

10312

I N A S S E M B L Y

May 20, 2016

Introduced by M. of A. HEVESI -- read once and referred to the Committee on Social Services

AN ACT to amend the social services law, in relation to resource exemptions for applicants for public assistance programs; and to amend chapter 436 of the laws of 1997, constituting the welfare reform act of 1997, in relation to the effectiveness thereof

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK, REPRESENTED IN SENATE AND ASSEMBLY, DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

1 Section 1. Section 131-n of the social services law, as amended by
2 section 16 of part B of chapter 436 of the laws of 1997, subdivision 1
3 as amended by section 1 of part X of chapter 54 of the laws of 2016 and
4 subdivision 3 as amended by chapter 207 of the laws of 2001, is amended
5 to read as follows:

6 S 131-n. Exemption of income and resources. 1. THE RESOURCES IDENTI-
7 FIED IN SUBDIVISION TWO OF THIS SECTION SHALL BE EXEMPT AND DISREGARDED
8 AT APPLICATION IN CALCULATING THE AMOUNT OF BENEFITS OF ANY APPLICANT
9 FOR ANY PUBLIC ASSISTANCE PROGRAM. AT RECERTIFICATION, RESOURCES DELINE-
10 ATED IN SUBDIVISION TWO OF THIS SECTION SHALL NOT BE TAKEN INTO CONSID-
11 ERATION WHEN DETERMINING ELIGIBILITY OR CALCULATING THE AMOUNT OF BENE-
12 FITS OF ANY RECIPIENT FOR ANY PUBLIC ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

13 2. The following resources shall be exempt and disregarded in calcu-
14 lating the amount of benefits of any [household under] APPLICANT FOR any
15 public assistance program: (a) cash and liquid or nonliquid resources up
16 to [two] THREE thousand dollars, or [three] FOUR thousand FIVE HUNDRED
17 dollars in the case of households in which any member is sixty years of
18 age or older, (b) an amount up to [four thousand six hundred fifty]
19 SEVEN THOUSAND FIFTY dollars in a separate bank account established by
20 an individual while currently in receipt of assistance for the sole
21 purpose of enabling the individual to purchase a first or replacement
22 vehicle for the recipient to seek, obtain or maintain employment, so
23 long as the funds are not used for any other purpose, (c) an amount [up
24 to one thousand four] EQUAL TO THE GREATER OF FIVE THOUSAND ONE hundred
25 SIXTY-FIVE dollars OR THE MAXIMUM TUITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM AWARD
26 AVAILABLE FOR THE CURRENT ACADEMIC YEAR in a separate bank account
27 established by an individual while currently in receipt of assistance
28 for the purpose of paying tuition at a two-year or four-year accredited
29 post-secondary educational institution, so long as the funds are not

EXPLANATION--Matter in ITALICS (underscored) is new; matter in brackets
[] is old law to be omitted.

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1 used for any other purpose, (d) the home which is the usual residence of
2 the household, (e) one automobile, up to ten thousand dollars fair
3 market value, through March thirty-first, two thousand seventeen; one
4 automobile, up to eleven thousand dollars fair market value, from April
5 first, two thousand seventeen through March thirty-first, two thousand
6 eighteen; and one automobile, up to twelve thousand dollars fair market
7 value, beginning April first, two thousand eighteen and thereafter, or
8 such other higher dollar value as the local social services district may
9 elect to adopt, (f) one burial plot per household member as defined in
10 department regulations, (g) bona fide funeral agreements [up to a total
11 of one thousand five hundred dollars in equity value] per household
12 member, (h) funds in an individual development account established in
13 accordance with subdivision five of section three hundred fifty-eight of
14 this chapter and section four hundred three of the social security act
15 [and], (i) [for a period of six months,] ANY real property which the
16 household is making a good faith effort to sell, in accordance with
17 department regulations and tangible personal property necessary for
18 business or for employment purposes in accordance with department regu-
19 lations, (J) RETIREMENT ACCOUNTS, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO INDIVID-
20 UAL RETIREMENT ACCOUNTS, 401(K)'S, 403(B)'S, AND KEOGH PLANS; AND (K)
21 ALL 529 COLLEGE SAVINGS PLANS. If federal law or regulations require
22 the exemption or disregard of additional income and resources in deter-
23 mining need for family assistance, or medical assistance not exempted or
24 disregarded pursuant to any other provision of this chapter, the depart-
25 ment may, by regulations subject to the approval of the director of the
26 budget, require social services officials to exempt or disregard such
27 income and resources. Refunds resulting from earned income tax credits
28 shall be disregarded in public assistance programs. COURT ORDERED CHILD
29 SUPPORT WHICH IS PAID OR WITHHELD FROM INCOME SHALL NOT BE CONSIDERED
30 AVAILABLE INCOME.

31 [2.] 3. If and to the extent permitted by federal law and regulations,
32 amounts received under section 105 of Public Law 100-383 as reparation
33 payments for internment of Japanese-Americans and payments made to indi-
34 viduals because of their status as victims of Nazi persecution as
35 defined in P.L. 103-286 shall be exempt from consideration as income or
36 resources for purposes of determining eligibility for and the amount of
37 benefits under any program provided under the authority of this chapter
38 and under title XX of the Social Security Act.

39 4. OWNERSHIP OF ALL OTHER PERSONAL PROPERTY NOT EXEMPT IN SUBDIVISIONS
40 TWO AND THREE OF THIS SECTION, SHALL BE EVALUATED BASED UPON ITS EQUITY
41 VALUE.

42 [3.] 5. The department is authorized to establish regulations defining
43 income and resources, CONSISTENT WITH THIS SECTION. [The department is
44 further authorized to promulgate regulations it deems necessary to
45 prevent the improper establishment and use of accounts for purchase of
46 first or replacement vehicles.]

47 S 2. Subdivision (c) of section 153 of part B of chapter 436 of the
48 laws of 1997, constituting the welfare reform act of 1997, as amended by
49 chapter 187 of the laws of 2015, is amended to read as follows:

50 (c) Section sixteen of this act shall take effect November 1, 1997
51 [and expire and be deemed repealed August 22, 2017].

52 S 3. This act shall take effect immediately; provided, however, that
53 section one of this act shall take effect on the first of April next
54 succeeding the date on which it shall have become a law.