

SENATE, No. 3051

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

221st LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED APRIL 8, 2024

Sponsored by:

Senator ROBERT W. SINGER
District 30 (Monmouth and Ocean)
Senator NELLIE POU
District 35 (Bergen and Passaic)

Co-Sponsored by:

Senator Beach

SYNOPSIS

Requires Division of Consumer Affairs to hire staff to alleviate professional license application backlog; appropriates \$10,000,000 in fiscal years 2024, 2025, and 2026.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 4/11/2024)

1 AN ACT requiring the Division of Consumer Affairs to alleviate
2 license application backlog, supplementing Title 45 of the
3 Revised Statutes, and making an appropriation.

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

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8 1. The Legislature finds and declares that:

9 a. The various state professional boards are responsible for
10 both the processing of initial license requests and the periodic
11 licensure renewals as required by statute.

12 b. There is currently a significant backlog of these license
13 requests in several of the regulated professions within the Division
14 of Consumer Affairs in the Department of Law and Public Safety.

15 c. The efficient approval of professional licenses is of great
16 importance to the people of New Jersey, both in terms of economic
17 development and consumer protection.

18 d. This act is intended to provide the Division of Consumer
19 Affairs with the resources necessary to reduce the license
20 processing backlog by hiring additional staff for that purpose.

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22 2. The Division of Consumer Affairs, using criteria which will
23 prioritize the reduction in license processing backlogs, shall hire
24 additional staff for the purposes of alleviating the application and
25 renewal backlog.

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27 3. There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Division
28 of Consumer Affairs in the Department of Law and Public Safety
29 \$10,000,000 annually for fiscal years 2024, 2025, and 2026 to
30 implement the provisions of this act.

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32 4. The Division of Consumer Affairs shall provide an annual
33 report to the Governor, and to the Legislature pursuant to section 2
34 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1) that provides details on the
35 spending authorized by this act. It shall include, at a minimum:

36 a. the number of incremental additional resources hired by
37 profession in accordance with this act;

38 b. the number of person-months by profession associated with
39 that hiring;

40 c. the initial backlog of both new applications and renewals at
41 the beginning of the fiscal year; and

42 d. the backlog of both new applications and renewals at the end
43 of the fiscal year.

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45 5. This act shall take effect immediately and shall expire
46 following the issuance of the report for fiscal year 2026 pursuant to
47 section 4 of this act.

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STATEMENT

This bill requires the Division of Consumer Affairs in the Department of Law and Public Safety to hire additional staff to alleviate the professional license application backlog. The bill appropriates \$10,000,000 in fiscal years 2024, 2025, and 2026 for the hiring of additional staff.

The various state professional boards are responsible for both the processing of initial license requests and the periodic licensure renewals as required by statute. There is currently a significant backlog of these license requests in several of the regulated professions within the Division of Consumer Affairs.

Starting in fiscal year 2016, language has been included in the annual appropriations act allowing the transfer of funds from the professional boards to other organizations within the Department of Law and Public Safety. These transfers may have taken away flexibility the boards would have to hire additional staff to address backlogs. This bill appropriates \$10,000,000 in each of the next three fiscal years to allow for both the immediate hiring of additional staff to alleviate the current backlog as well as to ensure ongoing funding to maintain proper levels of service for license processing across the regulated professions.

The bill also requires the division to provide an annual report that provides details on the spending authorized by the bill, and the effect of the spending on division staffing and the processing of license applications and renewals.