

OFFICE OF TEMPORARY AND DISABILITY ASSISTANCE

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| LOCAL COMMISSIONERS MEMORANDUM |  
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OTDA-4037EL (Rev. 11/98)

Transmittal No: 99 LCM-25

Date: September 22, 1999

Division: Temporary Assistance

TO: Local District Commissioners

SUBJECT: Building Independence for the Long Term (BILT)

ATTACHMENTS: Attachment I: Funding Level Awards(available on-line)  
Attachment II: Budget Worksheet (available on-line)  
Attachment III: Healthy Families New York Home Visiting  
Program (not available on-line)  
Attachment IV: Healthy Families New York Sites and  
State Contacts (not available on-line)

I. INTRODUCTION: BACKGROUND FOR NEED

The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA) created a lifetime limit of no more than five years for receipt of assistance funded under a state's Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant. As the five year limit nears for many recipients, Social Services agencies need to more aggressively engage families in self sufficiency activities shifting the goal of public assistance from merely preventing destitution to assisting families in achieving as high a level of self sufficiency as possible.

PRWORA assumes that all New York's TANF adult applicants and recipients can assume responsibility for their independence and allows almost no exemptions from strict work participation requirements. The time limit on TANF funded Family Assistance programs (FA) makes exempting "hard to place/serve" recipients from employment activities no longer a viable option, as they would default to New York's Safety Net Assistance program and burden our state and local funds. The challenge is to design programs that result in helping recipients to become prepared for the demands placed on them by employment and employment activities and enhance their potential for long term independence. The SFY 1999-2000 state budget contains an appropriation of \$18.1 million in TANF funds to support services

to assist eligible TANF recipients to achieve long term independence. Of this amount \$17.6 million is being allocated to local districts to implement the Building Independence for the Long Term (BILT) program pursuant to this LCM. We are examining the feasibility of allocating additional money for case management services, and additional information will be forthcoming. Included on Attachment I are awards to districts. BILT activity plans are due by November 1, 1999.

II. PROGRAM MODEL: BILT - PURPOSE

BILT is the \$17.6 million in funding designed to create new efforts to provide services to current FA recipients.

As a precursor to BILT, the State Fiscal Year 1997-98 budget included \$1.8 million to support 15 case management pilots in local districts. The positive response from districts applying highlighted the need to provide supports to FA families.

Since BILT program services are a separate funding initiative, any awards made from this project are separate and distinct from the previous \$1.8 million awarded. Pilot counties that were awarded case management funds previously from the \$1.8 million are encouraged, as are all counties, to submit proposals meeting the BILT criteria. Counties desiring to continue services originally funded under the demonstration pilots may choose to do so after expiration of the pilot project funding by using funds provided under the BILT award. This assumes such services fall within the BILT criteria.

III. BILT PROGRAM SERVICES

These funds would enable districts to devote additional resources to enable long term, hard to place/serve recipients, with significant barriers to long term independence, to overcome those barriers. Flexibility is encouraged; however, this initiative should not duplicate activities that can be supported by other initiatives or funding streams to the extent possible.

The following are examples of services which may be funded under this program:

- Identification and assessment of those factors which may inhibit the client and/or family unit from achieving long term independence such as domestic violence or substance abuse. Develop multi-faceted strategies that will eventually lead to long term independence, by building trusting worker/client relationships, including case management techniques, to overcome barriers to long term independence.

- Parent-child risk screening and education on issues such as handling difficult children and managing a household with a disabled child, and family support programs that address these barriers to the eventual employability of the caretaker/parent.

Note: These proposals can integrate any proposed case management BILT activities with the "Healthy Families New York Home Visiting Program" (see Attachment III for program descriptions and Attachment IV for current locations) administered by the Office of Children & Families Services (OCFS) or a similar model. This New York Home Visiting Program is a voluntary program that offers systematic assessment of pregnant women and new parents for risks that may lead to child abuse and poor health/development outcomes. Families identified with high risk factors are offered long term home visiting services until the child is in school or Head Start.

- Benefits Counseling - A service which could be designed to help recipients understand the positive impact which obtaining employment will have on their overall family financial situation. Included could be such topics as: Earned Income Disregard, Earned Income Tax Credit, availability of child care, and transportation services, as well as the enhanced medicaid eligibility provisions. The intent would be to remove anxieties related to work and self sufficiency.
- Remedial Programs for the Learning Disabled - Existing data suggest that approximately one-quarter of the TANF caseload could be learning challenged and would benefit from instructional technique by learning in alternate modes. Proposals may seek to identify learning challenged recipients, and partner with the local education and training community to develop appropriate remedial programs. These plans should work in concert with the district's other efforts, such as LIVES and VESID, to improve client and/or family functioning, thereby enhancing future steps to gain employment.
- Support Groups - Peer groups can be supported for a wide variety of issues such as substance abuse, learning disabilities, children's behavioral problems, or recipients' fear of change. The support groups' overriding goal should be to promote independence by incremental steps to gained employment. It should also assist the recipients in parenting, volunteer work and self-improvement, so they are not overburdened.
- Short Term Therapy - This is a specific approach to counseling that emphasizes focused interventions for individuals and families with mental health barriers.

- Home Management - A set of services which would be designed to assist recipients to learn and/or improve basic home management skills, especially money management. Concepts such as blending benefits including food stamps with the resources available through a paycheck and stretching those to their maximum, preparing family budgets, planning for future fiscal needs, and smart money management techniques could be included. The goal of such a program would be to develop recipient confidence that they will be able to manage their affairs, once they have eliminated their dependency on temporary assistance programs.
- Youth Programs - Programs that increase a young person's ability to more constructively function in the family unit, in school and in the workplace by increasing positive and reducing negative behaviors. Some examples include: working with TANF youth to stay in or return to school; improving school attendance and performance; exhibiting fewer negative behaviors such as school suspension; alcohol/substance abuse; pregnancy or repeat pregnancy; and, for teen parents, development of parenting skills.
- Development of frequent and large scale client contact programs that ensure that the self improvement needs of the client are met and the self sufficiency message is delivered repeatedly. These contacts could take place in individual or group settings, at or near employers' places of work - with permission of the employees and employers, or at some other neutral safe location.
- Client Support Services - BILT funds can be used to develop support programs designed to counsel recipients on managing time and stress, balancing work and home commitments, accepting new responsibilities.

Note: Faith Based Initiatives Option - The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 provides (under section 104) the ability for states and local districts to utilize charitable and faith based organizations in serving the poor and needy. Districts may opt to contract with faith based organizations to provide BILT services. The district must utilize its usual criteria in deciding whether any particular organization will be awarded a contract or allowed to redeem vouchers. Faith based organizations may not require beneficiaries to participate in religious activities in order to receive services.

- Targeted Programs - Targeting programs for select populations are acceptable, including those sanctioned for non-compliance with employment or IV-D requirements and who continue to receive benefits via their other family members, or those who receive benefits intermittently due to their inability to retain employment.
- Crises Intervention Service - Development of a "hotline" to provide immediate and direct assistance for emergencies such as breakdowns in child care or transportation arrangements and other simple crises that could prevent a recipient from working. These hotline services must be available beyond normal office hours.
- Local Tracking - The program may include development of local tracking mechanisms to ensure recipients are connected with and availing themselves of every resource possible to gain long term independence.

Note: The services funded under BILT would complement, not duplicate or replace those offered by the Department of Labor (DOL).

This Office is seeking flexible, innovative and creative approaches to serving this population. Acceptable activities are not limited to the above listed examples. BILT plans should have key design points that encompass a combination of some of the following: assessment and early identification of barriers, building a trusting relationship, home visits (particularly integrated with the Healthy Families New York or a similar model), case management, incremental steps and flexible design that are geared to long term recipients. Successful BILT proposals will be based on the assumption that every family has the opportunity to gain long term independence and the agency will assist the household in achieving this goal.

#### IV. PLAN CONTENT AND REVIEW

Local districts accepting a BILT program award must submit a written plan by November 1, 1999, for review and approval by the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance. The plan will be reviewed on the following criteria:

1. The ability to identify and assess the target population(s). This should include an estimated number of people to be served by the program.
2. Demonstration of an understanding of various problems and barriers faced by the targeted population(s).
3. Explanation of the service model(s) to be used, and how the model(s) will help recipients achieve long term independence.

4. A description of the anticipated outcomes of the program, and performance measures that will be used to evaluate those outcomes.
5. If applicable, a description of how the proposed program would augment district programs made available through TANF employment program resources or TANF employment initiatives funded by the New York State Department of Labor or through the Welfare to Work Block Grant.

In addition, plans will be reviewed for cost effectiveness (plan must include budget worksheet, see Attachment II) of the proposed services, and for overall fiscal appropriateness.

#### V. FUNDING

\$17.6 million is available to fund projects statewide. Local districts have been awarded an amount as shown on Attachment I.

The awards are based on all districts receiving funding for BILT. If all districts do not participate in this initiative and/or request lesser amounts, additional monies may be made available at a later date based on program need.

It is anticipated that approved program models will commence no later than January 1, 2000, and operate for one year. Continuation of this program beyond the state fiscal year is contingent upon authorization funding in the subsequent year's budget. Additional funding for future program years is subject to an annual appropriation by the State Legislature.

Please note: These funds are not available to supplant other federal funds. Further, current positions and services funded from other sources also may not be supplanted by BILT funding. Services provided must fall within acceptable guidelines for the expenditure of TANF funds. Prohibited expenditures include, but are not limited to, provision of day care and capital expenditures, and expenditures for non-TANF related individuals (non-federal safety-net).

#### VI. FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The administrative costs associated with this program should be reported as F17 function code expenditures and claimed on the Schedule D-17 "Distribution of Allocated Costs to Other Reimbursable Programs" (DSS-3274) to a DSS-3922 form entitled, "Financial Summary For Special Projects" labelled "BILT" and reported on the appropriate lines. The DSS-3922 should be submitted to the PA Claims Unit, Bureau of Financial Services.

For individuals who are otherwise eligible for TANF funding, the costs will be reported in the Total Column and claimed at 100% Federal Share. Reimbursement is available up to the limit of the approved project budget, with these costs being outside the local district administrative cost cap. It is OTDA's intention to provide districts with 100% Federal funding for this project for a full year. These funds will be available for use during the current State Fiscal Year, i.e. to pay for services through 6/30/00 with claims due by 8/15/00. Because these Federal funds must be appropriated for use by New York State and we operate on a one-year budget cycle, we cannot provide an absolute guarantee of continued funding beyond these dates. However, we fully expect that any unused amounts will again be reappropriated in the SFY 2000-01 budget, making them available for another year, thus enabling us to provide a full year's funding at 100% Federal share.

Any questions of a fiscal nature from Regions I through IV should be directed to Roland Levie at 1-800-343-8859, extension 4-7549; fiscal questions from Region V should be directed to Marvin Gold at 212-383-1733.

VII. SUBMISSION OF PLANS

A social services district accepting a BILT award must submit a plan individually or may collaborate with another district(s) and submit a unified plan. Plans should include the name and telephone number of an individual whom we may contact if any questions arise in the review process. Plans must be submitted to:

Patricia A. Stevens, Deputy Commissioner  
Attention: Jack Ryan  
Division of Temporary Assistance  
Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance  
40 North Pearl Street  
Albany, New York 12243

or Fax plan to: 518-474-5281  
or E-mail plan to: OCB010 on DSSP.

Proposed plans must be received by close of business November 1, 1999. Districts must submit three (3) copies of their plan. If you have any questions concerning this release, please contact your Regional Team representative.

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Patricia A. Stevens  
Deputy Commissioner  
Division of Temporary Assistance

Building Independence for the Long Term (BILT)  
FUNDING LEVEL AWARDS

\$9,825,000	New York City		
\$500,000	Erie Monroe		
\$340,000	Nassau Onondaga	Suffolk Westchester	
\$240,000	Albany Broome	Chautauqua Niagara	Oneida Orange
\$145,000	Chemung Dutchess Jefferson Oswego	Rensselaer Rockland Schenectady	Steuben St. Lawrence Ulster
\$95,000	Allegany Cattaraugus Cayuga Chenango Clinton Columbia Cortland Franklin	Fulton Greene Herkimer Livingston Ontario Orleans Sullivan Tioga	Tompkins Washington Wayne
\$45,000	Delaware Essex Genesee Hamilton Lewis	Madison Montgomery Otsego Putnam Saratoga	Schoharie Schuyler Seneca Warren Wyoming Yates



