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**OFFICE OF TEMPORARY AND DISABILITY**  
**ASSISTANCE**  
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**Andrew M. Cuomo**  
*Governor*

**Informational Letter**

**Section 1**

<b>Transmittal:</b>	12-INF-13
<b>To:</b>	Local District Commissioners
<b>Issuing Division/Office:</b>	Center for Employment and Economic Supports
<b>Date:</b>	August 30, 2012
<b>Subject:</b>	Guidance on Use of Enhanced WMS Cross-System Clearance Process and New Statewide Clearance Report
<b>Suggested Distribution:</b>	SNAP Directors, TA Directors, HEAP Directors, Staff Development Coordinators
<b>Contact Person(s):</b>	Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Bureau 1-800-343-8859 x31469 or 518-473-1469 Upstate Systems Bureau 518-473-7991
<b>Attachments:</b>	
<b>Attachment Available On – Line:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Filing References**

<b>Previous ADMs/INFs</b>	<b>Releases Cancelled</b>	<b>Dept. Regs.</b>	<b>Soc. Serv. Law &amp; Other Legal Ref.</b>	<b>Manual Ref.</b>	<b>Misc. Ref.</b>
				WMS Upstate Systems Reference Manual, WMS New York City Systems Reference Manual (ver.2012.1)	myBenefits/myWorkspace Release Notes(R9.1.1), GIS 12TA/myB009

## Section 2

### I. Purpose

The purpose of this Informational Letter (INF) is to provide guidance to social services districts (SSDs) on the use of the enhanced Welfare Management System (WMS) cross-system clearance process that automatically identifies statewide matches that are displayed to social services district workers via a new Statewide Clearance Report. The enhanced cross-system clearance process enables workers in all fifty-eight SSDs to be able to check for duplicate program participation in real time.

The availability of the new Clearance Report in myWorkspace was announced to Upstate districts on February 10, 2012 via General Information System (GIS) message GIS 12 TA/myB009. The availability of the results of the enhanced cross-system clearance process displayed in a new Statewide Clearance Window in the New York City (NYC) Human Resource Administration (HRA) Paperless Office System (POS) was announced to HRA workers on April 16, 2012 via HRA POS release notes Version 6.1.1.

**For cases processed through myWorkspace and NYC POS, SSDs must use the enhanced cross-system clearance process and the new Statewide Clearance Report for SNAP, TA and HEAP applicants and recipients to prevent the receipt of duplicate program benefits. For SNAP, TA and HEAP cases not processed through my Workspace and NYC POS, SSDs must continue to use the single system clearance process through WMS to prevent the receipt of duplicate program benefits.**

Note: As of August 29, 2012, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is the new name for the Food Stamp Program, pursuant to Chapter 41 of the Laws of 2012.

### II. Background

By matching data on the name, date of birth, Social Security Number (SSN), and gender of applicants and recipients, the WMS single-system clearance process indicates whether or not a new applicant is known to either Upstate or NYC WMS. It is a tool that is used to prevent duplicate participation by providing eligibility workers with information about an applicant's history with the following public benefit programs: Temporary Assistance (TA), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) and Medical Assistance (MA). Clearance results provide information on individuals who are applying for a program in another SSD, are receiving assistance in another SSD, have been denied assistance in the past, or previously were on assistance but are no longer receiving assistance.

The single-system clearance process identifies matches either within Upstate WMS or within NYC WMS. A NYC worker can only see clearances matched from within NYC WMS, and workers in all other SSDs can only see clearances matched from within Upstate WMS. For an Upstate worker to see if a new applicant is receiving assistance in NYC, the worker must conduct a manual inquiry of WMS. For a NYC worker to see if a new applicant is receiving assistance in a SSD outside of NYC, the worker must conduct a manual inquiry of WMS.

The enhanced cross-system clearance process does a complete, automatic clearance between the two systems (Upstate WMS and NYC WMS), and the new Clearance Report displays matches from both Upstate WMS and NYC WMS without the need for the local worker to conduct a manual inquiry. The new Clearance Report shows workers in both Upstate SSDs and in NYC whether an individual applying for assistance in their SSD also is applying for assistance in another SSD, is receiving assistance in another SSD, has been denied assistance in the past, or previously was on assistance but is no longer receiving assistance. The new Clearance Report also provides information to help workers identify individuals who are sanctioned for noncompliance with SNAP and TA program requirements.

The new Clearance Report can be accessed by workers in Upstate SSDs when processing cases through myWorkspace, and will be able to be accessed by workers at NYC's TA and Non-TA Food Stamp (FS)/SNAP Centers through NYC POS.

### **Program Implications**

**For cases processed through myWorkspace and NYC POS, SSDs must use the enhanced cross-system clearance process and the new Statewide Clearance Report for SNAP, TA and HEAP applicants and recipients to prevent the receipt of duplicate program benefits.** Cases are matched based on name, date of birth, SSN, and gender. Identifying applicants who are already active or applying in another SSD allows workers to resolve discrepancies and prevent duplicate participation at the time of the eligibility determination. The enhanced cross-system clearance process does not trigger any sort of automated action to close a case or deny an application. The social services district worker (both in NYC and Upstate) needs to act on the information and determine whether a case closing or application denial is appropriate.

The new Statewide Clearance Report is available to Upstate SSDs through myWorkspace for case processing. It will be made available to the NYC Centers through POS.

**For SNAP, TA and HEAP cases not processed through my Workspace and NYC POS, SSDs must continue to use the single system clearance process through WMS to prevent the receipt of duplicate program benefits.** For information on the use of the single system clearance process, Upstate social services district workers should refer to the WMS Upstate Systems Reference Manual, and NYC workers should refer to the WMS New York City Systems Reference Manual.

## **III. Match Analysis**

### **A. Upstate SSDs:**

The new Statewide Clearance Report displays Upstate matches and matches from NYC WMS on the Individuals Tab in myWorkspace. NYC matches are clearly distinguishable from Upstate matches, and workers have the option to sort / filter on Upstate and NYC. The Clearance screen is accessible from the Individuals Tab. This screen provides a new interface that allows workers to more easily identify matches and allows workers to select matches from the Clearance Report and import those matches into the Individuals Tab when processing an application or case in myWorkspace. Importing a match overwrites certain key pieces of data on the application or case in order to avoid the assignment of

multiple CINs to the same individual. When the Clearance screen is accessed from any location other than the Individuals Tab, it is displayed in the new format; however, users are not able to import matches into myWorkspace. The interactive screen also has a print button on it which generates a printer-friendly version of the screen in a new window. The system never displays more than 25 matches per individual and those matches are always displayed in descending order of priority according to match score and additional match analysis.

In myWorkspace, Upstate and NYC matches should be analyzed for the following data and be prioritized and displayed in the following order:

- Upstate -- Active Case or in App Status/Active Individual/Individual Disposition Code 07
- Upstate -- Active Case/Inactive Individual/Individual Disposition Code 10 (ineligible or sanctioned incremental)
- NYC – Cases in AP, AC or SI Status
- NYC -- Individuals with Medicaid coverage to date greater than the end of the current month, regardless of individual status
- Upstate -- Active Case/Inactive Individual/Individual Disposition Code 08 (non-applying household member)
- Upstate -- Active Case/Inactive Individual/Individual Disposition Code 15 (deleted)
- Upstate -- Active Case/Inactive Individual/Individual Disposition Code 13 (deceased)
- NYC -- Cases in RJ or CL Status
- Inactive Case /Inactive Individual – in descending order by date

myWorkspace also requires a worker to run a Clearance Report under certain circumstances. On new applications, a worker cannot leave the Individuals Tab without running the Clearance Report. Once they have run it, if they go back to the Individuals Tab and either add an individual or change demographic data for any of the existing individuals, they will be required to run it again. Demographic data includes first name, last name, middle initial, suffix, date of birth, sex (gender) and SSN. On undercare transactions, a worker is only required to run the Clearance Report when someone is added to the case, not when demographic information is changed.

(For more information see: myBenefits/myWorkspace Release Notes R9.1.1)

If the match in the Statewide Clearance window includes an exact match of the Social Security Number, the worker must:

- Ensure that the applicant's name, gender, and date of birth, were entered correctly and correct any demographic data that needs to be changed. As noted above, if a correction was made to any demographic information, a new Clearance Report must be run.
- Review and evaluate the case demographics to insure that the individual identified in the match is the same as the applying individual.
- Ask the applicant if he/she has applied for or received TA or SNAP benefits within the last 60 days from the SSD that appears on the Statewide Clearance Report.

**B. New York City:**

The enhanced cross-system clearance process matches the demographics of individuals who are applying for or receiving SNAP, TA, or MA (on a TA case) benefits in NYC against the demographics of individuals who are applying for, receiving, or recently closed for SNAP, TA, or MA benefits in a SSD outside of NYC.

The demographic information of all applying household members is compared to individuals' registered data. When the demographics of an individual applying for or recertifying for benefits in NYC result in a matching score between 102 and 106 with an individual in a SSD outside of NYC, the matching SSD, case type, case status, individual status, demographic data, match score, and dates of status will be added to application and recertification workflow in POS.

For matches that occur during the application process, the Statewide Clearance window will be displayed after the Withdrawal window. For matches that occur during the recertification process, the Statewide Clearance window will be displayed after the Education and Training window.

Match scores between 102 and 106 in the Statewide Clearance window include an exact match of the SSN of the individual applying for or recertifying for benefits in NYC with the SSN of an individual applying for, receiving, or recently closed for TA, MA and/or SNAP benefits in a NYS SSD outside of NYC.

The match score/criteria in the Statewide Clearance Report is as follows:

<b><u>SCORE</u></b>	<b><u>CRITERIA</u></b>
106	Last Name, First Name, Gender, DOB, and SSN
104	Last Name, First Name, and SSN
103	Last Name, Year and Month of DOB and SSN
102	DOB, SSN

In addition to the automated display of the Statewide Clearance window for matches that occur during the application or recertification process, workers may request a Statewide Clearance Report at any time from the POS tool menu. If there is a match, the information will be displayed in POS.

If the match in the Statewide Clearance window is between 102 and 104, the worker must:

- Ensure that the applicant's name, gender, and date of birth, were entered correctly in the Welfare Management System (WMS) and POS and correct any demographic data that needs to be changed. If a correction was made in WMS, request a new Statewide Clearance Report in POS.
- Review and evaluate the case demographics to insure that the individual identified in the match is the same as the applying individual.
- Ask the applicant if he/she has applied for or received TA or SNAP benefits within the last 60 days from the SSD that appears on the Statewide Clearance Report.

## Procedure for Client Matches

A denial or case closing due to a clearance match may not be imposed unless the results of the match have been manually reviewed and the applicant household has had a chance to respond and resolve the clearance match information.

In match situations where an applicant has not made any attempt to conceal or change identifying information, it may be that the applicant simply moved from one SSD to another without taking the steps necessary to ensure that the case in their former county of residence has been closed, or that they have filed a new application before the case closing transaction in their SSD of former residence has been completed. In such instances, a referral for fraud investigation usually is not appropriate. However, in situations in which an attempt has been made to conceal, change or obscure identifying information or where the reason for the match cannot be satisfactorily explained by the household, referral for fraud investigation may be appropriate.

If the match is with a case that is active for benefits in another SSD, and the applicant states that he/she no longer resides in that SSD, the worker must inform the applicant that they must get their case closed in the SSD in which they used to reside before they may receive benefits in NYC.

If the match listed in the Statewide Clearance Report is with a case that has been closed in another SSD within the last 60 days, the worker must check WMS (Upstate) or contact the other SSD to determine the last month that benefits were issued. If the applicant is determined to be eligible for SNAP, TA and/or HEAP benefits, the worker must insure that benefits are not issued for a time period that would duplicate benefits issued by the other SSD.

If an applicant claims that he/she is not receiving benefits from the SSD that was listed on the Statewide Clearance Report, the worker must contact that SSD to ascertain whether or not the applicant is the same person as is listed on the Clearance Report and, if so, to find out the status of the case and information on what benefits most recently have been issued.

When an applicant applies for benefits in a new SSD of residence before the benefits from the former SSD of residence cease, the new SSD still must accept and process the application within the normal thirty-day timeframe. If the new SSD determines that the applicant is otherwise eligible for benefits, the new SSD must open the case effective the first day of the month following the month that benefits from the former SSD end. The new SSD of residence may not issue expedited SNAP benefits to an applicant who is still active on a case that still is receiving SNAP benefits from the SSD of former residence.

Matches identified at recertification or during certain undercare transactions (such as adding an individual to a case) also require a review and investigation of the eligibility of the matched individual(s) and any other matched case(s). The review and investigation should determine which case(s) or individual(s) must be immediately closed and for which case or individual(s) eligibility may continue. Where evidence indicates that a referral for fraud investigation is appropriate, all cases and individuals involved in a match, including any cases and individuals with continuing eligibility, also should be referred for investigation.

**Note:** Statewide Clearance contact information for all SSDs is available through CentraPort on the OTDA Intranet at “County Profiles”, “District Contact for Out of District/State Inquiries”. (See GIS 12 TA/DC 015.)

#### **IV. Systems Implications:**

As announced in GIS 12 TA/myB009, the new interactive statewide Clearance Report replaced the PDF version that is accessed from the Individuals Tab in myWorkspace. In addition to Upstate matches, matches from NYC are now displayed also. NYC matches are clearly distinguishable from Upstate matches, and there is an option to sort and filter by Upstate and NYC matches. This new interactive statewide Clearance Report also allows a user to select Upstate matches on the Clearance Report to import directly into the Individuals Tab.

For NYC NTA FS/SNAP staff, a new statewide clearance window has been added to POS. For matches that occur during the application process, the Statewide Clearance window will be displayed after the Withdrawal window. For matches that occur during the recertification process, the Statewide Clearance window will be displayed after the Education and Training window.

#### **Issued By**

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