

**SENATE, No. 4670**

**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**  
**222nd LEGISLATURE**

INTRODUCED OCTOBER 1, 2026

**Sponsored by:**  
**Senator BENJIE E. WIMBERLY**  
**District 35 (Bergen and Passaic)**

**SYNOPSIS**

Expands services provided to homeless youth by street outreach, basic center shelter, and transitional living programs.

**CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT**

As introduced.



1 AN ACT concerning homeless youth and amending and  
2 supplementing P.L.1999, c.224.

3  
4 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*  
5 *of New Jersey:*

6  
7 1. Section 5 of P.L.1999, c.224 (C.9:12A-6) is amended to read  
8 as follows:

9 5. A street outreach program for homeless youth shall enhance  
10 the accessibility of resources to a homeless youth by locating,  
11 contacting and providing services to the youth through mobile  
12 outreach.

13 The services provided by the street outreach program, as  
14 determined by the department's contract, shall consider the age,  
15 gender, and social and developmental needs of homeless youth, be  
16 culturally and linguistically appropriate, to the extent practicable,  
17 and may include, but **[are]** not be limited to:

- 18 a. Assistance in finding temporary or short-term shelter;
- 19 b. Assistance in obtaining food;
- 20 c. A clothing allowance;
- 21 d. Individual and group counseling in the area of violence  
22 prevention;
- 23 e. Information and referral services regarding organizations and  
24 agencies that provide support services to homeless youth; **[and]**
- 25 f. Assistance in obtaining medical care;
- 26 g. Assistance in completing and submitting a Free Application  
27 for Federal Student Aid or other financial aid form to determine the  
28 level of need and eligibility for State and federal financial aid  
29 programs, if appropriate; and
- 30 h. Assistance in obtaining trauma informed services specific to  
31 youth who are survivors of human trafficking or sexual  
32 exploitation.

33 (cf: P.L.1999, c.224, s.5)

34  
35 2. Section 6 of P.L.1999, c.224 (C.9:12A-7) is amended to read  
36 as follows:

37 6. a. A basic center shelter program shall provide a homeless  
38 youth with 24-hour, seven-day a week, walk-in access to  
39 emergency, short-term residential care. The services offered by the  
40 program shall provide a homeless youth with a stable out-of-home  
41 placement and help reunite the youth with his parent or legal  
42 guardian, except in the case where family reunification is not in the  
43 youth's best interest.

44 The services provided at the basic center shelter, as determined  
45 by the department's contract, shall consider the age, gender, and

**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.

1 social and developmental needs of the homeless youth, be culturally  
2 and linguistically appropriate, to the extent practicable, and may  
3 include, but **are** not be limited to, the following core services:

4 (1) Family reunification services;

5 (2) Individual, family and group counseling;

6 (3) Food;

7 (4) A clothing allowance;

8 (5) Medical care;

9 (6) Educational services, including assistance in completing and  
10 submitting a Free Application for Federal Student Aid or other  
11 financial aid form to determine the level of need and eligibility for  
12 State and federal financial aid programs;

13 (7) Recreational activities; **and**

14 (8) Advocacy and referral services; and

15 (9) Trauma-informed services specific to youth who are  
16 survivors of human trafficking or sexual exploitation.

17 b. If a homeless youth under the age of 18 is admitted to a basic  
18 center shelter, the shelter shall attempt to notify the youth's parent  
19 or legal guardian of the youth's admission within 24 hours after the  
20 admission. The notification shall include a description of the  
21 youth's physical and emotional condition and the circumstances  
22 surrounding the youth's admission to the basic center shelter, unless  
23 there are compelling reasons not to provide the parent or legal  
24 guardian with this information. Compelling reasons include, but are  
25 not limited to, circumstances in which the youth is or has been a  
26 victim of child abuse or neglect.

27 c. If a homeless youth under the age of 18 is admitted to a basic  
28 center shelter, the shelter shall notify the division of the youth's  
29 admission to the basic center shelter within 24 hours after the  
30 admission to determine if the youth is in the legal care or custody of  
31 the division. If the homeless youth is in the legal care or custody of  
32 the division, the division, in consultation with the basic center  
33 shelter, shall determine what services shall be provided to the  
34 youth. The services may include, but are not limited to: crisis  
35 intervention services, continued temporary placement in the basic  
36 center shelter for up to 30 days, placement in an alternative living  
37 arrangement or referral to a transitional living program established  
38 pursuant to section 7 of **this act** P.L.1999, c.224 (C.9:12A-8) or  
39 to other appropriate organizations and agencies.

40 d. When the basic center shelter has reason to believe that the  
41 youth is an abused or neglected child as defined in P.L.1974, c.119  
42 (C.9:6-8.21 et seq.), the basic center shelter shall report the  
43 allegation to the division pursuant to section 3 of P.L.1971, c.437  
44 (C.9:6-8.10). A homeless youth may remain at a basic center  
45 shelter for up to 30 days pending the division's disposition of any  
46 case originated pursuant to this subsection.

47 e. If a homeless youth under the age of 18 is not in the legal care  
48 or custody of the division as provided in subsection c. of this

1 section, and a basic center shelter has not made a report to the  
2 division pursuant to subsection d. of this section, the basic center  
3 shelter shall notify a juvenile-family crisis intervention unit,  
4 established pursuant to P.L.1982, c.80 (C.2A:4A-76 et seq.), in the  
5 county of residence of the homeless youth, within 24 hours of the  
6 youth's admission to the basic center shelter, that a juvenile-family  
7 crisis exists as defined in section 3 of P.L.1982, c.77 (C.2A:4A-22).

8 f. In the event that a basic center shelter notifies a juvenile-  
9 family crisis intervention unit pursuant to subsection e. of this  
10 section, the homeless youth may remain at the basic center shelter  
11 for up to 10 days without the consent of the youth's parent or legal  
12 guardian. During this time, the juvenile-family crisis intervention  
13 unit and the basic center shelter shall help to reunite the youth with  
14 his parent or legal guardian. If reunification with the parent or legal  
15 guardian is not in the youth's best interest or not possible because  
16 the youth's parent or legal guardian cannot be located, the juvenile-  
17 family crisis intervention unit, in consultation with the basic center  
18 shelter, shall determine what services shall be provided to the  
19 youth. The services may include, but are not limited to, crisis  
20 intervention services and continued temporary placement in the  
21 basic center shelter for up to an additional 30 days.

22 g. In the case of a homeless youth from another state who is  
23 under the age of 18, a basic center shelter shall notify the Compact  
24 Administrator of the Interstate Compact on Juveniles, as soon as  
25 practicable, but within 24 hours of the youth's admission to the  
26 basic center shelter. The Compact Administrator shall facilitate the  
27 youth's return home to his parent or legal guardian or make other  
28 suitable care arrangements for the youth.

29 (cf: P.L.1999, c.224, s.6)

30  
31 3. Section 7 of P.L.1999, c.224 (C.9:12A-8) is amended to read  
32 as follows:

33 7. a. A transitional living program shall provide residential care  
34 and treatment services for up to 18 months to a homeless **【youth】**  
35 person 16 to **【21】** 25 years of age who demonstrates the maturity to  
36 function with minimal adult supervision.

37 b. The program shall assist in the maintenance of a homeless  
38 **【youth】** person in a living arrangement that will prepare the  
39 **【youth】** person for independence and self-sufficiency through the  
40 direct provision of, or through referrals to, other organizations and  
41 agencies for services, that consider the age, gender, and social and  
42 developmental needs of the homeless person, be culturally and  
43 linguistically appropriate, to the extent practicable, and as  
44 determined by the department's contract, **【which】** may include:

45 (1) Educational assessment and attachment to an educational  
46 program;

47 (2) Career planning, employment and life skills training;

48 (3) Job placement;

1 (4) Budgeting and money management;

2 (5) Assistance in securing housing appropriate to a homeless  
3 youth's needs and income; **[and]**

4 (6) Assistance in accessing other social services as may be  
5 appropriate;

6 (7) Assistance in completing and submitting a Free Application  
7 for Federal Student Aid or other financial aid form to determine the  
8 level of need and eligibility for State and federal financial aid  
9 programs; and

10 (8) Trauma-informed services specific to youth who are  
11 survivors of human trafficking or sexual exploitation.

12 c. If a homeless person is between the ages of 22 and 25, the  
13 program shall decide what additional services shall be provided to  
14 the person in addition to the services provided by the program, as  
15 determined by the department's contract. The services may include,  
16 but not be limited to, crisis intervention services, referrals to  
17 organizations and agencies for homelessness assistance services,  
18 and assistance in accessing other age appropriate support services  
19 as may be necessary to move the youth towards the goal of  
20 permanent affordable housing and self-sufficiency.

21 (cf: P.L.1999, c.224, s.7)

22

23 4. (New section) a. The department shall require every staff  
24 member employed by a street outreach, basic center shelter, or  
25 transitional living program established pursuant to section 4 of  
26 P.L.1999, c.224 (C.9:12A-5) to complete a training program  
27 developed by the department, in consultation with the Commission  
28 on Human Trafficking, on the relationship between human  
29 trafficking, childhood trauma, and sexual exploitation and the  
30 prevalence of youth homelessness.

31 b. (1) The training shall be part of any staff training required by  
32 the department and shall be completed no later than one year after  
33 the effective date of P.L. , c. (C. ) (pending before the  
34 Legislature as this bill) or, in the case of a newly employed staff  
35 member, within one year from the staff member's date of hire,  
36 whichever occurs later.

37 (2) The department, in consultation with the commission, shall  
38 conduct a periodic review of the prescribed subject matter of the  
39 training program to insure that the training includes information on  
40 relevant changes to State or federal law and other information  
41 deemed pertinent to the delivery of those services a staff member is  
42 required to provide to homeless youth.

43

44 5. (New section) The Department of Children and Families,  
45 pursuant to the "Administrative Procedure Act," P.L.1968, c.410  
46 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.), shall promulgate rules and regulations as may  
47 be necessary to effectuate the provisions of P.L. , c. (C. )  
48 (pending before the Legislature as this act).

1       6. This act shall take effect immediately.

2

3

4

#### STATEMENT

5

6       This bill expands services provided to homeless youth by street  
7 outreach, basic center shelter, and transitional living programs.

8       Specifically, the bill amends P.L.1999, c.224 (C.9:12A-2 et  
9 seq.), which establishes street outreach, basic center shelter, and  
10 transitional living programs, to require such programs to: (1)  
11 provide services that consider the age, gender, and social and  
12 developmental needs of homeless youth, and that are culturally and  
13 linguistically appropriate; (2) include services that provide  
14 assistance in completing and submitting a Free Application for  
15 Federal Student Aid or other financial aid form; and (3) offer  
16 trauma-informed services specific to youth who are survivors of  
17 human trafficking or sexual exploitation.

18       The bill amends section 7 of P.L.1999, c.224 (C.9:12A-8) to  
19 require transitional living programs to provide residential care and  
20 treatment services to homeless youth between the ages of 16 to 25.  
21 Current law requires these programs to provide services to youth  
22 between the ages of 16 and 21.

23       The bill also amends section 7 of P.L.1999, c.224 (C.9:12A-8) to  
24 mandate that the programs are to decide what additional services to  
25 provide homeless youth between 22 and 25 years of age, which may  
26 include crisis intervention services, referrals to organizations and  
27 agencies for homelessness assistance services, and assistance in  
28 accessing other age appropriate support services as may be  
29 necessary to move the youth towards the goal of permanent  
30 affordable housing and self-sufficiency. Under current law,  
31 transitional programs are only required to provide services as  
32 determined by contract and are not required to provide additional  
33 services to homeless youth between 22 and 25 years of age.

34       The provisions of the bill require that every staff member  
35 employed by a street outreach, basic center shelter, or transitional  
36 living program complete, within the time frame established in the  
37 bill, a training program developed by the DCF, in consultation with  
38 the Commission of Human Trafficking, on the relationship between  
39 human trafficking, childhood trauma, and sexual exploitation and  
40 the prevalence of youth homelessness.

41       The DCF is to conduct a periodic review of the training program  
42 to insure that the training includes information on relevant changes  
43 to State or federal law and other information pertinent to the  
44 delivery of services a staff member is required to provide to  
45 homeless youth.