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| ADMINISTRATIVE DIRECTIVE |  
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TRANSMITTAL: 97 ADM-11

TO: Commissioners of  
Social Services

DIVISION: Department of  
Labor Welfare-  
To-Work Unit

DATE: May 16, 1997

SUBJECT: Assessment Requirement for Recipients of Temporary  
Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

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SUGGESTED

DISTRIBUTION: IM Directors, Employment Coordinators, CAP  
Coordinators

CONTACT

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ATTACHMENTS: Model TANF Assessment Form - Available On-Line

FILING REFERENCES

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Previous ADMs/INFs	Releases Cancelled	Dept. Regs.	Soc. Serv. Law & Other Legal Ref.	Manual Ref.	Misc. Ref.
-	-	-	PRWORA of 1996	-	-

I. Purpose

The purpose of this directive is to advise local social services districts of the requirement to conduct an employment assessment of all adult members of families receiving assistance under TANF.

II. Background

New York's State Plan for implementing TANF was accepted by the federal Department of Health and Human Services on December 2, 1996. While the plan indicates that the current Job Opportunities and Basic Skills (JOBS) Training Program will be New York's work program under TANF, a new statutory requirement that is not part of JOBS must be addressed. Social services districts must conduct an initial assessment of all adult recipients in cases receiving TANF funds, including those individuals now categorized as exempt under JOBS.

III. Program Implications

Social services districts currently have a process in place that ensures that employable recipients are assessed. This process must now be expanded to accommodate the TANF requirement to assess all adults as described in Section IV. The following information describes who must be assessed, the components of the assessment, and the timeframes for completion.

IV. Required Action

A. Who Must be Assessed

An initial assessment must be conducted for each recipient of TANF funds (ADC and ADC-U) who is:

- 0 18 years of age or older; or
- 0 16 or 17 years of age and has not completed high school or obtained a certificate of high school equivalency, and is not attending secondary school.

Any current ADC recipient who has been assessed under JOBS and is currently enrolled in a JOBS activity, or who has been assessed under JOBS within the past year will be considered to have met the TANF assessment requirement. A break in assistance of less than 30 days does not invalidate any prior JOBS assessment for this purpose.

Each employable recipient must participate in the assessment as required or be subject to an individual sanction. Recipients, who are exempt according to current state regulations, who fail or refuse to participate, without good cause, in the assessment are subject to loss of eligibility until compliance, for the entire case, for TANF Program funds (ADC and ADC-U).

B. Notice Requirements

- a. Case Closings - Non compliant person who is currently exempt.

The reason language paragraph below is for use when an exempt recipient fails, without a good reason, to comply with the requirement that they be assessed. Districts that produce public assistance closing notices through the CNS will, by using reason code N17, produce the required reason language.

Districts that use manual notices for closings must use the appropriate State mandated or approved local equivalent notice:

- o DSS-4015: "Notice of Intent to Change Benefits: Public Assistance, Food Stamps, Medical Assistance and Services (Timely and Adequate)".

When a full explanation of the action will not fit on the notice, an attachment will be needed. Include enough information on the notice to identify the reason for the action and refer the recipient to the attachment for a full explanation. When an attachment is needed, the regulatory citation must appear on the notice. This decision is based on Department Regulations 351.2, 351.8(a) 2 and 351.21(a).

The CNS reason language produced by the use of N17 - "Failure to Complete Eligibility Process" follows:

This is because you failed to complete the public assistance eligibility process.

In addition to the eligibility interview, a recipient can be required to meet with agency staff to discuss possible employment opportunities, or other resources that may reduce or eliminate the need for public assistance. We told you in advance that you were required to meet with (Name of Person or Unit) on (Date).

You did not go to the appointment. When a person fails to complete the eligibility process, the case cannot get public assistance.

This decision is based on Department Regulations 351.2, 351.8(a) 2 and 351.21(a).

- b. Sanctions - Non compliant person who is currently employable.

Employable recipients that fail or refuse to participate in the assessment are subject to an individual sanction. Districts that produce public assistance closing notices through the CNS will, by using reason code WE1, WE2 or WE3, produce the required reason language.

Districts that use manual notices for closings must use the appropriate State mandated or approved local equivalent notice:

O DSS 4004: "Notice of Intent to Change Public Assistance Grant and/or Medical Assistance Coverage for Non-Compliance with Employment Related Requirements (Timely and Adequate)."

This decision is based on Department Regulation 385.4(b).

C. Assessment Components

The assessment must include an evaluation of the recipient's skills, prior work experience and employability (job readiness). The purpose of this assessment is to gather information needed to develop the recipient's plan to meet TANF work requirements and move toward self sufficiency. There is no federal requirement to develop an individual responsibility plan. Local districts may use a combination of assessment techniques to meet the TANF requirements. For example:

- O a JOBS assessment for all individuals, or
- O a JOBS assessment process for the current "non exempt" populations and a simplified assessment for all others.

Attached is a model assessment document that meets the minimum TANF requirements. Local districts may wish to use this document or design their own form which includes, at a minimum, the same elements as the model. Districts are, of course, free to use their current JOBS assessment document. Districts may, when they deem appropriate, assess recipients by mail or telephone.

D. Timeframes for Implementation

A TANF assessment must be completed for those individuals outlined in Section IV A. according to the following timeframes:

- O By June 2, 1997 for those individuals active as of December 2, 1996.
- O Within 90 days of being determined eligible for TANF assistance for all others.

V. Systems Implications

There has been a WMS Employment Subsystem modification that allows subsystem record creation for all employability codes with the exception of "30" - Child under 16 years. TANF assessments should be entered on the Employment Subsystem using existing activity and status codes.

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VI. Effective Date

This directive is effective May 15, 1997 and is retroactive to December 2, 1996.

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Karen B. Papandrea  
Director  
Welfare-To-Work

TANF ASSESSMENT

Recipient Name	Case Number, CIN or SS#
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- |  |        |       |
|--|--------|-------|
| 1) Prior Work Experience - Has the recipient been employed during the last two years? If yes, please provide a brief summary below under "Notes/Next Steps." | ++ Yes | ++ No |
|  | ++     | ++    |
| 2) Job Skills - Does the recipient possess job related skills? If yes, note them below under "Notes/Next Steps."   | ++ Yes | ++ No |
|  | ++     | ++    |
| 3) Barriers to Employment - Will any of the following barriers/conditions impact on the recipient's ability to accept employment?                            | ++ Yes | ++ No |
|  | ++     | ++    |
| Lack of Child Care   | ++ Yes | ++ No |
|  | ++     | ++    |
| Health Problems  | ++ Yes | ++ No |
|  | ++     | ++    |
| Drug/Alcohol Abuse   | ++ Yes | ++ No |
|  | ++     | ++    |
| Non-English Speaking   | ++ Yes | ++ No |
|  | ++     | ++    |
| No Transportation  | ++ Yes | ++ No |
|  | ++     | ++    |
| Other _____  |        |       |

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Notes/Next Steps

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Local District Evaluator \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_