STATE OF NEW YORK

777

2021-2022 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

(Prefiled)

January 6, 2021

Introduced by Sen. THOMAS -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Social Services

AN ACT to amend the social services law, in relation to enacting the intergenerational poverty mitigation act

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

Section 1. The social services law is amended by adding a new article 10-E to read as follows:

ARTICLE 10-E

INTERGENERATIONAL POVERTY MITIGATION ACT

Section 484. Short title.
484-a. Definitions.
484-b. New York intergenerational welfare reform commission.
484-c. Establishment of intergenerational poverty plan implementation pilot program.

§ 484. Short title. This article shall be known as the "Intergenerational poverty mitigation act."

§ 484-a. Definitions. As used in this article:

1. "Cycle of poverty" or "poverty cycle" means the set of factors or events by which the long-term poverty of a person is likely to continue and be experienced by each child of the person when the child becomes an adult unless there is outside intervention.

2. (a) "Intergenerational poverty" means poverty in which two or more successive generations of a family continue in the cycle of poverty and government dependence.

(b) "Intergenerational poverty" does not include situational poverty that: (i) is generally traceable to a specific incident or time period within the lifetime of a person; and (ii) is not continued to the next generation.

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

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3. "Poverty" means the state of a person who lacks a usual or socially acceptable amount of money or material possessions as demonstrated by the person's income level being at or below the United States poverty level as defined by the most recently revised poverty income guidelines published by the United States department of health and human services.

§ 484-b. New York intergenerational welfare reform commission. 1. There is hereby created the New York intergenerational welfare reform commission composed of the following nine members: (a) one member appointed by the commissioner; (b) two members to be appointed by the governor; (c) three members to be appointed by the temporary president of the senate; and (d) three members to be appointed by the speaker of the assembly.

2. The appointee of the commissioner shall serve as chair of the commission. The chair is responsible for: (a) the call and conduct of meetings at least four times per year; (b) calling additional meetings upon request by a majority of the commission's members; and (c) delegating duties to other members of the commission.

3. A majority of the members of the commission constitutes a quorum of the commission at any meeting and the action of the majority of members present is the action of the commission.

4. The department shall provide staff support to the commission as requested.

5. The commission's purpose is to: (a) collaborate in sharing and analyzing data and information regarding intergenerational poverty in the state with a primary focus on data and information regarding children who are at risk of continuing the cycle of poverty and welfare dependency unless outside intervention is made; (b) examine and analyze shared data and information regarding intergenerational poverty, including the data provided by the intergenerational poverty report, to identify and develop effective and efficient plans, programs, and recommendations to help at-risk children in the state escape the cycle of poverty and welfare dependency, which may include avoiding homelessness among children at risk of remaining in poverty; (c) implement data-driven policies and programs addressing poverty, public assistance, education, and other areas as needed to measurably reduce the incidence of children in the state who remain in the cycle of poverty and welfare dependency as they become adults; and (d) establish and facilitate improved cooperation between policymakers in rescuing children from intergenerational poverty and welfare dependency.

6. The commission shall: (a) study, evaluate, and report on the status and effectiveness of policies, procedures, and programs that provide services to children in the state affected by intergenerational poverty and welfare dependency; (b) study and evaluate the policies, procedures, and programs implemented by other states and nongovernmental entities that address the needs of children affected by intergenerational poverty and welfare dependency; (c) identify policies, procedures, and programs, including any lack of interagency data sharing, lack of policy coordination, or current federal requirements, that are impeding efforts to help children in the state affected by intergenerational poverty escape the poverty cycle and welfare dependency and recommend changes to such policies and procedures; (d) create an ongoing five- and ten-year plan, which is updated annually, containing measurable goals and benchmarks, including future action needed to attain those goals and benchmarks, for decreasing the incidence of intergenerational poverty among the state's children, including reducing the incidence of homelessness among children affected by intergenerational poverty and increasing the number of

the state's children who escape the poverty cycle and welfare dependency; (e) implement policy, procedure, and program changes to address the needs of children affected by intergenerational poverty and help those children escape the poverty cycle and welfare dependency, including, as available over time, data to track the effectiveness of each change; (f) recommend policy, procedure, and program changes to address the needs of children affected by intergenerational poverty and to help those children escape the poverty cycle and welfare dependency, including the steps that will be required to make the recommended changes and whether further action is required by the legislature; and (g) provide a forum for public comment and participation in efforts to help children in the state escape the cycle of poverty and welfare dependency.

7. To accomplish its duties, the commission may: (a) request and receive from any state or local governmental agency or institution, information relating to poverty in the state, including: reports, audits, data, projections and statistics; and (b) appoint special committees, to advise and assist the commission; provided that members of such special committee shall be appointed by the commission and may be: (i) members of the commission; or (ii) individuals from the private or public sector;

§ 484-c. Establishment of intergenerational poverty plan implementation pilot program.

1. There is hereby established an intergenerational poverty plan implementation pilot program to encourage counties to implement local solutions to address intergenerational poverty.

2. A county or a group of contiguous counties may submit a proposal to the department to participate in the program. Such proposals for participation shall specify: (a) outcomes that will address intergenerational poverty that the county aims to achieve with such program; (b) metrics that would be used to measure progress toward the specified outcomes; (c) baseline measurements for each specified outcome and the metric against which progress will be measured; and (d) the total amount of money needed to achieve the specified outcomes.

3. The department shall: (a) specify the format for a proposal; (b) set a deadline for a county or group of counties to submit a proposal; (c) define criteria for selecting a county or group of counties to participate in the program, which may include: (i) a significant number of individuals within the county or group of counties experiencing intergenerational poverty; (ii) an established strategic plan to address intergenerational poverty; (iii) evidence of strong engagement and leadership; and (iv) partnerships with groups overseeing human services, early childhood services public health, education, economic development, behavioral health and juvenile justice.

4. One year after the effective date of this section, the department shall select at least one county or group of counties to serve as the pilot program location, and shall be authorized to grant any appropriated funds to such county or group of counties to achieve the pilot program indicators and outcomes.

5. A county or group of counties that receives a grant under the pilot program shall: (a) provide a cash or in-kind match that is equal to at least twenty-five percent of the amount of the grant; (b) use the funds provided by the program and the cash or in-kind match for purposes approved by the department; and (c) report quarterly to the department on progress regarding the indicators and outcomes described this section.

6. The department shall issue a report annually detailing a description of the program, including the number and amounts of grants awarded, the recipients of the grants, and an evaluation of the progress grant recipients have made toward the indicators and outcomes described in this section.

7. The department shall have the power: (a) to make such pilot program permanent if the department determines the program has been successful; and (b) to expand the pilot program to an additional county or counties after the initial one-year pilot program.

§ 2. This act shall take effect immediately.