

ASSEMBLY, No. 2985

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 208th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED MARCH 18, 1999

Sponsored by:

Assemblyman KENNETH C. LEFEVRE

District 2 (Atlantic)

Assemblyman FRANCIS J. BLEE

District 2 (Atlantic)

Co-Sponsored by:

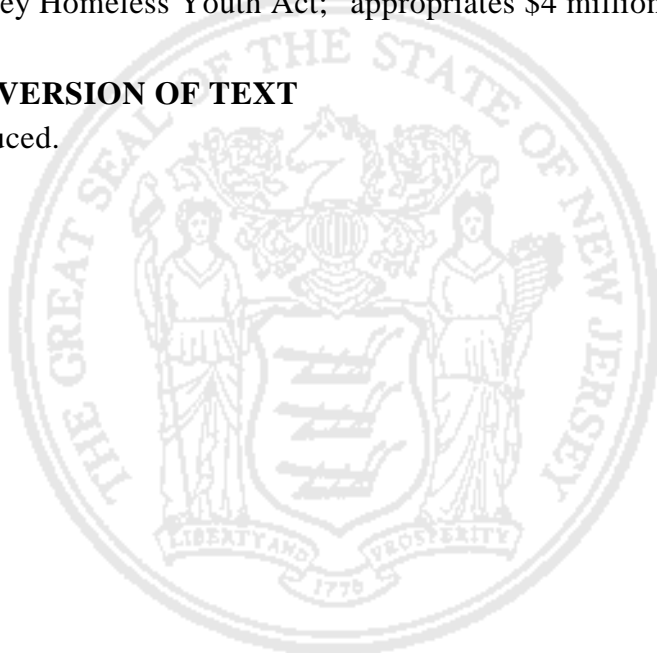
**Assemblymen Connors, Cottrell, Assemblywoman Farragher,
Assemblyman Felice, Assemblywoman Gill, Assemblymen Gibson, Lance,
Romano, Thompson, Zecker, Arnone, Augustine, Bagger, Conaway,
Assemblywoman Weinberg, Assemblymen Wisniewski and Wolfe**

SYNOPSIS

"New Jersey Homeless Youth Act;" appropriates \$4 million.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 5/7/1999)

1 AN ACT concerning homeless youth, supplementing Title 9 of the
2 Revised Statutes and making an appropriation.

3

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

6

7 1. This act shall be known and may be cited as the "New Jersey
8 Homeless Youth Act."

9

10 2. The Legislature finds and declares that: homeless youth are a
11 largely invisible population; many of these children have no families
12 and are being exploited by adults or are turning to delinquency as a
13 way to survive on the streets; these young people are urgently in need
14 of services which will prevent them from becoming permanently
15 homeless; therefore, it is in the best interest of the State to establish
16 and support a continuum of services geared specifically for homeless
17 youth, including street outreach, basic center shelter and transitional
18 living home programs.

19

20 3. As used in this act:

21 "Department" means the Department of Human Services

22 "Division" means the Division of Youth and Family Services in the
23 Department of Human Services.

24 "Homeless youth" means a person 21 years of age or younger who
25 is without shelter where appropriate care and supervision are available.

26

27 4. The department shall establish and support a comprehensive
28 program for homeless youth in the State by contracting with
29 community-based or Statewide programs, licensed by the department,
30 that provide street outreach, basic center shelter and transitional living
31 home services for homeless youth. The department shall establish
32 licensure requirements for programs that ensure that services, as
33 specified by this act, are provided to homeless youth in the State in an
34 appropriate and responsible manner. The commissioner may establish
35 such other requirements for the homeless youth programs as he deems
36 necessary.

37

38 5. A community-based street outreach program for homeless youth
39 shall enhance the accessibility of resources to a homeless youth by
40 locating, contacting and providing services to the youth through
41 mobile outreach.

42 The services provided by the street outreach program shall include,
43 but not be limited to:

44 a. Assistance in finding temporary or short-term shelter;

45 b. Assistance in obtaining food;

46 c. A clothing allowance;

1 d. Individual and group counseling in the area of violence
2 prevention;

3 e. Information and referral services regarding community-based
4 organizations that provide support services to homeless youth; and

5 f. Assistance in obtaining medical care.

6

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

13 The services provided at the basic center shelter shall include, but
14 not be limited to:

15 (1) Family reunification services;

16 (2) Individual, family and group counseling;

17 (3) Food;

18 (4) A clothing allowance;

19 (5) Medical care;

20 (6) Educational services;

21 (7) Recreational activities; and

22 (8) Advocacy and referral services.

23 b. A homeless youth may remain at a basic center shelter for 30
24 days without the consent of the youth's parent or legal guardian. If it
25 appears that arrangements for the youth's return home to his parent or
26 legal guardian or a temporary placement in an alternative living
27 arrangement cannot be made, the youth's stay may be extended for an
28 additional 30 days, with the written consent of the youth's parent or
29 legal guardian if the youth is under the age of 18.

30 c. A basic center shelter shall notify the division within 24 hours of
31 a homeless youth's admission to the center, if the basic center shelter
32 has knowledge that the youth is in the care and custody of the division.
33 The basic center shelter, in consultation with the division, shall
34 determine what additional services shall be provided to the youth,
35 including, but not limited to, crisis intervention services, temporary
36 placement in an alternative living arrangement or referral to a
37 transitional living home program established pursuant to section 6 of
38 this act or to other appropriate agencies.

39 d. A basic center shelter shall notify the juvenile-family crisis
40 intervention unit, established pursuant to P.L. 1982, c. 80 (C.2A:4A-
41 76 et seq.), in the county of residence of the homeless youth, within 24
42 hours of the youth's admission to the center, if the center has reason
43 to believe that a juvenile-family crisis exists pursuant to section 3 of
44 P.L.1982, c.77 (C.2A:4A-22). The basic center shelter, in consultation
45 with the juvenile-family crisis intervention unit, shall determine what
46 additional services shall be provided to the youth, including, but not

1 limited to, further crisis intervention services, temporary placement in
2 an alternative living arrangement or referral to a transitional living
3 home program established pursuant to section 7 of this act or to other
4 appropriate agencies.

5 e. A basic center shelter shall attempt to notify a homeless youth's
6 parent or legal guardian, within 24 hours of the youth's admission to
7 the center, if the youth is under the age of 18. The notification shall
8 include a description of the youth's physical and emotional condition
9 and the circumstances surrounding the youth's admission to the center
10 shelter, unless there are compelling reasons not to provide the parent
11 or legal guardian with this information. Compelling reasons include,
12 but are not limited to, circumstances in which the youth is or has been
13 a victim of child abuse or neglect.

14 f. In the case of a runaway or homeless youth from another state,
15 a basic center shelter shall notify the division, as soon as practicable,
16 but within 24 hours of the youth's admission to the basic center
17 shelter. The division shall assume responsibility for the youth's return
18 home to his parent or legal guardian or for making other suitable care
19 arrangements for the youth.

20

21 7. a. A transitional living home program shall provide residential
22 care and treatment services to a homeless youth 16 to 21 years of age,
23 who demonstrates the maturity to function with minimal adult
24 supervision.

25 The program shall assist in the maintenance of a homeless youth in
26 a living arrangement that will prepare the youth to eventually live on
27 his own through the direct provision of or through referrals to other
28 community-based organizations or public agencies for services in the
29 following areas:

- 30 (1) Educational assessment;
31 (2) Career planning, employment and life skills training;
32 (3) Job placement;
33 (4) Budgeting and money management; and
34 (5) Assistance in securing housing appropriate to a homeless
35 youth's needs and income.

36 b. The transitional living home program shall provide services to
37 a homeless youth who has been referred to the program by a street
38 outreach program pursuant to section 5 of this act, a basic center
39 shelter pursuant to section 6 of this act or by the Superior Court,
40 Chancery Division, Family Part.

41

42 8. Subject to the "Administrative Procedure Act," P.L.1968, c.410
43 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.), the Commissioner of Human Services shall
44 adopt rules and regulations for the licensing by the department of
45 community-based or Statewide street outreach, basic center shelter
46 and transitional living home programs for homeless youth.

1 9. There is appropriated \$4,000,000 from the General Fund to the
2 department. The department shall contract with community-based or
3 Statewide street outreach, basic center shelter and transitional living
4 home programs that are licensed by the department pursuant to this act
5 to provide services to homeless youth.

6
7 10. This act shall take effect 90 days following enactment.
8
9

10 STATEMENT
11

12 This bill, the "New Jersey Homeless Youth Act," requires the
13 Department of Human Services to establish and support a
14 comprehensive program for homeless youth by contracting with
15 community-based or Statewide programs that provide street outreach,
16 basic center shelter and transitional living home services to homeless
17 youth in this State.

18 Under the provisions of the bill, the street outreach program shall
19 enhance the accessibility of resources to a homeless youth by locating,
20 contacting and providing services to the youth through community-
21 based, mobile outreach. The services provided shall include, but not
22 be limited to:

- 23 1. Assistance in finding temporary or short-term shelter;
- 24 2. Assistance in obtaining food;
- 25 3. A clothing allowance;
- 26 4. Individual and group counseling in the area of violence
27 prevention;
- 28 5. Information and referral services regarding community-based
29 organizations that provide support services to homeless youth; and
- 30 6. Assistance in obtaining medical care.

31 The basic center shelter program shall provide a homeless youth
32 with a stable out-of home placement. The program shall also help the
33 youth reunite with his family, if family reunification is in his best
34 interest. The services provided by the basic center shelter program
35 shall include:

- 36 1. Family reunification services;
- 37 2. Individual, family and group counseling;
- 38 3. Food;
- 39 4. Clothing;
- 40 5. Medical care;
- 41 6. Educational services;
- 42 7. Recreational activities; and
- 43 8. Advocacy and referral services.

44 Under the provisions of the bill, a homeless youth would be able to
45 remain at a basic center shelter for a period of 30 days without the
46 permission of the youth's parent or legal guardian. If it appears that

1 arrangements for the youth's return home or a temporary placement in
2 an alternative living arrangement cannot be made, the youth's stay at
3 the shelter may be extended for an additional 30 days, with written
4 consent from the youth's parent or legal guardian if the youth is under
5 the age of 18.

6 Within 24 hours of the homeless youth's admission, the basic center
7 shelter shall notify the Division of Youth and Family Services (DYFS),
8 if the basic center shelter has knowledge that the youth is under DYFS'
9 care, or a juvenile-family crisis intervention unit, if the shelter has
10 reason to believe a juvenile-family crisis exists pursuant to N.J.S.A.
11 2A:4A-22. The basic center shelter shall, in consultation with DYFS
12 or the crisis intervention unit, as appropriate, determine what
13 additional services shall be provided to the youth, including, but not
14 limited to, crisis intervention services, temporary placement in an
15 alternative living arrangement or referral to a transitional living home
16 program or to other agencies. The basic center shelter shall also
17 attempt to notify the homeless youth's parent or legal guardian within
18 24 hours of the youth's admission if the youth is under the age of 18.
19 The notification shall provide the homeless youth's parent or legal
20 guardian with a description of the youth's condition and the
21 circumstances surrounding his admission to the basic center shelter,
22 unless there are compelling reasons not to do so. Under the provisions
23 of the bill, compelling reasons include, but are not limited to,
24 circumstances in which the youth is or has been a victim of child abuse
25 or neglect.

26 In the case of a runaway or homeless youth from another state, the
27 basic center shelter shall contact DYFS, as soon as practicable of the
28 youth's admission. DYFS shall then be responsible for the youth's
29 return home or for making other suitable care arrangements for the
30 youth.

31 The transitional living home program shall assist in the maintenance
32 of a homeless youth 16 to 21 years of age, who demonstrates the
33 maturity to function with minimal adult supervision, in a living
34 arrangement that will prepare the youth to eventually live on his own.
35 Through the direct provision of or through referrals to other
36 community-based organizations or public agencies, the program will
37 provide services in the following areas:

- 38 1. Educational assessment;
- 39 2. Career planning, employment and life skills training;
- 40 3. Job placement;
- 41 4. Budgeting and money management; and
- 42 5. Assistance in securing housing appropriate to a homeless youth's
43 needs and income.

44 A homeless youth shall be referred to the program by a street
45 outreach program, a basic center shelter or by the Superior Court,
46 Chancery Division, Family Part.

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1 The bill also requires that the Commissioner of Human Services to
2 develop rules and regulations for the licensing by the department of
3 the street outreach, basic center shelter and transitional living home
4 programs.

5 Finally, the bill appropriates \$4,000,000 to the department to
6 contract with community-based or Statewide street outreach, basic
7 center shelter and transitional living home programs licensed by the
8 State to provide services to homeless youth.