

[First Reprint]

SENATE, No. 2617

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

222nd LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2026 SESSION

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SYNOPSIS

Establishes Council for Community Recovery and Family Success.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As reported by the Senate Health, Human Services and Senior Citizens Committee on May 11, 2026, with amendments.



1 AN ACT establishing the Council for Community Recovery and
2 Family Success, ¹and¹ supplementing Title 9 of the Revised
3 Statutes ¹**[**, and making an appropriation¹**]** .
4

5 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
6 *of New Jersey:*
7

8 1. The Legislature finds and declares that:

9 a. As a State, our child and family services and the resources
10 appropriated to fund those services are primarily designed to respond
11 to crisis-related events. Consequently, the services provided to
12 children and their families struggle to produce long-term positive
13 results.

14 b. A growing body of literature suggests that comprehensive,
15 integrated, and sustained investments in family support, prevention,
16 early intervention, and infant, child, youth, and family well-being are
17 more cost-effective than a fragmented approach of various programs
18 providing services that only address the symptoms that cause family
19 crises and distress.

20 c. The solution to improving outcomes for all children and
21 families in New Jersey is to provide an interdisciplinary approach to
22 family support and preventive services and to enact a Bill of Rights for
23 Infants, Children, Youth, and Families in New Jersey. A Bill of
24 Rights, which would be based on the United Nations Treaty on the
25 Rights of the Child, would recognize and protect the rights of infants,
26 children, youth, and families in New Jersey and provide a framework
27 for the provision of preventive services to at-risk infants, children, and
28 youth and their families.

29 d. It is therefore in the best interests of the State to invest in and
30 implement ¹**[**programs, which¹**]** services and supports designed and
31 delivered by community-based service networks. Each network will
32 be responsible for developing a plan to address family and childhood
33 success and develop supportive and early intervention services that¹
34 promote ¹**[**prevention, early intervention, and¹**]** the well-being of
35 infants, children, youth, and families in order to improve ¹**[**the¹**]** life¹
36 outcomes for all infants, children, youth, and families who reside in
37 New Jersey.
38

39 2. a. There is established the Council for Community Recovery
40 and Family Success in, but not of, the Department of Community
41 Affairs. For the purpose of complying with the provisions of Article
42 V, Section IV, paragraph 1 of the New Jersey Constitution, the
43 Council for Community Recovery and Family Success is allocated
44 within the Department of Community Affairs but, notwithstanding this

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.

Matter enclosed in superscript numerals has been adopted as follows:

¹Senate SHH committee amendments adopted May 11, 2026.

1 allocation, the council shall be independent of any supervision or
2 control by the department or by any officer or employee thereof.

3 b. The council shall consist of 25 members as follows:

4 (1) the Commissioners of Children and Families, Community
5 Affairs, Corrections, Education, Health, Human Services, and Labor
6 and Workforce Development, and the Executive Director of the
7 Juvenile Justice Commission in the Department of Law and Public
8 Safety, or their designees, who shall serve ex officio;

9 (2) 13 public members appointed by the Governor, which
10 members shall include representatives of children's advocacy and
11 family support, juvenile justice advocacy, behavioral health, housing
12 support and homelessness prevention, and early childhood supports
13 and education organizations, an organization providing support for
14 family financial security, business and commerce, the faith-based
15 community, a community leader, and parents or guardians whose
16 children are receiving State funded services;

17 (3) two public members appointed by the Senate President, one of
18 whom shall be a representative of municipal government, and one of
19 whom shall be a resident of an underserved community; and

20 (4) two public members appointed by the Speaker of the General
21 Assembly, one of whom shall be a representative of county
22 government, and one of whom shall be a resident of an underserved
23 community.

24 c. Vacancies in the membership of the council shall be filled in
25 the same manner provided for the original appointments. The
26 members of the council shall serve without compensation, but may be
27 reimbursed for travel and other miscellaneous expenses necessary to
28 perform their duties, within the limits of funds made available to the
29 council for these purposes.

30 d. The council shall organize as soon as practicable but no later
31 than 60 days following the appointment of its members, and shall
32 select two co-chairpersons from among their members, one of whom
33 shall be a State official and one of whom shall be a community
34 representative. The chairpersons shall appoint a secretary who need
35 not be a member of the council.

36 e. The council shall meet at the call of its chairpersons, and hold
37 hearings at the times and in the places it deems appropriate and
38 necessary to fulfill its charge. The council shall be entitled to call to
39 its assistance and avail itself of the services of the employees of any
40 State, county, or municipal department, board, bureau, commission, or
41 public or private agency as the council may require and as may be
42 available for the council's purposes, and shall be entitled to call on the
43 assistance of professional services for support, and the Administrative
44 Office of the Courts for information relevant to its purposes.

45 f. The council may seek the advice of experts, such as persons
46 specializing in the field of social work, education, law, human
47 services, economic development, workforce development, or other

1 related fields, as deemed appropriate by the membership of the
2 council.

3 g. The council shall annually prepare its administrative budget
4 and work plan in conformance with its duties, and shall secure staff
5 services from the Departments of Children and Families, Community
6 Affairs, Corrections, Education, Health, Human Services, and Labor
7 and Workforce Development, the Juvenile Justice Commission, other
8 council member organizations, and from other contracted professional
9 staffing and support services, as may be necessary for the council to
10 carry out its duties under this act.

11 ¹h. All funds provided to the council, including appropriations or
12 grants from federal, State, or local government, private sector
13 donations, or philanthropic gifts shall be held by and administered by
14 the Community Foundation of New Jersey or similar non-
15 governmental, nonprofit entity.¹
16

17 3. a. The purpose of the council shall be to ¹~~guide and~~¹ oversee
18 ¹~~and support~~¹ the development ¹~~and implementation~~¹ of ¹~~a~~
19 Statewide initiative focusing on community-based service networks
20 in communities throughout the State with priority attention to those
21 communities of greatest need. These community-based service
22 networks will be place-based partnerships that may include, but are not
23 limited to, local residents, local governmental authorities, local
24 education agencies, community-based nonprofit organizations, local
25 leaders, business leaders, health systems, and other partners. Each
26 community-based service network will include a lead agency, which
27 will be responsible for fiscal and administrative management of the
28 network and fostering collaboration among all network members. The
29 mission of each community-based service network is to enhance¹ the
30 social and economic well-being of infants, children, youth, and
31 families, and the provision of holistic, age and developmentally
32 appropriate services that support a child's development from birth to
33 young adulthood. The initiative shall be based on the four pillars of
34 family success:

35 (1) positive family relationships and community connections;

36 (2) safety and financial security;

37 (3) high quality education and quality learning environments; and

38 (4) good health and infant, child, youth, and family well-being.

39 b. (1) In order to implement the Statewide initiative, the council
40 shall:

41 (a) advocate for a State Bill of Rights for Infants, Children, Youth,
42 and Families to provide a framework for the initiative's
43 implementation;

44 (b) ¹support community-based service network services that
45 promote family economic security, lifelong education, good health and
46 well-being, and safe and thriving communities;

1 (c) in collaboration with community-based service networks,¹
2 identify and evaluate¹ policies, procedures, practices, and financial
3 priorities relating to **1**[preventive] supportive¹ services for at-risk
4 infants, children, youth, and families **1**[and the] ; eliminate any¹ gaps
5 in those policies, procedures, practices, and financial priorities, and
6 develop strategies to further¹ promote the well-being of infants,
7 children, youth, and families **1**[and encourage family success]¹;

8 **1**[(c) review the programs, policies, and initiatives of the
9 Departments of Children and Families, Community Affairs,
10 Corrections, Education, Health, Human Services, Labor and
11 Workforce Development, and Law and Public Safety, and any other
12 departments of State government and any community-based
13 organizations as may be appropriate, and make recommendations that
14 will enable such departments and organizations to better coordinate
15 and improve the effectiveness of the department's or organization's
16 programs, policies, and initiatives;

17 (d) conduct ongoing, comprehensive cost-benefit analyses of the
18 budgets of State departments and community-based organizations that
19 provide services to at-risk infants, children, youth, and families, and
20 State and local funding mechanisms for infant, child, youth, and
21 family service systems, to identify and make recommendations on how
22 to redirect resources and programmatic focus from distress services to
23 preventive services for at-risk infants, children, youth, and families
24 and for family success initiatives;

25 (e) **1**[(d) explore strategies to maximize and effectively utilize all
26 State, county, municipal, and federal funding sources, as well as any
27 funds from business and philanthropic investments as may be
28 available, for the purpose of providing supportive and preventive
29 services for infants, children, youth, and families and to improve
30 family success outcomes; and

31 **1**[(f) establish community recovery and family success
32 councils, which shall] **1**[(e) provide funding, technical support, and
33 oversight of the community-based service networks, which may¹
34 include members of existing councils, boards, and task forces **1**[where
35 indicated, in each county of the State]¹, which **1**[(councils] networks¹
36 shall:

37 (i) assess local infant, child, and youth demographics, including
38 age, gender, race, socio-economic status, and ethnicity, as well as
39 indicators of well-being;

40 (ii) collect and analyze information concerning the services and
41 resources that are currently available, the cost and availability of
42 services and programs, and the met and unmet needs of infants,
43 children, youth, and families in the county; and

44 (iii) develop methods that support innovative preventive
45 services for at-risk infants, children, youth, and families and the
46 development of local family success initiatives.

47 (2) The goals of the Statewide initiative shall be to:

1 (a) promote positive family relationships, community connections,
2 and preventive services to ensure the financial security, quality
3 education, good health, safety, permanency, and well-being of infants,
4 children, youth, and families through an integrated service planning
5 and delivery system of care;

6 (b) develop and recommend the adoption of community-informed
7 family success outcomes, including specified performance-based
8 outcomes measures and objectives;

9 (c) identify obstacles that impede or prevent family success and
10 develop strategies to successfully overcome such obstacles;

11 (d) explore the role of institutional racism and bias in the delivery
12 of services to at-risk infants, children, youth, and families, and how
13 racism and bias can impede or prevent family success;

14 (e) identify policies and practices that promote the delivery of
15 preventive services to at-risk infants, children, youth, and families and
16 encourage family success; and

17 (f) incorporate input from key stakeholders, including parents,
18 family members, community members, and children receiving
19 preventive services from the Department of Children and Families and
20 the Department of Human Services, and any other department of State
21 government or from a community-based organization, on the
22 development of a plan to design, strengthen, and implement local
23 family success initiatives.

24 c. ¹【Subject to the availability of funds, the council shall
25 implement the Statewide initiative pursuant to this section over the
26 course of the next three fiscal years.】¹ The council shall establish
27 criteria for the allocation of funds made available to the council,
28 assigning priority based on both the total child population and
29 percentage of child poverty in each eligible jurisdiction. The initial
30 findings of ¹【local family success councils】 each community-based
31 service network¹ shall be based on an assessment of need ¹【and
32 county readiness】 , collective impact, and readiness to implement or
33 expand family success programs¹.

34 d. All departments and agencies of the State and all community-
35 based organizations that provide relevant distress or preventive
36 services, maintain relevant data sets, or perform functions pertinent to
37 relevant distress or prevention programs, shall assist the council in its
38 responsibilities pursuant to subsection b. of this section.

39 e. As used in this section:

40 “Distress services” mean initiatives intended to remediate
41 circumstances, including but not limited to, educational, social, and
42 personal failures, and family crises, that endanger the safety,
43 permanency, health, and well-being of infants, children, and youth.

44 “Preventative services” means initiatives that promote the safety,
45 permanency, health, and well-being of infants, children, youth, and
46 their families and divert the need for distress services.

1 4. The council shall submit an annual report to the Governor
2 and, pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), to the
3 Legislature, with the council's recommendations for legislative and
4 administrative actions regarding the use of federal, State, county,
5 municipal, and business and philanthropic funds to support the
6 development and implementation of innovative family success
7 initiatives and preventive services for all infants, children, youth,
8 and families in New Jersey.

9
10 5. The Council for Community Recovery and Family Success
11 shall adopt, pursuant to the "Administrative Procedure Act,"
12 P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.), rules and regulations
13 necessary to effectuate the purposes of this act.

14
15 ¹6. There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Council
16 for Community Recovery and Family Success the sum of
17 \$4,000,000 to implement the provisions of this act. Unexpended
18 amounts appropriated to the council pursuant to this section shall
19 not be returned to the General Fund at the end of the fiscal year, and
20 shall be retained by the council in the succeeding fiscal year for the
21 purposes of implementing the provisions of this act. The council
22 shall be authorized to invest unexpended funds appropriated
23 pursuant to this section, and to use dividends and interest earned on
24 the amount invested for the purposes of implementing the
25 provisions of this act. ¹

26
27 ¹7. 6.¹ This act shall take effect immediately.