violence complaints attend initial training

within 90 days of appointment or transfer and annual in-service training as described in this section.

(3) The Attorney General and the Administrative Director of the Courts shall provide that **[**all**]** training on the handling of domestic violence matters required under this subsection shall include information concerning the:

(a) **[**the**]** impact of domestic violence on society**[**, and include topics regarding**]** ;

(b) **[**the**]** dynamics of domestic violence**[**,**]**;

(c) **[**the**]** impact of domestic violence on children**[**,**]**;

(d) **[**the**]** impact of trauma on survivors**[**,**]**;

(e) risks for lethality in domestic violence cases**[**,**]**;

(f) safety planning and services for survivors of domestic violence**[**,**]**;

(g) **[**the**]** impact of racial bias and discrimination on survivors and marginalized communities**[**,**]**;

(h) **[**the**]** statutory and case law concerning domestic violence**[**,**]**;

(i) **[**the**]** necessary elements of a protection order**[**,**]**;

(j) **[**the**]** guidelines regarding when domestic violence incidents trigger mandatory or discretionary arrest**[**,**]**;

(k) policies and procedures as promulgated or ordered by the Attorney General or the Supreme Court**[**, and**]**;

(l) application of trauma-informed practices during real-time interactions with a survivor pursuant to section 1 of P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill); and

(m) the use of available community resources, support services, available sanctions, and treatment options.

c. Law enforcement agencies shall: (1) establish domestic crisis teams or participate in established domestic crisis teams, and (2) shall train individual officers in methods of dealing with domestic violence and neglect and abuse of the elderly and disabled. The teams may include social workers, clergy or other persons trained in counseling, crisis intervention or in the treatment of domestic violence and neglect and abuse of the elderly and disabled **[**victims**]**.

(cf: P.L.2021, c.377, s.1)

4. Section 4 of P.L.2001, c.81 (C.52:4B-52) is amended to read as follows:

4. The program coordinator shall:

a. Coordinate the county Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner program in accordance with standard protocols for the provision of information and services to **[**victims**]** survivors of sexual assault developed by the Attorney General pursuant to subsection d. of section 6 of P.L.1985, c.404 (C.52:4B-44);

b. Perform forensic sexual assault examinations on ⟦victims⟧ survivors of sexual assault in accordance with the standards developed by the Attorney General and appropriate medical and nursing standards of care;

c. Designate one or more licensed physicians or certified forensic sexual assault nurse examiners to perform forensic sexual assault examinations on ⟦victims⟧ survivors of sexual assault in accordance with the standards developed by the Attorney General and appropriate medical and nursing standards of care;

d. Develop and implement standardized guidelines for forensic sexual assault examinations performed by designated physicians or certified forensic sexual assault nurse examiners in the county;

e. Develop and implement a standardized education and training program to provide instruction to members of the county Sexual Assault Response Team established pursuant to section 6 of ⟦this act⟧ P.L.2001, c.81 (C.52:4B-54) which shall include, but not be limited to ⟦, instruction in the following areas⟧:

(1) the importance of a coordinated, multi-disciplinary response to a report of sexual assault;

(2) the policies and procedures which govern the responsibilities of each team member;

(3) the psychological effects of sexual assault and rape trauma syndrome on the ⟦victim⟧ survivor and the ⟦victim's⟧ survivor's family and friends;

(4) the collection, handling and documentation of forensic evidence; ⟦and⟧

(5) the confidentiality issues associated with the treatment of a ⟦victim⟧ survivor of sexual assault and the investigation of a report of sexual assault; and

(6) the application of trauma-informed practices during real-time interactions with a survivor pursuant to section 1 of P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill).

f. Establish, in cooperation with licensed health care facilities, private waiting rooms and areas designated for forensic sexual assault examinations and the provision of rape care services in the licensed health care facilities participating in the program;

g. Develop, in cooperation with licensed health care facilities, protocols for the storage of forensic evidence;

h. Provide appropriate services to ⟦victims⟧ survivors of sexual assault, including the opportunity to tend to personal hygiene needs, obtain fresh clothing and speak with a rape care advocate prior to and during any medical procedure or law enforcement investigation, unless the ⟦victim⟧ survivor requires immediate medical attention, as appropriate;

i. Collaborate with law enforcement officials and the county rape care program to ensure that the needs of ⟦victims⟧ survivors of sexual assault are met in a compassionate manner;

j. Participate in regular meetings of the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Program Coordinating Council established pursuant to section 7 of ⟦this act⟧ P.L.2001, c.81 (C.52:4B-55); and

k. Develop and implement procedures to ensure that ⟦victims⟧ survivors of sexual assault are not charged ⟦any⟧ a fee for services that are directly associated with forensic sexual assault examinations, including routine medical screening, medications for prophylaxis of sexually transmitted infections, pregnancy tests, emergency contraception, supplies, equipment, and use of space.

As used in this section and section 6 of ⟦this act⟧ P.L.2001, c.81 (C.52:4B-54), "rape care advocate" means a victim counselor, as defined pursuant to section 3 of P.L.1987, c.169 (C.2A:84A-22.14), who specializes in the provision of rape care services.

(cf: P.L.2011, c.106, s.2)

5. Section 1 of P.L.2017, c.192 (C.52:4B-54.1) is amended to read as follows:

1. a. The Division of Criminal Justice, in consultation with the Division of Violence Intervention and Victim Assistance, shall develop or approve a training course and curriculum for law enforcement officers on the handling, investigation, and response procedures for reports of sexual assault. This training course and curriculum shall be reviewed at least every two years by the division and modified as ⟦need may require⟧ necessary. The division shall make the curriculum available to ⟦all⟧ each law enforcement ⟦agencies⟧ agency in the State.

b. The Attorney General shall be responsible for ensuring that ⟦all⟧ each law enforcement ⟦officers complete⟧ officer completes in-service training triennially on the handling of sexual assault matters.

c. The training course and curriculum shall include a component on the application of trauma-informed practices during real-time interactions with a survivor pursuant to section 1 of P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill).

(cf: P.L.2017, c.192, s.1)

6. Section 1 of P.L.2021, c.66 (C.52:4B-54.2) is amended to read as follows:

1. a. The Division of Criminal Justice shall develop or approve a triennial in-service training course and curriculum specifically for every county prosecutor and each assistant county prosecutor to whom sexual assault cases are assigned on how to appropriately handle, investigate, and respond to reports of sexual assault.

b. The training course and curriculum shall include a component emphasizing the value of restorative justice in sexual assault cases and the application of trauma-informed practices

during real-time interactions with a survivor pursuant to section 1 of P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill).

c. The division shall make the training course and curriculum available to ⟦all⟧ each county prosecutor's ⟦offices⟧ office in the State.

d. The division shall review the training course and curriculum every five years, in consultation with nationally recognized trainers with expertise in trauma-informed care and the New Jersey Coalition Against Sexual Assault, and ⟦make any⟧ modify the training course and curriculum as necessary ⟦modifications⟧.

e. The division may make the training course and curriculum available in an online format, but county prosecutors and appropriate assistant county prosecutors shall complete the course and curriculum in person every six years.

f. The Attorney General shall be responsible for ensuring that ⟦all⟧ county prosecutors and appropriate assistant county prosecutors triennially complete the in-service training on handling sexual assault matters required by this section.

g. A county prosecutor or assistant county prosecutor appointed after the effective date of P.L.2021, c.66 (C.52:4B-54.2 et al.) shall complete the training course and curriculum within 60 days of the county prosecutor's or assistant county prosecutor's initial appointment. The division shall determine whether training in the handling of sexual assault cases completed by a county prosecutor or assistant county prosecutor appointed prior to the effective date of P.L.2021, c.66 (C.52:4B-54.2 et al.) complies with the requirements of this section. If the training does not comply with these requirements, the county prosecutor or assistant county prosecutor shall complete the training course and curriculum required by this section within 60 days of the effective date of P.L.2021, c.66 (C.52:4B-54.2 et al.).

h. The division shall develop an open process pursuant to which the division will accept bids by organizations to assist in developing and providing the training required by this section.

(cf: P.L.2021, c.66, s.1)

7. This act shall take effect on the first day of the thirteenth month following enactment, but the Attorney General and the Administrative Director of the Courts may take such anticipatory administrative action in advance as shall be necessary for the implementation of this act.

STATEMENT

This bill requires law enforcement, prosecutorial, and judicial training on the impact of trauma.

Under the bill, certain law enforcement, prosecutorial, and judicial professionals must receive training on the application of trauma-informed practices during real-time interactions with a survivor of domestic violence or sexual assault.

Training on the application of trauma-informed practices during real-time interactions with survivors must include information on:

- neurobiological effects of trauma on memory, behavior, and communication;
- emotional state-dependent recall and the impact of stress on memory retrieval;
- recognition of trauma responses including dissociation, shutdown, freeze, and fawn responses;
- trauma-informed interviewing practices;
- considerations related to pacing, sequencing, and environmental factors during interviews and testimony;
- impact of nervous system dysregulation on communication and witness presentation;
- application of trauma-informed principles during courtroom engagement and judicial proceedings; and
- current evidence-based research and best practices regarding trauma and survivor interaction.

Under current law, certain law enforcement, prosecutorial, and judicial professionals who work with survivors of domestic violence or sexual assault must attend trainings on domestic violence and sexual assault.

These law enforcement, prosecutorial, and judicial professionals include:

- Municipal prosecutors;
- Law enforcement officers;
- County prosecutors;
- Assistant county prosecutors;
- Municipal court judges;
- Superior Court judges responsible for the adjudication of domestic violence matters;
- Judicial personnel involved with the intake and processing of domestic violence complaints; and
- Members of a county Sexual Assault Response Team.

Although these trainings require instruction related to trauma-informed practices, these trainings do not explicitly require training on how trauma may affect memory, behavior, communication, and testimony when a law enforcement, prosecutorial, or judicial professional actively interacts with a survivor.