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Local Commissioners Memorandum

Section 1

Transmittal:	07-LCM-10
To:	Local District Commissioners
Issuing Division/Office:	Division of Employment and Transitional Supports
Date:	August 8, 2007
Subject:	Food Stamp Management Evaluation Procedures
Contact Person(s):	Denis Sheehan at 518-473-6352
Attachments:	Attachment 1: 2007 Food Stamp Management Evaluation Program Access Review Schedule Attachment 2: 2007 Food Stamp Management Evaluation Claims Review Schedule
Attachment Available On – Line:	X

Section 2

I. Purpose

The purpose of this release is to advise local districts of the continued requirement to conduct Food Stamp Management Evaluations (MEs) in New York State.

II. Background

Program Access MEs are a portion of the annual report submitted by the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA), Division of Employment and Transitional Supports (DETS) to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). Beginning in FFY 2002, OTDA introduced the ME self-assessment process to share program responsibility by allowing some local districts to assess, evaluate and, when necessary, adjust their own management practices. OTDA required districts to retrieve a random sample of cases, review these cases, complete an interview instrument, respond to individual case findings, and if indicated, submit a Corrective Action Plan (CAP) to address deficiencies.

III. Program Implications

Program Access Reviews

OTDA is continuing the ME self-assessment process for program access reviews under USDA-approved procedures. Districts will continue to self-assess key areas of program access, including application processing, expedited processing, timeliness and accuracy of benefits and notices, separate determination, including transitional food stamp benefits, complaint procedures and waiting room observations. This year 18 districts outside of NYC will complete a self-assessment and OTDA will conduct 8 on-site reviews. The districts receiving on-site reviews will not be required to complete a self-assessment. On-site reviews will include a review of 25 cases. The roster of program access reviews is attached (see Attachment 1).

The self-assessment will include a review of 20 cases currently under process using a State prescribed Casefile Review Instrument. Completed forms will be submitted to OTDA, and if indicated, a Corrective Action Plan (CAP) will be prepared for areas identified as needing improvement. This year, OTDA will again utilize an automated Food Stamp Management Evaluation Review process. Participating districts will access the web-based questionnaires and transmit the resulting data to OTDA on-line by September 15, 2007.

Claims Reviews

ME on-site claims reviews will be conducted by OTDA's Bureau of Audit and Quality Improvement (A&QI). See Attachment 2 for the schedule of reviews. Additionally, OTDA's Bureau of Budget, Finance and Data Management is doing a separate review in a sample of local districts of the LDSS 3214 Food Stamps Claims Against Households report and supporting documentation as part of the USDA-required ME review process.

REVIEW GUIDELINES

Program Access

Districts scheduled for a self-assessment review in 2007 will select 20 cases, including cases from each of the following categories: Temporary Assistance (TA) case openings, denials, withdrawals and closings; and non-temporary assistance/food stamp (Non-TA/FS) case openings, denials and withdrawals. The reviewer may be either designated centrally or may be any supervisor who did not sign the original case action. In addition, each district will complete an on-line structured Interview Guide to assess other pertinent areas of operation. The guide remains largely unchanged from prior years.

All districts identified for participation in the Food Stamp (FS) Program Access self-assessment process will be contacted by OTDA directly and provided instructions for on-line form access. Security considerations necessitate a short window of activity for completion of the on-line forms. As such, all Program Access self-assessment forms must be electronically filed by September 15. Districts will then provide their Corrective Action Plans to OTDA where they will be used for statewide program analysis.

Those districts designated for an on-site review in 2007 will be contacted by OTDA/DETS Food Stamp staff to schedule the completion of the review. Case samples will be provided to on-site review districts by OTDA staff in 2007.

CORRECTIVE ACTIONS

Although the sample reviewed by districts does not constitute a valid statistical sample, the review of FS processing in the several areas listed above will provide local managers with indications of those actions that were taken in error and how best to correct them. Districts experiencing significant errors in any of the review areas will submit a Corrective Action Plan with the case review forms.

Plans may include remedies such as: topical training, communications improvements, recordkeeping changes, staff realignments or any other locally-developed processes or resources required to improve the problem area. Districts should include dates by which activities are to be conducted.

STATE OVERSIGHT

The Division of Employment and Transitional Supports will review the materials submitted, as well as those obtained from the on-site reviews, and prepare a statewide ME report on program access to be submitted to USDA.

Issued By _____
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Title: **Deputy Commissioner**
Division/Office: **Employment and Transitional Supports**