SYNOPSIS

Increases amount of benefits under Work First New Jersey program by 30 percent over three years and according to Social Security cost of living increases thereafter.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.

Be It Enacted by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:

1. Notwithstanding any regulation to the contrary, the maximum benefit levels provided to Work First New Jersey recipients shall increase according to the following schedule:
   a. For Fiscal Year 2018, the maximum benefit levels shall be 10 percent higher than the maximum benefits levels in effect during Fiscal Year 2017.
   b. For Fiscal Year 2019, the maximum benefit levels shall be 20 percent higher than the maximum benefits levels in effect during Fiscal Year 2017.
   c. For Fiscal Year 2020, the maximum benefit levels shall be 30 percent higher than the maximum benefits levels in effect during Fiscal Year 2017.
   d. For Fiscal Year 2021 and each year thereafter, the maximum benefit levels shall be annually adjusted according to the cost of living adjustment applied under the federal Social Security program.

2. The Commissioner of Human Services shall apply for such State plan amendments as may be necessary to implement the provisions of this act and to secure federal financial participation for State expenditures under the federal Temporary Assistance to Needy Families program.

3. The Commissioner of Human Services, in accordance with the “Administrative Procedure Act,” P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.), shall adopt such rules and regulations as the commissioner deems necessary to carry out the provisions of this act.

4. This act shall take effect immediately.

STATEMENT

This bill increases the maximum cash assistance benefit for families participating in the Work First New Jersey (WFNJ) program. The WFNJ program provides cash and other assistance to low-income New Jersey residents in order to alleviate the negative effects of poverty. WFNJ includes the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program, which assists families with dependent children, and General Assistance, which assists adults without dependent children.

Currently New Jersey’s maximum benefit amount for WFNJ recipient households in $424 per month for a family of three. The bill would increase this amount to $466 in Fiscal Year (FY) 2018, $509 in FY 2019, and $551 in FY 2020. For FY 2021 and each year thereafter, the maximum benefit would be annually adjusted according to the cost of living adjustment applied under the federal Social Security program.