

CHAPTER 62

AN ACT concerning emergency food programs, supplementing Title 30 of the Revised Statutes and making an appropriation.

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

C.30:1A-7 Short title.

1. This act shall be known and may be cited as the "New Jersey Hunger Prevention and Nutrition Assistance Program Act."

C.30:1A-8 New Jersey Hunger Prevention and Nutrition Assistance Program.

2. There is established in the Department of Human Services, the New Jersey Hunger Prevention and Nutrition Assistance Program.

The purpose of the program is to: improve the health and nutritional status of State residents in need of food assistance, supplement the efforts of emergency food programs in the State to reduce hunger, and enable families and individuals to become food secure and self-sufficient.

a. The Commissioner of Human Services shall establish the program in conjunction with the regional food banks in the State.

b. The goals of the program are to:

(1) enhance the accessibility and availability of safe, nutritious food and food-related resources;

(2) develop and provide comprehensive nutrition education programs;

(3) periodically conduct assessments of the needs of persons requesting food assistance and hunger-related issues to ensure program funds are used effectively; and

(4) empower persons requesting food assistance or at risk of needing food assistance to increase their independence from emergency food assistance programs.

C.30:1A-9 Grants to emergency food programs.

3. a. Within the limits of funds appropriated for the program and such other funds as are made available to the program, the program shall provide grants to emergency food programs in the State to carry out the goals of the program.

An emergency food program shall submit an application for grant funds to the Department of Human Services in a form and manner prescribed by the Commissioner of Human Services. The commissioner, in consultation with the Hunger Prevention Advisory Committee established pursuant to section 4 of this act, shall award grants to emergency food programs that:

(1) address an unmet need for emergency food services;

(2) offer services that meet the goals of the program, particularly with respect to providing nutrition education services to persons in the service area of the emergency food program;

(3) provide for referral or outreach services to other public and private social services programs that serve the emergency food program's target population;

(4) demonstrate culturally competent services, including recognizing food preferences and traditions of the community, that are appropriate to the target population of the emergency food program; and

(5) demonstrate an ability to document how the grant funds are used and to meet the reporting requirements of the program.

b. In addition to considering the criteria for awarding grants provided in subsection a. of this section, upon completion of the needs assessment conducted pursuant to section 5 of this act, the commissioner and advisory committee shall take into consideration the findings of the needs assessment in determining how grant funds shall be allocated in the State.

c. Grant recipients shall report quarterly to the Department of Human Services on the use of the grant funds, including the number of persons served by the emergency food program, the type of services received and such other information as required by the commissioner.

C.30:1A-10 Hunger Prevention Advisory Committee.

4. There is established a 13-member Hunger Prevention Advisory Committee in the Department of Human Services. The advisory committee shall assist the Commissioner of Human Services in the implementation of the New Jersey Hunger Prevention and Nutrition

Assistance Program established pursuant to this act and shall oversee the needs assessment that shall be conducted pursuant to section 5 of this act.

a. The advisory committee shall consist of:

(1) the Secretary of Agriculture, the Commissioner of Human Services, and the Commissioner of Community Affairs, or their designees, who shall serve ex officio; and

(2) 10 public members appointed by the Governor who shall include: two representatives of emergency food programs in the State; two representatives of programs serving homeless individuals in the State; the Executive Directors of the County Welfare Directors Association of New Jersey, the Municipal Welfare Association of New Jersey and the Association for Children of New Jersey, or their designees; a nutritionist; and two members of the public who are knowledgeable about emergency food programs. The public members other than the executive directors shall serve during the term of office of the Governor who shall have appointed them, at the pleasure of that Governor.

b. Vacancies in the membership of the committee shall be filled in the same manner provided for the original appointments.

c. The committee shall organize as soon as practicable following the appointment of its members and shall select a chairperson and vice-chairperson from among the members. The chairperson shall appoint a secretary who need not be a member of the committee.

d. The committee shall be entitled to call to its assistance and avail itself of the services of the employees of any State, county or municipal department, board, bureau, commission or agency as it may require and as may be available to it for its purposes.

C.30:1A-11 Statewide needs assessment.

5. The Commissioner of Human Services shall contract with Rutgers, the State University to conduct a Statewide needs assessment to:

a. identify and quantify, at all steps in the State's food delivery system, wholesome and nutritious food that goes to waste before it can be made available to those in need of such food;

b. identify and quantify the need for emergency or supplemental feeding for families and individuals in the State;

c. identify strategies and structures for minimizing spoilage of food resources;

d. develop a fiscally judicious plan to secure food from loss to deterioration or waste and to transport and apportion that food to emergency feeding programs throughout the State;

e. develop strategies for behaviorally focused educational outreach with at-risk families and individuals; and

f. analyze nutritional sufficiencies and deficiencies in existing emergency food programs and develop solutions to generating nutritionally complete, culturally acceptable diets.

C.30:1A-12 Annual report to Governor, Legislature.

6. The Commissioner of Human Services shall report annually to the Governor and the Legislature on the activities of the program. The report shall include a listing of the grants awarded under the program, the number of persons served through the grants and such other information as the commissioner deems appropriate.

7. Upon certification by the Director of the Division of Budget and Accounting in the Department of the Treasury that federal funds not to exceed \$5,000,000 are available to support the expenditure, such funds are appropriated from unexpended federal Temporary Assistance to Needy Family funds to the Department of Human Services to carry out the purposes of this act.

Of this appropriation, the department shall allocate up to \$250,000 to conduct the needs assessment pursuant to section 5 of this act and up to \$4,750,000 for the purpose of making grants to emergency food programs in the State pursuant to section 3 of this act.

8. This act shall take effect immediately.

Approved April 19, 2001.