

ASSEMBLY AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY  
COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO  
**ASSEMBLY, No. 2367**

with committee amendments

**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**

DATED: FEBRUARY 14, 2022

The Assembly Agriculture and Food Security Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Assembly Bill No. 2367.

This bill, as amended, increases the income eligibility threshold, over a three-year period, to 50 percent of the federal poverty level for families with dependent children under the Work First New Jersey (WFNJ) program. The WFNJ program provides cash and other assistance to low-income New Jersey residents to alleviate the negative effects of poverty. Families with dependent children are part of the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program within the WFNJ. The WFNJ-TANF program is funded through both State dollars and the federal TANF block grant.

Specifically, under the bill, as amended, the initial maximum allowable income eligibility levels are to increase by an equal amount, to the extent possible, in each of the three fiscal years following the effective date of the bill such that the income eligibility level is required to be 50 percent of the federal poverty level in the third fiscal year in which the bill is effective. The initial maximum allowable income eligibility levels established under this act are to be used for new applicant, reapplicant, and reopened cases to determine initial income eligibility.

Currently, according to the New Jersey State Plan for TANF, the initial maximum allowable income eligibility level under the WFNJ-TANF program for a family of three is \$839 a month. Nationwide, 25 states have a higher income eligibility threshold for TANF, with monthly maximum amounts ranging from \$857 in South Dakota to \$2,231 in Minnesota. Based upon the federal poverty guidelines for 2022, the bill would increase New Jersey's monthly income threshold by approximately \$40 in each of the three fiscal years following the bill's enactment until the initial maximum allowable income eligibility level reaches \$960 a month in the third fiscal year in which the bill is effective.

The bill, as amended, further directs the Commissioner of Human Services to apply for such State plan amendments as may be necessary

to implement the provisions of the bill and to secure federal financial participation for State expenditures under the federal TANF program.

The bill is to take effect on July 1 next following the date of enactment.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS

The committee amendments make technical and clarifying amendments to the bill.