

ASSEMBLY AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY
COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 2361

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: FEBRUARY 14, 2022

The Assembly Agriculture and Food Security Committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No. 2361.

This bill requires the Department of Human Services (DHS), working in consultation and cooperation with community-based organizations and county welfare agencies, to develop and implement a comprehensive outreach plan for the New Jersey Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). SNAP, formerly known as the Food Stamp Program, is a nutrition assistance program that serves as a safety net for low-income households.

Specifically, the bill directs that the outreach plan focus on increasing potential beneficiaries' access to: 1) information regarding the availability of SNAP, the criteria for eligibility for SNAP benefits, and the various methods to apply for SNAP benefits; and 2) the technological means to apply for SNAP benefits.

At a minimum, the plan is to include:

1) establishing a SNAP Navigator Grant Program, the purpose of which will be to distribute grant funding, via a process and method determined by the Commissioner of Human Services, to community-based organizations to support the employment of SNAP application navigators. In distributing grants under the program, the commissioner will be required to give priority to community-based organizations that assist underserved communities. The bill directs that funds, the amount to be determined by the commissioner, be appropriated from the General Fund to the DHS for the purposes of establishing this grant program;

2) providing training to the appropriate staff at community-based organizations regarding the necessary steps to complete and submit a SNAP application, through all available methods, including online and by telephone. Trained staff are to assist clients with the SNAP application process;

3) partnering with community-based organizations to increase client access to computers and the online SNAP application; and

4) providing SNAP information and resources to beneficiaries of public assistance programs who are served by the department and by county welfare agencies, and who are likely to be eligible for, but are not currently receiving, SNAP benefits.